

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole Counsel of GOD

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Num. 5



For this day is
holy unto our
Lord: neither be
ye sorry; for the
joy of the Lord
is your strength.
Neh. 8:10

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THE SILVER LINING



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Editor: Gene Hawkins

Definite Sign Posts Of The End

Gene Hawkins

“**B**ecause thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Rev. 3:10

One major key to understanding the multiple mysteries of the tribulation period is to realize that the entire world will be involved. The above text describes it as “...the hour of temptation (tribulation) which shall come upon **all the world**, to try them...” The only exception in regard to enduring this hour will be the Church at Philadelphia who will be kept “...from...” or “out of” that same troublous period. This unique Church represents the very elite of the entire Body of Christ at that time, and their credentials are recorded in this assessment of the Judge. “I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” Rev. 3:8-9 3
Such words can, in no wise, be a reference to the entire Church, as some suppose. Paul declared in Eph. 5 that, “... Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” V. 25-27 These words once again cannot be applied to the Church as a whole, for the purity which they demand is simply not on display in the whole of Christendom. They are a reference only to those whose full dedication and submission unto Jesus is manifest, even as that which is set forth by the Church at Philadelphia.

We have heard for some time that there are those of our day, who are absolutely convinced that the tribulation has already begun. This persuasion stems from the fact that this world has most assuredly been under siege over the past few months and even years, with a great many of the signs which Jesus prophesied in answer to the disciples questions, “...Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matt. 24:3 This entire

world has clearly witnessed, "... wars and rumours of wars:... nation...against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:... famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Matt. 24:6-7 The Master then defines these as "...the beginning of sorrows." Matt. 24:8 These pages have repeatedly identified these calamities as such for a number of years, but the last couple of months have produced a decided change with the advent of the latest "pestilence" or plague, now known as the "coronavirus."

4 There have been earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, and multiplied accounts of weather-related catastrophes throughout the world. There have been reports of both record cold and record heat in various parts of the globe. America contended with massive wildfires in California, which were complicated due to high winds and drought. Australia likewise endured some extremely severe "bushfires" in that country, and environmental groups from both nations have loudly proclaimed that the real culprit is global warming. However, the electric company in California was deemed to be the cause of those fires, and lawsuits have been leveled against them, accusing them of negligence in failing to maintain their power lines. Likewise, reports out of Australia have largely debunked the idea that the conflagration there was caused by global warming. The following quote out of Australia is from "News Weekly Jan. 25, 2020" "Not surprisingly, most of the media have blamed the terrible wildfires that have caused massive damage in S. Australia, Victoria, and New S. Wales on the Morrison Government's inaction on climate change. A simple question tells us whether this claim is true: if the Morrison Gov't. had pursued the totality of the Green's (environmentalists) agenda --- closing down all coal-fired power plants, banning coal exports, and ending the use of all fossil fuels,...would it have stopped the bushfires? The answer to that question clearly is 'NO.'...The fires are a result of a prolonged drought affecting Eastern Australia, and weather events that have pushed hot, dry air that usually stays in Central Australia over the Eastern states. These conditions happen periodically about every decade. The last time Australia experienced similar conditions was in 2009, when horrific bushfires wiped out entire townships in central Victoria and over 170 people were burned to death."

This article simply reaffirms the fact that man has nothing to do with the erratic weather conditions which have prevailed over this entire planet for the last few years. The simple explanation is that prophecy is being fulfilled before our very eyes and men are so filled with rejection and rebellion that they

are desperately trying to “explain away,” all these spectacular events by trying to assert their own control. It is also rather interesting that some, including Pope Frances, have suggested that there is surely a link between the “coronavirus” and “man-made global warming.” Let “...all the world...” heed this fact: all these phenomenal events are not going to stop. They will rather increase, both in frequency and intensity, and the puny efforts of men will not even slow them down, let alone eliminate them.

The current “coronavirus” is a good example of the contrast between past demonstrations of Jesus’ prophetic words in Matt. 24, and that which will soon become commonplace in this world. All the aforementioned disasters of which He prophesied have been rather sporadic and somewhat isolated to a particular locale. The world as a whole has surely been aware of the hardship produced by earthquakes, hurricanes, tidal waves, and the rebellious conduct of ungodly men, for some time. Indeed, some nations have provided assistance for restoration of the damage done to various parts of the world, but there has been no single “pestilence or plague” which has brought the whole world to a standstill UNTIL NOW! for “...all the world...” 5 has most assuredly been infected and affected by this new plague.

However, let us be encouraged. We can shout with all confidence that the tribulation has NOT already begun. IF that were true, then let the entire world sit up and take notice, for there would be less than 1260 days until the antichrist would set up his own image, “...the abomination of desolation...” in the temple at Jerusalem. Matt. 24:15 Then, 1010 days thereafter, that same man of sin will be removed from this earth along with the false prophet, and cast into the lake of fire. This simply means that the Utopia known as the Millennium will be in full swing upon this earth in approximately 7 more years. These are not random numbers plucked out of the clear blue. They are clearly set forth in scripture, as will be explained later in this article.

It seems that Paul also was confronted with the idea that Jesus had already come, at the time then present, when he wrote his second epistle to the Thessalonians. This was a very spiritually elite assembly as is evidenced by his first letter to them, but evidently some had been persuaded that Jesus had come and they had been left behind! “And to you who are troubled rest with

us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,” II Thess. 1:7 “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” II Thess. 2:1 -2 The apostle assures them that the time when Christ “...shall be revealed from heaven...” is yet future. He further declares, “...by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ... that the day of Christ...” is still “...at hand.” Since Paul immediately begins his discourse on the judgment yet to come, we can only wonder what circumstances may have prompted them to think that it had already begun. He assured them in the text above that Christ will be “...revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,” and then describes their mission as one of judgment, whereby they go forth “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;” II Thess. 1:7-9 The apostle reinforced the idea that judgment was on the way, but that time had not yet arrived. We simply do not know whether or not these saints had been enduring some of the hardships comparable to our day, but we surely do know from Jesus’ letter to Smyrna that persecution and great pain was rampant at the time then present in the early days of the Church Age. “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Rev. 2:10

