

# Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the  
whole counsel of GOD

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## Again The Bells

Again the Christmas bells are ringing  
Again the boys and girls are singing  
Carols sweet on evening air  
Reminding us of the Babe so fair.  
Who came to earth to dwell with men,  
Born of Mary in Bethlehem.

Again the anthem comes a swelling,  
While men and women are a telling  
The old, old story -- a Savior's love,  
That brought Him down from the  
courts above

And never will His praises cease;  
For He has made eternal peace.

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### CHRISTMAS

Two strangers met by the old inn gate  
And passed the time of day.  
"What's new?" "Oh, nothing much I think  
A child is born, they say."

Three eager watchers of the skies  
Saw a new star one morn.  
Straightway the ancient wise men spoke,  
"This day a King is born."

Shepherds watching on a hillside  
Pearled with the morning dew,  
Heard a choir of angels sing,  
"Lord Christ is born to you."

A woman smiled through all her pain,  
A man brushed off a tear.  
As Mary to kind Joseph said,  
"The Son of God is here."

Frank Kingdom



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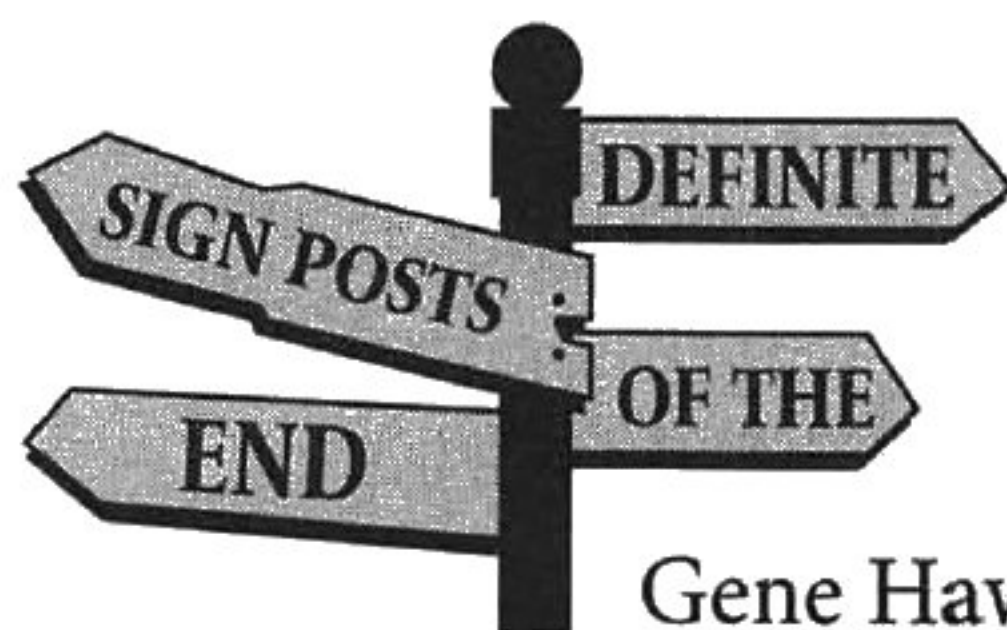
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Editor: Gene Hawkins



Gene Hawkins

“**M**oreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God;... But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. And he said, Hear ye now,... Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Isa 7:10-14

“And they asked him, saying, Master,... what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And he said, Take heed that ye be not **deceived**:...ye shall hear of **wars and commotions**, (disorder, confusion tumult) ... Nation shall rise against nation,...great **earthquakes** shall be in divers places, and **famines**, and **pestilences**; and **fearful sights** and **great signs shall there be from heaven**. And when ye shall see **Jerusalem compassed with armies**, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh....And 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**; **Men's hearts failing them for fear**, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the **powers of heaven shall be shaken**....So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” Lk. 21:7-31 3