Regardless of the difficulties they may have experienced, Paul was very emphatic that The Lord had not returned in judgment. He then listed a number of things that must come to pass before the arrival of that day. Let us also understand specific events which must come to pass BEFORE the tribulation begins. Daniel is very precise in his vision regarding the daily sacrifice being taken away by the false prophet. “Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, (Christ) and by him (false prophet) the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down....Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the

daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Dan. 8:11-13 These verses tell us that from the time the daily sacrifice is taken away until the regime of antichrist is over and the sanctuary in Jerusalem shall be cleansed, will be exactly 2300 days. Daniel also records another timeline which will begin when the daily sacrifice is taken away. “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.” Dan. 12:11 This 1290 day period ends in the middle of the tribulation week, as recorded in Daniel 9:27. “And he (antichrist) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate,…” Jesus prophesied of this same infamous act of the antichrist with the warning, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:” Matt. 24:15-16 Thus, 7
from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away until that time wherein the antichrist will set up his own image in the temple will be exactly 1290 days. The entire tribulation period, according to the above reference of Dan.9:27, is comprised of “...one week...” Men must understand that when Christ takes His throne, the Gentile Calendar will give way to that controlled by King Jesus. Daniel declares that “...he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings:...” Dan. 2:21 Scripture declares that time, during the tribulation period, must be measured in exact days, and the same number of days attributed to both the first and last halves of that period, is recorded in three different ways. John asserts that the antichrist, who will rule in the latter half of the tribulation, must “...continue forty and two months.” That would be 42 months of 30 days each resulting in 1260 days. Daniel describes that same period as “...time, times, and an half.” Dan. 12:7 “...time,...” would be 1 year or 360 days. The term “...times...” defines 2 years or 720 days, while ... “...an half...” would be only 6 months, or 180 days. The sum of “... time, times and an half...” would then be 1260 days. John also

informs us that God "...will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." Rev. 11:3 Thus power will be given to God's Two Witnesses for the first 1260 days of tribulation, while the antichrist will be given authority in the last 1260.

The only way for these three expressions of time to coincide with one another is to measure them according to God's calendar which will contain exactly 30 days per month. There will be exactly 12 months in a year and each year will be comprised of only 360 days rather than the current 365+ days recorded by the Gentiles. Men may argue that such is not possible, and we can only wonder if the environmentalists will try to blame it on "global warming," but it is God Who controls the universe and Daniel tells us plainly that "...he changeth the times and the seasons..."

8 Such numbering means that the entire tribulation week will contain exactly 2520 days or 7 years of 360 days each. This means that from the beginning of the tribulation to the "midst" of it will be precisely 1260 days. If there are 1290 days from the taking away of the daily sacrifice to the middle of the week, it means that the tribulation must of necessity begin exactly 30 days AFTER the daily sacrifice is taken away, which is the difference between 1290 and 1260.

Daniel is also very clear that the tribulation period will end 2300 days AFTER the daily sacrifice is taken away. Since taking away the daily sacrifice is the starting point for all of the established timelines during the tribulation period, 30 days must be added to the tribulation week of 2520 days in order to determine the time in which the tribulation SHOULD end. This means that the week of 7 years should be completed 2550 days after the daily sacrifice is halted. However, since Daniel is adamant that it will end 2300 days after the daily sacrifice is taken away, the tribulation must come to an end 250 days early, the result of 2550 minus 2300 days. This is in keeping with the fact that Jesus said, "...except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved,..." Matt. 24:22 We are thus instructed that when the antichrist sets up his image in the midst of the week, only 1010 days will remain, for that is the difference between 2300 days marking the end of the tribulation period and the 1290 days which identify the middle of the week.

These numbers also mean that the reign of antichrist

cannot begin in the middle of the week. It must of necessity start 250 days before that time in order for him to get his allotted 1260 days, or as John prophesies "...there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." Rev. 13:5 Thus, the reign of antichrist and the aforementioned ministry of the two witnesses must overlap by 250 days.

There is absolutely no record announcing that the daily sacrifice has been discontinued, but that momentous declaration will indeed trigger the start of the tribulation period 30 days later. Furthermore, there are also numerous other reasons by which we may be assured that the seals of judgment announced in Rev. 6 have not yet been opened. Jesus plainly promised the Church at Philadelphia that He would "...keep them from (or out of) the hour of temptation..." meaning that a group of people would have to be translated out of this world before tribulation days even start, "...out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" Rev. 5:9 If such a phenomenal thing had already happened, it is quite certain that the news media would have been "all over it," trying to explain how all those people from every nation in this world had so mysteriously disappeared without a trace. This same story has been recorded before. Scripture plainly proclaims that Enoch "...**was not found**, because God had translated him..." Heb. 11:5 This miracle took place **BEFORE** the judgment of the flood came in the days of Noah. The fact that "...he was not found..." surely indicates that someone had to have been looking for him, and it is quite certain that the same scenario will be repeated when the bride of Christ is translated out of this world even **BEFORE** the tribulation ensues. There have been absolutely no reports of such a spectacular occurrence.

Scripture is also very clear that Jesus must take His throne in heaven **before** the hour of tribulation begins, because these same Philadelphia believers will come through the promised open door of Rev. 4:1 and be present at His coronation. This is confirmed by John's vision, where he saw that, "...round about the throne were four and twenty seats: (thrones) and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting,... and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind..." Rev. 4:4&6 Additionally, though Jesus is crowned in Rev. 4, He does not open the book with 7 seals of judgment

until Ch. 5. He must be crowned King before judgment begins.

We would, in addition, note that the very moment in which Jesus takes His Throne, it signals that every national power on this planet will be ruling in usurpation. Daniel saw it thus: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." Dan. 7:9 The "...Ancient of days..." is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ sitting on the Universal Throne Of God, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." I Cor. 15:25 The previous verse of this chapter tells us that the end will then come (the end of His 1000 year reign) "...when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father;..." I Cor. 15:24

10 His throne which "...was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire,..." is indicative of the judgment which shall shortly come to pass after His coronation. One major reason for that judgment is the aforementioned usurpation among the nations, but the current conduct of these national powers simply does not indicate that the world has reached the point wherein they could be righteously accused of this aggression against the New King. National powers at present seem to be much more engaged in wresting power from one another rather than demonstrating open rebellion against the Lamb. Their attitude toward Him at this hour seems to be that of simply denying His Existence or just altogether ignoring His Presence. That will change when He officially takes His throne, for "These (nations) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Rev. 17:14

We would cite one final reason for insisting that the tribulation has not yet begun, and that is the ministry of the aforementioned two witnesses. Whether they are two individuals or two groups is unclear, but their ministry is very apparent, for God will give them "...power...and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth....And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often

as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.” Rev. 11:3-7

The allotted time of the two witnesses will begin on day one of the tribulation. Their tenure will end precisely 1260 days later in the midst of the week, when they will be killed by the beast whom Satan will have raised from the bottomless pit 250 days earlier. Rev. 9:1-3 The miraculous ministry of these two witnesses described above will be like unto that of Elijah and John the Baptist. It is also evident that “...all the world...” will also experience the effects of the devastation wrought by these two, for when they are killed, “...they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies... And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them,... because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” Rev. 11:9-10 There is not even a hint of any persons or group around the world reporting anything close to the miraculous demonstrations of Divine Power recorded above. Thus, it seems crystal clear that these two prophets of God have not yet been revealed, and thus the tribulation has in no wise begun.

We are still in that era known as the beginning of sorrows, but let all men understand that Jesus will honor His Word and He will very quickly come for His Own. Let all of us who are looking and longing for Jesus’ soon coming take heart, and embrace Paul’s message to the Thessalonians, “That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that **the day of Christ is at hand.**”

Daniel clearly establishes the fact that there will be a 30 day respite after the daily sacrifice is taken away before the tribulation begins. Some have wondered over the years if Jesus would fulfill His promise to the Church at Philadelphia during that 30 day period. However, the question must be asked: How could He come as a “thief” if a 30 day notice of His arrival was issued? Thus, we are persuaded that Jesus must come for His Bride prior to the daily sacrifice being taken away. Therefore, it is imperative for those who are watching that we follow His specific instruction for “...of that day and that hour knoweth no man,... Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” Mk. 13:32-33

The days currently surrounding us are indeed filled with uncertainty, chaos, and destruction. However, now is not

the time to panic, but rather to believe God, and respond to the same invitation which Paul gave to the Thessalonians. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels," II Thess. 1:7 Faith in Jesus and His soon coming will absolutely enable us to obtain genuine rest and confidence in Him despite the upheaval prevailing in our day. Paul further instructs us, "...by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." II Thess. 2:1-2

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

12

Our Hope

There's light at the end of the tunnel; my friend
There's hope still ahead on the road.
With our sorrow and loss at the foot of His cross
We will lighten our heavy heart's load.

The darkness is but for a season, dear one.
There's sunshine to follow the rain.
The tears that we cry will eventually dry,
Because Jesus has taken our pain.

And, oh what a day His coming will bring
A grand reunion in heaven on high.
Our Jesus we'll meet, our loved ones we'll greet
What a hope in the sweet by and by!

D. Albrecht

A Spiritual Pandemic

Dr. Vicky Moots

A pandemic is classified as a global outbreak of a disease, and usually starts out locally as an epidemic and then spreads worldwide. Most viral pandemics are caused by the influenza virus which mutates in character from year to year. One of the deadliest ones was the Spanish flu of 1918 which killed between 20 to 50 million people. The swine flu (H1N1) was a new strain of that virus and killed approximately 700 million to 1.4 billion people worldwide. The regular seasonal flu kills between 290 to 650 thousand per year. The coronavirus (COVID-19) was declared a pandemic on March 12, 2020 and the final devastation of it is yet to be determined.

Viruses such as influenza virus spread rapidly because they are so contagious, meaning that they can be easily spread from person to person. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, the virus-containing droplets are scattered out into the air. This is more readily spread when people are in close proximity (within six feet) or when they touch each other.

The Bible contains good information in the Old Testament regarding preventing the spread of disease. The priests who ministered in the tabernacle in the wilderness were required to wash their hands in the brazen laver after offering sacrifices prior to entering the tabernacle. Anyone with a draining sore or bloody issue was considered unclean and had to keep themselves separated from the rest of the people. More specifically, regarding an infectious disease, let us examine the regulations for leprosy, which was a major health concern in those days. Leviticus 13 describes how to diagnose an active case of leprosy. If a person met the criteria, he was considered "utterly unclean." V. 45 tells us he was to put a covering upon his upper lip, which would be like a modern-day face mask. V. 46 states, "...he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without [outside] the camp shall his habitation be." In other words, he was to be quarantined, away from everyone else. This was, of course, to prevent the spread of the disease to other people.

Healthcare professionals are following similar guidelines today to limit diseases. Regarding the spread of COVID-19, we are also limiting the gathering of large groups of people together and avoiding personal contact as much as possible.

But what if we **wanted** to spread something that was good? In that case, we would do the opposite. After Jesus' resurrection, just before he ascended back to heaven, he commanded his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mk. 16:15 They had become personally infected with the good news of the resurrection through close contact with Jesus Himself, and now they were told to start spreading it around the world, infecting others. They were to do this by preaching, or spreading the gospel with their mouth, which contained the contagious droplets of the new Christianity virus.

Like any other pandemic, it started out locally as an epidemic and then became worldwide. We see this when Jesus told his followers in Acts 1:8 "...ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem [locally], and in all Judea [regionally], and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (worldwide)

14 The pandemic of Christianity began initially with the twelve disciples and a few women, then increased to 120 who were gathered together in the upper room in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out. But we also read that more than 500 people had been in contact with Jesus at one time following His resurrection. I Cor. 15:6 These also had the potential to become infected and spread the virus. However, the 120 in Jerusalem exposed an even bigger crowd of people, for we read in Acts 2 that a large multitude heard them speak, and about 3,000 of them became infected and believed. After that, "...the Lord added to the church daily..." (v. 47), those that were being saved, and the infection continued to spread by person to person contact.

A virus is spread by the droplets of water that come out of the mouth of an infected person. The aerosol of those Christians was the Word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ and still has the power to infect anyone who is exposed to it, even today.

After the Day of Pentecost, we read in Acts 3 that Peter and John were going into the temple in Jerusalem to pray and met a lame beggar asking for money. Peter told him, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." Acts 3:6 What did Peter and John have? They had been infected with the Christianity virus, and as commanded by Jesus, were spreading it through His Name throughout Jerusalem to anyone with whom they had contact. Peter not only spread the virus by what came out of his mouth,

but he reached out and took the lame man by the hand, making direct physical contact. This promptly spread the infection to him, and he was immediately healed and began to walk and leap and praise God, which, in turn, infected others around him.