The above texts clearly reveal that both advents of Jesus are announced by signs. Isaiah's prophecy, which will be read countless times during this Christmas Season, surrounds the fact that God had promised to preserve Judah even though both Syria and Israel had joined forces against them. Isa. 7:3-7 God is apparently offering to give Ahaz, the King of Judah at this time, an outward sign of that promise. Ahaz appears to be rather “pious” in the matter declaring that he would not “...tempt the LORD...” by doing such a thing. God is not impressed with his unbelief and immediately rendered His Own sign, not only for Ahaz, but for the entire nation and the world. That sign is Jesus, the guarantee of all God's promises. His very name, “Immanuel”

(with us is God) bespeaks the fact God is determined to preserve His Own. Matthew further clarifies this prophecy, explaining that “Emmanuel” is a direct reference to Jesus, Who “...shall save his people from their sins.” Matt. 1:21

The major sign here is that “...a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,...” meaning that this sign is a direct display of God’s supernatural power which is quite beyond the abilities of men. The location of that phenomenon is also recorded in scripture, for Micah emphatically asserts that, “...thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Mic. 5:2 Matthew quotes this verse also, applying it directly to the birth of Jesus.

4 However, when these “signs” were directly fulfilled, the skeptics refused to believe them. God’s “...highly favoured...” and righteous “...virgin...” according to Luke 1:26-28, was, in effect, accused of harlotry. When Jesus declared that the Pharisees “... do the deeds of your father,...” their first retort was that...” We be not born of fornication;...” Jn. 8:41 The implication here is that, “You WERE!” Matthew also makes it clear that Joseph was very much aware of public opinion that Mary was simply a young peasant girl who had “gotten into trouble.” “Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.” Matt. 1:19 The law was very clear on this matter of infidelity, that such an one was to be stoned. Deut. 22:21. Instead, God intervened and “...while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.” Matt. 1:20

Jesus also had other confrontations with the Jews, challenging them to observe the signs before them, such as the reference to healing the blind man earlier in John 10, saying “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.” Jn. 10:37-38 All those works were direct signs that their Messiah was among them, but still the majority turned a deaf ear and blind eye to such phenomena. Are not men doing the same thing today when the

obvious is right in front of them?

Raising Lazarus from the dead was likewise a most stupendous sign that Jesus was the fulfillment of prophecy, but consider the response of the Pharisees. "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." Jn. 11:47-48 Thus, their only solution to solve this "problem" is to take "...counsel together for to put him to death." Jn. 11:53 Furthermore, they must also "get rid of the evidence" in regard to this miracle. Therefore "...the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;" Jn. 12:10

Another great sign that Jesus had indeed come to this earth to "...save his people from their sins" is that of the resurrection, but rather than believe and accept what was before them, the chief priests "...when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is **commonly reported among the Jews until this day.**" Matt. 28:12-15

5

Signs also abound at this present time, announcing Jesus' second coming at the end of this Church Age, but the thoughts and actions of wicked men come to the fore just as they did at His first advent. The signs of our time, in their view, must at all costs be "explained away," today just as they were in days of yore.

A careful tabulation of the signs registered in the above text from Luke 21 reveals no less than 16 major signs "...that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." It is quite true that many of the elements represented by these signs such as wars, famines, & earthquakes have been a part of history since the beginning of time. The difference in these last days is that all these "signs" seem to be converging all at once and with great rapidity. Jesus defined the days prior to the tribulation as "...the beginning of sorrows," thus likening these end times to the experience of a woman in child birth. Those birth pangs begin very light and far apart, but as the time draws nigh, they become much more intense and frequent.

This is the pattern in these end time signs, prevalent across this entire little earth ball at this hour.