The religious leaders of that day now recognized the seriousness of the epidemic of Christianity and tried desperately to keep it from becoming a pandemic. They took Peter and John aside after that incident to question them. The chief priests and rulers feared that it would keep spreading and quickly held a council among themselves, saying, "But that it spread no further among the people, let us straightly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" Acts 4:17-18 Basically, they were telling Peter and John to cover their mouth with a "mask" of silence much like we put a mask on an infected person to limit the spread of infected aerosol droplets. However, Peter and John refused to do this and replied, "...we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." V. 20 They could not hold back the breath of the Holy Spirit which was now flowing through them: "...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Matt. 12:34

15

Since then, Christianity has become a pandemic through the Name of Jesus. Many have tried over the years to stamp it out and Satan continues to do this today. He persists in trying to remove the Name of Jesus or the symbol of the cross from schools, government offices, places of work and even our homes. Christians all over the world are being persecuted, tortured and killed in an effort to eradicate the Name of Jesus and Christianity. Sadly, there are many in America who claim to be Christians who have never really been infected. They have no symptoms of the virus that are detectable in their lives. What symptoms would one expect to be manifested? The three most important symptoms which confirm a suspected case would be praise, joy and love. Praise and joy would be likely to be manifest in spite of dire circumstances. We find evidence of this in Acts 5 which states that the apostles, after being beaten for preaching in the Name of Jesus, were "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." V. 41 We find further evidence of these symptoms in Paul and Silas after they were beaten and thrown into the inner prison for preaching and had their feet placed in the

stocks. At midnight they “...prayed, and sang praises unto God...” Acts 16:25 Perhaps they were delirious with the fever from the infection! Jesus, Himself, confirmed that love was an important criterion in the diagnosis, as stated in John 13:35. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”.

A person cannot become a Christian simply by hearing about Jesus and reading about Him or memorizing the Bible, anymore than a person can become infected with the “coronavirus” simply by hearing about it on the news or reading about it on the internet. We must have personal contact with Jesus by letting the gospel touch our heart and infect our soul. In order to claim the Name of Jesus and become a Christian, we must have had close enough contact with Him to be able to say with John, “...we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;” I John 1:1 John was so close to Jesus that he leaned on His breast and was called the “...disciple whom Jesus loved.” The Word of life was Jesus Himself.

16 As a result of such close personal contact, we become infected and there will be evidence in our life that others may see. With Christ in our life, we can then touch others and spread His love and continue to preach the gospel with our lives, as well as with our mouths.

FEELINGS AND THE WORD

For feelings come and feelings go
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the Word of God,
Naught else is worth believing.

Though all my heart should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token,
There is One greater than my heart
Whose Word cannot be broken.

I'll trust in God's unchanging Word
Till soul and body sever,
For though all things shall pass away
His Word shall stand forever.

Martin Luther

The Incomparable Value Of Teachers

Anon

“**B**ut the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” 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 truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” Some saints make these verses teach too much. They refuse to be taught by older saints, and say somewhat glibly at times, “The Holy Ghost teaches me.” Such members usually fall into fanaticism, and want to be the teachers themselves. “Teachers” are most assuredly important officers in the church. “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers,... Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?...” I Cor. 12:28,29 17

Paul said at his last meeting with the Ephesian elders, before departing for Jerusalem, “...Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,... And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have **taught** you publickly, and from house to house.” Acts 20:18-20 The apostle also conveyed the essence of this same message to the Romans. “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Rom. 10:14

The verse preceding our opening text puts John’s words in context, meaning that no unsaved person, no false teacher, could instruct them. He said, “These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.” I Jn. 2:26 Some such fanatics have gone so far that they did not need the Bible any longer. Only teachable folk are capable of teaching others.

REFLECTIONS

... From the Editor

“... Behold, a sower went forth to sow;” Matt. 13:3

This parable of the sower may be applied a number of ways, one of which portrays the beginning of this present Church age. The “...sower...” was indiscriminate in his task and broadcast the seed of God’s Word everywhere even “...by the wayside... upon stony places...among thorns...But other fell into good ground,...” Matt. 13:4-8 This same scenario began in the early Church, represented by the Church at Ephesus. Paul called those elders for a final meeting just prior to setting sail for Jerusalem, declaring that “I kept back nothing... and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks,...” Acts 20:20-21 Likewise, the early apostles and “... they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word,” even in the midst of persecution. Acts 8:4

18

The end of this same age is depicted by the Church at Laodicea, as well as the seventh parable of Matt. 13, wherein the “drag net” of harvest is also all encompassing and indiscriminate in its mission of judgment.

The complications incurred by the current “coronavirus” are legion, and have most assuredly affected The Church in direct violation of Paul’s admonition for these last days of “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,... and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Heb. 10:25 We know that we have been in the midst of a world-wide “falling away,” for quite a number of years, as men in general seem to be completely disinterested in God’s Word. We surely miss gathering together with God’s People, but can only wonder if perhaps the door has been flung open wide as somewhat of a last call for men to heed His Voice. Is this, perhaps, an expression of Divine Grace whereby God will bring His message to men even though they have chosen to turn a deaf ear to Him? Jesus said in regard to the parables, “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Matt. 13:9 All humanity is most assuredly faced with that choice today.

Men have been absolutely enamored with the internet in recent years, and thus we can only surmise as to whether or not

God may be using this tool to once again promote His Message "...publicly, and from house to house,..." in these closing days of The Church Age. Many pastors have employed a number of innovative ways to comply with the law and yet continue to "feed the flock," and some Churches, including our own, have chosen to use a tool called "live streaming." This is a means whereby anyone with a computer, tablet, or cell phone can access the internet and view a live service in "real time." Multitudes have literally been "shut up" in their homes, but can now choose to redeem the time in a very profitable manner.

We can say of a surety that the day of Laodicea is here. The impending "drag net" of judgment is looming, whereby "...a net, that was cast into the sea, and...they... gathered of every kind:...and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away." Mt 13:47-48 God's Word will be the determining factor of separation as It has always been, thus it is so very imperative that men heed it NOW. Receiving God's Truth is relatively easy at this current time, but there is coming a day, after the tribulation has begun, when it will be much more difficult, even to the point of martyrdom. It is imperative that men immediately adhere to Paul's admonition "(For he saith...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" II Cor. 6:2

19

The answers for all the ills of mankind have, from the very beginning, been couched in God's Word. The message for the Church is found in Paul's Gospel, who declared "...a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me." I Cor. 9:17 This is the message we preach today, and we, too, will put forth every effort to make it known. Paul preached "...publicly, and from house to house,..." and we will endeavor to accomplish the same result even after the quarantine for the coronavirus is over. Anyone who desires to "livestream," may find us easily on the internet at gracegod.com. When that web site appears, just click on the yellow box located at the top of the home page. We will display live coverage of Sunday School at 10:00 A.M. CDT. The worship service will follow at 11:00 A.M. CDT., and the Wed. Eve. Bible Study and prayer meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M.

If other Churches who are preaching Paul's Gospel wish to make their information known, let us know and we will announce it in these pages. Let all of us follow Paul's example. "I am debtor ...So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you..." Rom. 1:14

Where to Run!

David Albrecht

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," I Pet. 1:3

The Apostle Peter was writing to believers of his day reminding and encouraging them regarding the hope, the lively hope, as he put it, that we have in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead. Have you noticed that people are always looking for something in which to hope? I think it has been that way from the beginning, since the Garden of Eden. People have always been looking for something of purpose to bring meaning to their lives, something to focus on, something to hope in.

People Run

20 According to studies that have been done, "there were 2.19 billion Christians around the world in 2010, more than three times as many as the 600 million recorded in 1910." Also, "Studies estimate significantly more people have converted from Islam to Christianity in the 21st century than at any other point in Islamic history. Conversion to Christianity has also been well documented, and reports estimate that hundreds of thousands of Muslims convert to Christianity annually" (Wikipedia - Christian Population Growth).

Although we do not see massive revival in our country, several nations of the world are seeing many, many people who have been looking for hope come to Jesus. They are literally running into His open arms! Praise the Lord for that because He is not willing that any should perish.

However, there are countless millions who are running in the wrong direction. They have turned their backs on God and rejected His free gift of grace to the saving of their souls. Large numbers that compose this group may be the "more educated". They may be too wise and learned to stoop to a redemption so simple as to put faith in the blood of Jesus. There are many, I am convinced, that God has given over to a reprobate mind as described by Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 1. Ah, the reprobate

mind: clouded, and askew, fueled by selfish and sinful desires, influenced, inticed, and blinded by the enemy, ever searching for hope (in all the wrong places), hopelessly seeking for something to connect to, indifferent to others, lacking ability to love, callous to God and all that is Godly, void of reason and good judgment and even common sense, hopeless! Hopeless? Yes, hopeless in themselves. But not without hope! "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). Even those with hardened hearts and blinded eyes (spiritually) can be reached if only the Holy Spirit can work His way through the layers of resistance in their lives to reach their hungering souls. Pray for them!

Don't Derail

You and I, as Christians, have this lively or living hope that Peter talked about. But we have opportunity, sometimes on a daily basis, to either run to God or away from Him. There are so many things in life that come across our paths that could upend us. Then there is the devil who comes to "steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10). He would love to distract, discourage, depress, disgruntle and derail us. **21**

My nephew and his wife had an eighteen year old son, a Christian young man, good sense of humor, good natured and always pleasant to be around anytime that I had been to visit. He was brilliant and was recently accepted at a prestigious engineering university, had friends, a good job, bought a nice car and seemingly had a lot going for himself. He was home alone one day and called his mother to see when she would be home. She said she needed to make a stop and then would be home shortly. She got home and checked on him in his room to find he had taken his own life. All attempts to revive him failed. What a tragedy! How inconsiderate of those left behind! So many questions to follow that may never be answered. So many tears, heartache, and pain to follow, leaving many heavy hearts all the way around.

Where do you and I turn in times like these? Where is our source of hope, strength, peace and comfort? It would be easy to become derailed - out of commission with the unbelievable heartache of situations like this. I believe we are in the last days and should be looking for the coming of the Lord. But the perils of the

end times will become magnified. There will be signs in the heavens and ills of the earth that will eventually swallow up many. I'm not sure what we Christians might have to face before His return. But we are not "as others which have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13)! Peter went on to say in 1 Peter 1:4 that we have "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for us! We are not without hope! No matter what happens here, we have a great hereafter ahead of us and we can wake up every morning with something to look forward to. Praise the Lord! At a point in Jesus' ministry, the Bible says "many" of His disciples left Him. So He asked the twelve if they also would go away. I love Peter's answer. He said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." John 6:68 So simple. Where else could we run?

I hope in your life that in times of frustration, heartache, adversity, turmoil or whatever comes your way, you will find a straight path to run to Him. Focus on the hope we have in Jesus and His resurrection power as you lay your
22 burdens down at His cross and be looking for His soon return!

Lord, I thank You that in You we have such a great salvation and hope. We are just travelers here below and look forward to our heavenly home with You. May we always seek refuge and find shelter under the shadow of Your wings. You are the One that offers sanctuary to the hopeless and hurting, as well as Your Own children. May we always run to You. In Jesus Name, Amen.

COULD THIS BE THE DAY

Could this be the day of His coming
For which we have waited so long,
The day for which we are living,
The hope that gives us a song?

He's coming in power and glory.
Look up! For He will not delay.
His bride will be caught up to meet Him--
Oh, tell me! Could this be the day?

Beulah Clark

CHOOSING

Jack Davis

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, **refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; **Choosing rather** to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; **Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches** than the treasures in Egypt: for he had **respect** unto the **recompence** of the **reward**. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.” Heb. 11:24

The word "choosing" has special significance here. It means to select by the act of taking. The Scriptures used as a text contain seven "R's"; and they relate to choosing by the believer. This portion of Scripture begins with "By faith,..." and ends with "...invisible." The first verse proclaims, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith makes that which we cannot see with the natural eye visible; and gives substance to, or makes tangible, that which we cannot hold with natural hands. By faith we see God's promises afar off; and being persuaded of them, we embrace them, claiming them for our very own. If by faith we choose, we will never lose.

"When he was come to years ..." This expresses a growing up, reaching maturity. We all must make choices along the way. We are given a chance to "come to years." If this were not so, God would not hold us responsible. Today, in many lives, a quick work is being done to bring believers to spiritual maturity. They are "coming to years," in order that they will make the right choice.