6 It must also be clarified that the “Coming of Jesus” does not refer to just one appearance, as many in our day apparently believe. It seems that the majority of Christendom is in harmony with the teaching that Jesus will simply come down from heaven in one “gigantic swoop” and take all believers to heaven, while leaving all that are left bound for hell. Scripture does not bear that out. Jesus’ discourse in Matt. 24 begins with the disciples asking, “...what shall be the sign of thy coming...” V. 3 The word translated “...coming...” is from the Greek term “parousia,” meaning “a being near, often return,” revealing that Jesus will make numerous “appearances” before the “...kingdom of God...” is fully complete. That overall pattern is succinctly couched in Jesus’ exhortation before He went away that, “...the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at **even**, or at **midnight**, or at the **cockcrow**, or in the **morning**.” Mk. 13:34-35 Scripture is very clear that He will appear to different companies in each of these four epochs of time, and for most of them, that appearance will be as a thief, because men are still not actually looking for Him.

God’s people today should be clinging to the words of The Master, Who exhorted: “... when these things **begin** to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” Lk. 21:28 This current day is replete with evidence of “...these things...” if only men would see it through the lens of God’s Word. This world is still in the pre-tribulation period which, again, Jesus defined as being “...the beginning of sorrows.” This means that the first period of the night designated above as “...even...” has not yet begun. If God’s people will only claim it, the promise to the Philadelphia Church still applies. “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from (out of) the hour of temptation, (night time of tribulation) which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Rev. 3:10

The Apostle Paul also used this same word “parousia”

when writing to the Thessalonians. “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the **coming** of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep.” I Thess. 4:15 Those who “...remain...” refer to a full overcoming band, like unto the company in Philadelphia, who have not died and are yet alive waiting to be translated to glory before the night of tribulation even begins.

It is also rather interesting that the aforementioned “signs” increase both in intensity and frequency prior to the various appearances of Jesus. Many today, even among unbelievers, have voiced their opinions that they have never seen current world-wide troubles like unto these in their lifetimes, but sadly the majority does not correlate those difficulties with the eminent return of Jesus. Scripture is very clear, however, that “...these things...” represent only the **beginning** of what is yet to transpire. One example of this pattern is found in the “midnight” hour of the tribulation. It will be a time of great darkness, and difficulty, but it is also when Jesus “appears” to take the five wise virgins, or 144,000, home to glory. Another example is that of earthquakes which appear to be taking center stage in a number of countries at this present time, yet none can compare with one such as that described in Rev. 16:18 “And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.” Revelation 17-18 then shows Jesus appearing as an Angel of judgment pouring out the wrath of God upon the False Church. This same pattern of signs preceding a revelation of Jesus will be repeated until all God’s judgments are poured out and the King of kings makes His final appearance wherein “...every eye shall see him,...” Rev. 1:7

Peter also provides a very clear example of one factor with which the entire world seems to be obsessed, for the nations call one conference or summit after another to address it. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away...and the **elements shall melt with fervent heat**...wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the **elements shall melt with fervent heat?**” II Pet. 3:10-12 A great controversy presently rages among a number of scientists today as to whether or not global temperatures are actually rising.

Extremely low temperatures in some areas seem to discount that idea. However, these verses emphatically confirm the fact that extraordinary heat will prevail on this earth, culminating with the scenario described above. This process may have already begun but it will most assuredly intensify during the tribulation for "... men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues:..." Rev. 16:9 Peter's message presents a double emphasis on what men today call "global warming" or "climate change," and some politicians even insist that it is more of a threat to the world than a war with China or Russia. One thing is certain. It is quite beyond the control of natural men to do one thing about it. The timing for this heat disaster is also relevant because Peter describes a phenomenon which will not reach its completion until AFTER the Millennium is over when John "... saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; (dissolved) and there was no more sea." Modern men have blamed such things as forest fires, earthquakes, famines, and all sorts of erratic weather conditions on supposedly rising world temperatures. It matters

8 not what causes all these things to happen. They have been prophesied and **all the combined efforts of unbelieving and wicked men will not be able to stop them.** Peter is absolutely emphatic that the temperature of the world and entire universe will rise, but the planet will in no wise "be destroyed" until AFTER the 1000 year reign of Christ is over, just prior to the time when God will "...make all things new." Rev. 21:5

It is rather ironic that all these nations come to climate change conferences in majestic jets requiring massive amounts of fossil fuels, yet the purpose of such summits is to impose restrictions on those under them to cease such consumption. All the efforts of men to "reduce world temperatures" will unequivocally fail because these endeavors are absolutely contrary to the prophecies of God's Word concerning it. The only thing these dictatorial practices produce is great hardship on their underlings, and that disaster is being greatly advanced in every nation around the entire world contributing to the promised "...perilous times..." of these last days. II Tim. 3:1

Scripture also asserts that religious leaders will not be able to "revive" this world, for Paul plainly asserts that, "...that day (the



day of Christ V. 1) shall not come, except there come a falling away first,..." II Thess. 2:3 This "...falling away..." does not testify of revival, but some might counter that "such a falling away has already come and now is the time for revival." The rest of this verse, however, proclaims that such a falling away will be consummated only when "...that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;" which will not officially occur until very near the middle of the tribulation. It is vitally imperative, therefore, that true believers employ all their energies to abide by Jesus' admonition for conduct during this present time of declension. "And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched... Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.... And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward,... to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.... But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;.." Lk. 12:39-45

The predominant theme of this portion is "attitude." Every believer must ask himself the question, "What is MY attitude to Jesus' coming?" It must first of all be watchful, and thus "ready" for Jesus to come. One must also be a faithful steward, "in the ministry he was given "...to give them their portion of meat in due season..." This is the one who will be blessed "...for so doing..." Finally, we must at all costs NOT give in to the destructive thought, "...My lord **delayeth** his coming..." for this will open men up to disastrous failure and the fleshly conduct found in the rest of this verse, for he "...shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;" The assurance that Jesus is coming in my lifetime will ensure our success and as John proclaims, "... every man that hath this hope in him **purifieth** himself, even as he is pure." I Jn. 3:3 Paul likewise emphasizes attitude to influence conduct in view of Jesus' coming again. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" Tit. 2:11-13

## A Ruler From Bethlehem

Mary M. Bodie

“**B**ut thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Mic. 5:2

The above citation records the prophecy concerning the birth place of Christ. The little town of Bethlehem is forever glorified by the fact that Jesus was born there. As the Prophet declares, "Though it is little, (God chooses little things), among the thousands of Judah,..." yet it is marked as the city out of which shall come forth, "He that shall be Ruler in Israel."

10 When the wise men came to Jerusalem (and they were wise indeed), saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" the scribes and chief priests had the answer. They knew this prophecy in Micah referred to their Messiah and coming King. But here is the strange fact: they took no further interest in what the wise men related of the Star which they had seen in the heavens and had followed to find the King of the Jews and worship Him. He in whom the Jews should have been interested, whom Gentiles had come five hundred miles to see, cared nothing about the King. They went on looking after their business without further searching of Scripture, or seeking the King of the Jews. This is what amazes us, but it should not. We have the same conditions before our eyes today. The religious leaders, the responsible parties, bishops, priests, ministers of all denominations, who should be on the alert to know when Christ the King of the Jews shall appear the second time and what shall be the SIGN of His appearing, are not one whit more interested than the Jews were at His first advent. They are blind, deaf and dumb to the signs of the times and know not the day of their visitation.

Herod the king was the only one of the great ones that showed much concern. He was troubled and some of the people of Jerusalem also; no doubt those who had political jobs and wondered what would become of them if another king took over. Herod was so alarmed concerning his office, and fearful that this

new born king would get his throne, that he sent and slew all the male children from two years old and under. Nevertheless Joseph and Mary escaped with the Child. God was caring for them. There was a precious gem in that company.