"...Moses ... refused." He rejected or renounced Egyptian royalty, riches, and pleasures. Many of God's people today have rejected Egypt's royalty and riches, but are still dwelling in "Egypt's sand." The enjoyment of a sinful life is fleeting and costly. We shall reap just what we have sown "The wages of sin is death." "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," the Scriptures say. Moses refused the royalty of Egypt. He could have become a great man of that world. He had all of Egypt's sordid and varied

pleasures at his disposal. Egypt was one of the most powerful and rich nations of that time. He took reproach instead of royalty. Daniel, in his day, refused Babylon's provisions, pleasures, and presents; and was thus proven to be God's man. He was preserved, protected, and promoted. Satan offered Jesus all of the kingdoms of the world without going to the Cross, but Jesus chose God's way to the throne. And so must we.

"... choosing rather to suffer." We have a selection. We must be aware of the priorities, and then we can decide on a preference. On either side of "...rather,..." we have the words "refused" and "respect." After Israel had made their golden calf, Moses asked, "Who is on the Lord's side?" He wanted them to make a decision, stand up and be counted. Joshua, reminding Israel of the wonderful things that God had done for them, said --- "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Elijah asked: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him."

24

"Choosing rather to suffer affliction WITH the people of God." Affliction never separates the people of God, but rather draws them closer. Affliction cannot separate us from the love of God, but rather He makes it all work for our good. When we take God's choice, we draw nearer to Him, even in affliction. Israel was indeed an afflicted people at this time; yet Moses cast his lot with them, and encouraged others to do so. Num. 10:28-30

There are those who choose to go the other way, such as Hobab, Lot, and Demas. After the death of her two sons, Naomi told her daughters-in-law to return to their own people. Orpah did, but how precious are Ruth's words in choosing to go God's way: "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth 1:16. As a result of this choice, Ruth is one of the links in the lineage of Christ.

Rebekah, when asked to make a choice, said, "I will go." In the Song of Solomon 1:4, the Shulamite says, "Draw me, we will run after thee."

God's mercy opens many doors for us. The route we are

asked to follow does not always look promising, but He has promised enough grace for the way. The question is asked of each of us: "What will we do with the opportunities for selfish gain which come to us?" Can we count them loss for Christ? Jesus said, "Mary hath chosen that good part." Paul said, "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." Phil. 3:13,14.

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Reproach meant disgrace, dishonor, and shame. Moses used God's set of figures, and reckoned reproach to be riches --- even greater than Egypt's treasures. He knew the score, and so did the Apostle Paul who said, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" - Romans 8:18.

How could Moses count his choice of suffering with the people of God as the reproach of Christ? His faith enabled him to look forward to Calvary and to its benefits. Jesus went to the Cross bearing our reproach. "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me." Rom. 15:3 When we identify ourselves with Christ, we bear His reproach. We do this by choice. It is far easier to shout for Him in the crowd, than to stand alone with Him at the Cross. 25

"...for he had respect..." This word means to "regard," and expresses the thought of looking steadfastly forward and away from all else. The Greek word also implies hope. The basis of such an act of faith is laying hold of the hope which is set before us. We look away from all that is temporal to that which is eternal. We have respect for God's reward, because we expect the fulfillment of God's promises. This is the impetus behind our choosing.

Day by day we are making choices. We come to a crossroad, a point of decision, and sometimes we do not know which choice to make. When by faith we choose affliction over momentary pleasure, and reproach over riches, we will gain eternal and unsearchable riches.

"...he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

When we respect the Rewarder, we expect His recompense. Go with God." He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Recompense expresses payment of wages. God pays well, and rewards faithfully. Choose to go with God, and you will be separated from the world. Enoch walked with God by choice. This is walking on the higher plane. Think of the reward which Enoch received! Translation!

In Hebrews two, we read that every "...disobedience received a just recompense of reward." Our confidence in God and His promises has great recompense of reward. In Genesis 14:17 and 15:1, we read of Abraham returning from the battle in victory. We read that he RESPECTED Melchizedek and accepted a blessing from him. He then REMITTED a blessing to Melchizedek by giving him tithes of all. When the king of Sodom offered him of the spoils of conflict as a reward, Abraham REFUSED, saying, "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the Possessor of heaven and earth." He accepted nothing from the king.

26 Abraham's REWARD came from the Lord who declared, "I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward." God offered Himself to Abraham as the Reward for faithfulness. Abraham wanted to claim God as his very own. God is not ashamed to be called our God when we walk in His way and take His promises by faith. God has gone on record repeatedly identifying Himself as the God of believing humanity.

Today, Jesus is being offered as "...the Prize of the high calling of God..." to those in the Church who will make the right choice. This great Prize will reign as the Almighty God. He will reign as "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" and yet, He offers Himself for an intimate, sweet, and deep relationship as Bridegroom. It is Jesus who offers Himself as our "Shield and exceeding great Reward."

It is difficult to refuse to listen to that still small Voice that speaks to our hearts. When you hear that Voice of invitation, bow before Him. Submit your will to Him. Talk with Him. Let Him make love to you and offer you the sweet proposal of marriage. Choose you this day God's way.

(Reprint 1974)

The Eyes of the Lord

A.S. Copley

“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” Prov. 15:3

God accommodates His language to our human conception. Therefore, the Bible speaks of God having a mouth, hands, arms, legs, feet and eyes. because He possesses a spiritual form, or shape—Phil. 2:6. Note a number of citations on the eyes of the Lord.

1. Eyes of grace. Gen. 6:8. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Influenced by the life of his fore-fathers, Noah repented of his sins and accepted God's way of salvation, and was saved by wondrous grace.

2. Palestine watched by God's eyes. Deut. 11:12. "A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." Are you living in the heavenly Canaan by faith? Then His eyes are continually upon you.

3. Kept. Deut. 32:10. "He found him in a desert land and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about; He instructed him; He kept him as the apple of His eye." God did that for Israel. Can He do less for us today? The apple of the eye is the most delicate part. It dare not be touched. A needle thrust into the curtain over the apple, or hole, in the eye, produces blindness. Satan has not succeeded in making the Lord blind; neither is he able to pluck the saints out of His mighty hand.

4. Run everywhere. II Chron. 16:9. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro thruout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of him whose heart is perfect toward him." God gave me this many years ago; but has made it good in the last 25 years by causing people to send me offerings to help publish our paper and tracts and books. A perfect, undivided, believing, yielding heart is the only condition needed to command such ample strength from the Lord. Asa had proved this in his earlier days; but at last, perhaps lifted up with pride of success, he turned to the king of Syria for help against his own national brother, Baasha, king of Israel. God reproved him, giving him these

wonderful words to show him what he had missed. Finally, Asa was diseased in his feet, turned to the physicians and died.

5. Protection. Ezra 5:5. "But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they (their enemies) could not cause them to cease" building the house of the Lord and the walls. Praise God for the protection of His holy eyes.

6. Guiding. Psa. 32:8. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye." Compare with this, Psa. 73:24. Have you ever been directed by the simple look of a friend? We need never go astray from God and the Truth.

7. Deliverance. Psa. 33:18. "Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine." His eye never sleeps, is never careless of His own.

28

8. On the nations. Psa. 66:7 with Amos 9:8. "He ruleth by His power forever. His eyes behold the nations. Let not the rebellious exalt themselves." God is not unmindful of national movements. In fact, He moves them even as a player does a block on a chess-board. "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom (Israel), and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth, saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord." Israel as a kingdom is not today in existence; but the Lord still has His eyes upon them and in due time will gather out a remnant, and His kingdom over them will be restored.

9. The seven eyes. Rev. 5:6. "And I beheld and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living ones, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth." We have two eyes. God has seven. Our vision is imperfect His is complete, minute, searching, safe and sufficient. The eyes of the Lord are the Holy Spirit in all His minute and delicate oversight and mighty protection and leadership of His own. Any wonder that we feel eternally secure in God's loving and strong hands? His eyes are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their cry."

(Reprint 1950)

God's Unmistakable Voice

Anon

“...The voice of one crying in the wilderness,...make his paths straight.” Matt. 3:3

Two thousand years ago that trumpet blast was heard, after apparently a period of 400 years of silence on God's part. No prophetic voice was heard to reprove men for their wickedness or to tell them of the love of God for them. There was a famine in the land for the Word of God; just imagine, not one gospel message in 400 years! What a dark time that was. Then one day, yes, happy day, the above message was heard. John the Baptist, the mighty trumpeter of God was announcing the arrival of the Savior of the world. There was a revival. Those that had ears to hear that voice came out unto him; all the land of Judea came out to be baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Jesus came along and He was baptized of John also and identified Himself with that ruined race of men. For three some years Jesus walked among men, healing the sick, loosing men and women from Satanic power and doing good wherever He went. Cruel hands then nailed Him to the tree of shame and the very elements revolted at this treatment of the Son of God. A time of darkness again hung over all the earth, a different sort of darkness, this time of the elements. But the darkest hour was when God turned His back on His Own Son as He hung on the cross identified with you and me.

But soon there will be another Voice, another Trumpeter announcing the coming again of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. After the silence of these two-thousand years, that voice will break forth and call men to repentance and preparation to meet the Lord, Who will be coming from Heaven with power and great glory. That coming will end the greatest hour of darkness (The Great Tribulation) the world has known since Calvary, and again God will have His faithful ones on the scene, to point to His Son. This will be about seven years after the overcomers have been secretly taken to Heaven. The light will shine out from Heaven and the Lord Himself will come, triumphant and glorious, to set up His Kingdom on the earth and a new day will dawn for this world. Heaven will come down into this world of sorrow and pain; and gladness will abound. A lasting happiness will come to the world with Jesus' coming to them. God Himself will dwell with men and they will be His people and He will be their God.

(Reprint 1950)

AND NOW ABIDES FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE.

Geoff Haase (Australia)

“**N**ow Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.”
John 11:5.

We readily know that Jesus loves all men, yet the Holy Spirit sees fit at times to set some apart who were near and dear to the heart of the Man Christ Jesus. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus play a special part on God's redemptive stage, and their open and honest responses, reactions and behavior is recorded for our instruction. They are indeed an interesting trio. “Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany,...There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”
John 12:1-3

30 John's account of this event does not mention “Martha's moment” while Luke's record spends valuable time emphasizing her service. Lk. 10:38-42 John's narrative rather emphasizes, in this instance, Mary and her act of worship and devotion which were poured out upon Jesus Whom she was getting to know and love. John 12:3

Among other interesting spiritual insights, we would mainly consider three aspects of the believer seen in these three. Their presence in the house with Jesus depicts the fact that we may be seated with Him, serving others often, and worshiping Jesus. Luke never mentions Lazarus, for His lesson deals only with Martha and Mary.

Lazarus, a Son

Lazarus has but a brief appearance in John 11 & 12, although it is the very prominent distinction of having been raised from the dead and seated with Jesus. What a great picture of us who have believed. The Ephesian message is in view here. A son seated, yet not alone, for John 12:2 declares that, “...Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.” Although this picture does point to the future marriage of the Lamb, we are seated now, and indeed feasting by faith at this present hour.

Jesus offered the invitation to “...sup (eat) with him...” Rev. 3:20. Thus all have surely been called to fellowship. This enthroned life with Jesus has brought us into holy fellowship and

sweet communion, for "...Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" Eph 2:6.

Lazarus surely represents the "...many sons..." whom Jesus brought to glory. Heb 2:10 Paul makes it clear in the above text that all believers are quickened (made alive) and raised and seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, yet many walk as men (I Cor. 3:3) and others submit to ordinances, commandments and doctrines of men. Col. 2:20-22 If believers will simply accept the fact of our enthronement with Jesus, asking the Holy Spirit to make it real in our experience, He will make it a reality. The alternative is to remain as babes or be children all our Christian lives and see ourselves tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine by clever crafty error.

Lazarus clearly represents believers who have moved on from being babes and children and have accepted their place as a son who "... sat at the table with him." Lazarus simply sits. He has nothing to say, nothing to do. He sits with Jesus and appears happy to do so. And so should we! There is nothing more to say, nothing more to do, but to believe we are seated with Him. We are called to believe this fact. This is a part of the inheritance that we have obtained "... to the praise of His glory..." Eph. 1:12. 31

Lazarus, whose name means "God is my help" my support.... "God who surrounds me," has indeed been helped up to sit with Him in heavenly places... Praise God.