Let us turn again to the prophecy in Micah 5. In verse one, latter part, we read of the "smiting of the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek," which refers to the bruised and beaten Man, Jesus, and His rejection and death at the hands of wicked men. The Jews did not recognize their Messiah and King, though He was born according as the prophecy declared, in Bethlehem Ephratah. It was from that little town that the coming Judge and Ruler came forth, which statement declares the humanity of the King of the Jews. Then notice His Deity is announced in the next phrase — "whose goings forth have been from everlasting to everlasting." Nevertheless, the Jews knew His birthplace; they denied the Lord from glory. They rejected their King, not an ordinary man, but the God-Man from heaven, for, as the Everlasting One, He never had a beginning and He shall never have an end. He was far back there in the Eternal past and He will be far on in the Eternal future. He always was and always will be, this King of the Jews. But they gave Him up and He was taken by the Roman soldiers and crucified. 11

"Therefore will He give them up until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel." Observe that the Jews are given up to their enemies because they had rejected their King and given Him up.

Forty years after Calvary, the Lord allowed the Roman Army to come against Jerusalem and destroy the city, break down the beautiful Temple of which they were so proud and take them captive — in which condition they remain unto this day. But thank the Lord, there will be an end. Notice, it can only continue UNTIL the restoration of the seed of Abraham. Let us look at Isaiah 66:8, for the confirmation of this statement. Here we learn that, "She which travaileth" refers to the Jews in the great tribulation after they are restored to their land—Matt. 24:21. It will be the last birthpang of a new race. "A nation shall be born at once; for

as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." It is most marvelous to see the harmony of Scripture and the certainty of its fulfillment. Praise the Lord for the assurance which God's infallible Word gives to us.

The next verse, "He shall stand and feed (or rule) His people in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the Name of the Lord His God — and they shall abide — for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth," refers to the King of the Jews who was born in Bethlehem. He will be a Shepherd, Ruler, providing everything for them, "and He shall be great." In the very scene where He was betrayed and crucified He shall be exalted. The world will be forced to acknowledge Him, who was abased and humbled to the dust. O, glory to God! He shall come from heaven (not Bethlehem, nor even Jerusalem) with power and glory and to the ends of the earth He shall be renowned.

12 "And this Man shall be the peace..."—v. 5. Yes, the Man that made peace by the blood of His cross shall bring that PEACE WITH HIM WHEN HE COMES. He Himself is the peace. When we have Him we have peace. The Assyrian (anti-Christ) may come into the land with the sword, but the King of the Jews shall fight for His people and they shall be delivered. Then He will set up His kingdom founded on righteousness and peace and put down all other rule, authority, and power. Let us look at a little description (Isaiah 2) of that World Government that the King of the Jews, the Babe born in Bethlehem shall put over.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow into it." Mountain in Scripture often figures a kingdom as it does here. The Prophet is speaking of the Kingdom of God upon the earth. It will be established and exalted above all other kingdoms. All the people shall be a part of that kingdom. Many people shall witness and say to others, "Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob (father of the Jew) and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths, for out of Zion will go forth the law and the

Word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

O, what a beautiful picture! "This Man," born in Bethlehem shall have a Kingdom that is holy, and men shall learn His ways and His Word and all will be perfect in that Paradise on earth. There will be no more war after He takes over, for the nations will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. That is the way to put out the warmongers, put them out by making the armaments into something constructive instead of destructive. The man whose Name is "Peace" will bring about this consummation. No one else can bring peace to this war-minded world, but that One, who was born in Bethlehem, and was laid in a manger; that One whom Wise Men came miles to worship; that derided, scorned and crucified One; that One who made peace shall have the honor to put that peace into effect — and that shortly.

Men have such distorted ideas about things upon the earth. They imagine the world belongs to them just because they live here. They think that they must put the things in order, ignoring God as the Owner and Master of the earth, but they cannot get away with that. They are working at the present time on a program for a State Government where peace will reign and prosperity flourish. "The Great Three," as they have been called, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, have met together and conferred on this pleasant theme — a world confederacy of Nations, all uniting their forces for good and dwelling together in harmony. The vision is beautiful but it will pass as a dream in the night. The world will awaken and find it a nightmare. The Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which has a righteous basis, shall endure — and its peace will never pass away. God is on His throne and His will shall be done upon His own earth. He has a program and all the Kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever." Rev. 11:15.