God's Word is replete with promises that His provision for glory has been given to all His children in Christ Jesus, and as seated with Christ, like Lazarus and others of his company, we have that glory. Jesus said, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:" Jn. 17:22 This would be the glory of the Spirit's presence in our lives that brings oneness.

This Threefold cord is not to be broken. Lazarus portrays this aspect of the saints, where all the action takes place "... in the house..." John 12:3 We are seated in sweet fellowship represented by Lazarus. We are serving all in the house with Martha, and we worship and hear His word as depicted by Mary. Martha gives us some insight into "servanthood," and work "...in the house,..." as Mary presents us with devotional deep aspects

of intimacy.

Note first that Martha received Him into the house, an apt picture of first things in the life of the believer for "...as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, ... Which were born, not of blood, ... nor of the will of man, but of God" Jn. 1:12-13 The new birth brings us into the house or into Christ, and it is here that the Psalmist says, "those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God." Psa.92:13 It is in this house, God's house, the church, where we learn how to behave ourselves. I Timothy 3:15. We wish to see each one in the house loved, fed and cared for. It is in the fellowship of the saints, with the gospel of redeeming grace ringing out, with the Holy Spirit having His way, that we each flourish and bring forth fruit to the glory of God. We are interested in our brothers and sisters who with us make up the body of Christ. We see traits, dispositions and personalities along with dysfunction, fracture and issues. Yet God's amazing grace is sufficient and able to save to the uttermost and change lives.

32 The Cross reaches each one of us wherever we are and if we will but say yes to Jesus, allowing the Holy Spirit to work His Word into our inner man, we will all become trophies of grace and bring a smile to the face of our loving Heavenly Father.

Martha A Servant

"But Martha was distracted, or "cumbered" (according to the Old King James Version) with much serving,..." Lk. 10:40 Most of us know we can take on too much, get frustrated, be distracted and then act out our frustrations and complain. It is in times like this when we are not at our best, when our attitude becomes critical and judgmental and we start telling Jesus how to run His Church.

When serving becomes a drudgery, we should stop and search our heart. It is here in close relationships, and even more so in family, we can let down our guard and allow the flesh to dictate the moment, but Paul would say "...by love serve..." Gal. 5:13 Distraction can cause us to forget who and why we are serving.

The last portion of V. 40 may throw some light on our dilemma, for Martha insists that Jesus "...bid her therefore that she help me." "Me" always gets in the way of good wholesome fellowship. David found a key to good service when he said "Serve the Lord with gladness" and to "do" it in His Name, Col. 3:17, for you

serve the Lord. Col. 3:24. Each of us are called to serve as saints, not as slaves under law. Here is another lesson spoken by the Spirit. Martha means "mistress" and she plays the part so well as "mistress law" being so busy; work, work, work and points the critical finger at those who do nothing but bathe in the presence of Jesus, hear His Word of Grace and simply believe. Yes, "he that believes has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed, the moment you believe. (from death to life) Jn. 5:24

How sad that so many (as Martha's character suggests) are in the house, yet still under law. A religious spirit of witchcraft seduces some to choose law over grace and mix the pure word of grace with smatterings of legality. "Knowing that a man is not justified (saved) by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ,..." Gal. 2:16. The law is not of faith Gal 3:1. Salvation from beginning to end is by grace through faith Eph. 2:8-9

Paul travailed in prayer for the saints in Galatia that Christ might be "...formed in them..." and that they might come out of babyhood. Gal 4:19 Such folk are still God's children (if they are born of the Spirit) and we must love them as Paul did and hope and pray some will move into the glorious light of the gospel of the grace of God.

How tender yet truthful Jesus is and note that He twice speaks her name "...Martha, Martha..." Later it was "...Simon, Simon..." Luke 22:31 When trouble is near, He wants us to hear. It reminds us of Mother's voice, it gets our attention. Martha was "cumbered with much serving" much like some Hebrews, (Jewish believers) for in Heb 12:1 he instructs them, and us, to lay aside every weight. (encumberance)

Nothing can be worse than being distracted while we endeavour to run the race to win the prize. Jesus tells Martha, you are careful, (full of cares) anxious, agitated and troubled about many things. Let us take note and make the necessary adjustments to free ourselves from any of these cares that threaten to choke the Word and hold us back from the sweet servant spirit of Jesus flowing from one to the other.

Lazarus portrays the fact that we are called to take our place seated and eating with Jesus. Our dear sister Martha helps us to see that our serving in Kingdom things constantly needs the guiding words of the Master "...lest you be weary and faint in

your minds.” Heb. 12:3

“...A Sister Called Mary...” Lk. 10:39

How we deeply admire this Mary, one of six mentioned in the New Testament! She seems to direct her energies toward devotion, worship, and intimacy as she “...anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair:...” John 12:3 She saw things others failed to see, she anointed Him for the day of His burial. John 12:7 It is saints such as Mary who add that extra spiritual dimension to the meeting of the saints. They carry a certain glory. They have been somewhere, know things, and have something to add to the gathering. How we appreciate souls like this. We need them.

34 So, too, with Ruth in the fields of Boaz, we have the young men (sons) and the maidens (the virgins). God paints such lovely pictures. Ruth 2:9&22 Yet they all serve, and yes we must see a picture, here and there, of she who “...is all glorious within...” Psa. 45:13 Here in Mary, we have another winsome woman whiling away her moments with the Man of Destiny. She lingers at His feet, hearing His Word. Lk. 10:39 “Faith comes by hearing...”. We, too, must seize the moment. Of course we serve, like Martha did, and yes we are out in the field sowing seed and gleaning in the time of harvest. We are busy. Yet how will we ever know, how will we ever grow and go on to know the Lord if we fail to sit and listen and feed on the Word. Acts 20:28. “... Mary hath chosen that good part,...” Lk. 10:42 Yes there may be other “parts” you could choose but “this one,” we let no man take away.

How will we ever know what pleases and displeases Jesus unless we hear His Voice? (His Word hidden in our hearts) How will we find His will, His mind or know His ways unless we get a knowledge of the written Word? Mary knew that. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds through the mouth of God Matt. 4:4. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, (shows me my perfect standing) and a light unto my path.” (shows me how to walk) Psa. 119:105

* “A new creation.” We do not try to purify the tenant by painting the house. Neither does God. He puts a new tenant into the old house.



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