(Reprint 1944)

## *Jesus' Two Appearings*

Orville A. Freestone Sr.

“**F**or the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Tit. 2:11

Here in our text we note two appearings of our Lord because of God's unmerited favor bestowed upon lost, sinful humanity. The one appearing is past; the other is yet future. If we will consider conditions that obtained at Jesus' first appearing, we will get a picture also of what may be expected at His later appearing for the former typifies the latter in many aspects. The glory of God as seen in Christ at His first coming was veiled and hidden from unregenerate men but when He comes again, **14** "without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:29), all must bow to Him and confess His right to reign. His glory will be unveiled and terrible to behold.

The first appearing was announced to shepherds in the fields by an angelic messenger. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Lk. 2:13 While a few were looking for Him, God worked so suddenly that even they were in some instances a bit startled. But they were witnesses.

"And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him." Lk. 2:25 Simeon means hearing and as we wait on the Lord He will cause the ears of our understanding to be opened to the Truth for "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10:17 While he waited "the Holy Ghost was upon him." Saints who are looking for the Lord to appear and wait on Him will be instructed through the Word to receive the Holy Spirit as on the Day of Pentecost. Having received Him they are thereby endued with power to "walk in the Spirit" and continuing therein

they are in a position to receive as did Simeon, a revelation concerning Jesus' coming.

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

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

Now we note another character chosen of the Lord to be a witness that Jesus as a Babe was the SON of GOD. "And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser; she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about four score years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting; and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spoke of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Lk. 2:36-38

Anna means gracious; Phanuel signifies fear of God; Aser means happy. Anna figures saints today who fear the Lord and looking unto Him are being transformed into His likeness. They partake of His gracious Spirit and, of course, are happy. Anna's husband was dead and she was a long time a widow. This speaks to us of the saints of God who were cut off from their former Head, Adam, because by faith we were separated from the old creation and the world at Calvary—Gal. 6:14. Her widowhood

figures the saints of this age espoused to Christ and joined by faith but waiting for that faith to become a reality when we shall join Him in the air.

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

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

Joseph signifies adding to. He figures saints who not only wait on the Lord to come and set up His Kingdom but seize the opportunities at hand to add honor and distinction to themselves now. They devour the Word and "grow in grace and knowlege of our Lord." No man takes their crown or reward for they follow the admonition in II Pet. 1:5-7. "Giving all diligence, add to your faith



virtue (power-endued by the Holy Spirit), and to virtue knowlege; and to knowlege temperance, and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." Verse 8 tells us that these possessions make us fruitful or make us to increase in the knowlege of the Lord Jesus Christ. One cannot subtract and add at the same time so keep adding and no man can take away your crown. Rev. 3:11 And Jesus said, "Behold I come quickly; (suddenly) and My reward is with Me to give every man according as His work shall be." Rev. 22:12

(Reprint 1946)

*The Voice Of The Rye*

George E. Burt

I was made to be eaten  
But not to be drank,  
To be threshed in a barn,  
Not soaked in a tank.

17

I came as a blessing,  
When put thru a mill,  
Not as blight, a curse,  
When put thru' a still.

Make me into loaves and  
Your children are fed.  
Put me into drinking,  
I'll starve them instead.

As bread I'm a servant,  
The eater shall rule.  
As drink I am master  
The drinker a fool.

# REFLECTIONS

*...From the Editor*

“**A**nd thou Bethlehem,... out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” Matt. 2:6

Matthew presents Christ as the King and His Kingdom, a theme which runs like a thread through his entire account. It begins with the above quote from Micah 5:2, proclaiming Israel’s Messiah as the “...Governor...” or ruler of Israel. Bethlehem means “house of bread,” speaking of this same Ruler as the Bread of Life. Micah identifies this same location as “...Bethlehem Ephratah,...” the latter term signifying both “double ash heap and double fruitfulness,” basically the same meaning as Ephraim. Those terms describe both the abasement and restoration of Israel, or Ephraim. Jesus likewise experienced both the “ash heap” of death and judgment, but will yet exalted into the fullness of “double fruitfulness” when He is crowned King of kings and Lord of lords.

18

Matthew begins with His birth as a King, completely omitting the lowly stable birth recorded in Luke. The wise men from the East also come to Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, enquiring “...Where is he that is born King of the Jews?...” Matt. 2:2 They also come bearing lavish gifts befitting a King of His stature. Matthew alone likewise records other events becoming only to a King. His genealogy is traced only back to Abraham, as the son of David, the king. Matt. 1:1 The term “kingdom of heaven” or its equivalent is found at least 25 times in this gospel record. Specific differences in other accounts of the four gospels, such as the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, also set Him apart as The King.

This distinction is also made in the end of Matthew’s record as the resurrected Christ instructs His disciples just prior to His departure into heaven. “...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth...” Matt. 28:18 It must be understood that even though Jesus laid the foundation for this glorious power with His work of redemption on Calvary and subsequent resurrection, He has not yet claimed that place and will not, until He sits on the very throne of God in Rev. 4, wherein He will

begin His Millennial reign. The next verse in Matthew's closing text instructs the disciples: "Go ye therefore, (because of V. 18) and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" The Church today is baptized in Jesus' Name, but in that day it will be most proper to baptize "...in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" because Jesus at that time will be reigning as God for 1000 years and is thus the representative for the entire trinity. Baptism, testifying of His death, burial and resurrection still centers around Jesus as The Redeemer, but He now speaks for the fullness of the Godhead. This same period of time also applies specifically to Israel, for they are instructed to venture into "all nations...Teaching them..." V. 19-20 This chosen nation will yet be God's kingdom of priests and their success in converting entire Gentile Nations to Jesus will be exceptional because Satan will be bound for these thousand years, wherein he can offer not one whit of deception or resistance.

Jesus closes His message, assuring the disciples, "...lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," (age) that is, the Millennium. V. 20 Paul then explains that, "...he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he (God) hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." I Cor. 15:25-28

Much of the world will celebrate the birth of the King during this Christmas season, but the greater joy is to look forward with great anticipation to being in that chosen company which will actually see Him, as "...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 John also beheld this same scene of glory, declaring that, "...I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." Rev. 4:23

**KING JESUS WILL VERY SHORTLY REIGN!**

GH

## *God's Timing and Purposes*

(Cont'd)

Vicky Moots

“...a time to break down, and a time to build up.” Eccl. 3:3b:

In the natural, an old building that is deteriorating, or that is no longer adequate to meet the need, must be torn down in order to make room for that which is new. This is true spiritually also.

In Scripture, the body is often referred to as a building, a temple or a tabernacle, since it is the earthly dwelling place of the soul and the spirit. Jesus used this analogy in John 2:19-21 when He was speaking to the Jews in the temple: “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.”

20 Jesus earthly body had to be destroyed, to be taken down, to make room for His new spiritual body, the church. He was raised up three days later to become the head of the church. The earthly temple in Jerusalem was also torn down in 70 A.D. and never rebuilt. That's because God no longer needed an earthly building for a dwelling place since He was building a spiritual temple.

Paul describes God's new building in Eph. 2:21-22: “In whom [Jesus Christ] all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” And in I Cor. 3:9 Paul says, “...ye are God's building.” He also states in v. 16, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

Our own bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, individually and collectively, as members of the body of Christ. We are joined together, built together, as the church, to form a spiritual temple that continues to grow daily as souls are being saved. God now dwells in the midst of His people, not in temples of stone.

Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth clothed in a body of flesh, an earthly temple, in order that He could die for us as we read in Phil. 2:8: “And being found in fashion as a man, he

humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” He chose to let Himself be abased, to be broken down for us. He had to die in order to be exalted. He left the glory of heaven to become a servant to all, but then God built Him back up: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name.” (Phil. 2:9)

God sometimes has to break us down too, through circumstances, in order to build us up into something better. Jeremiah used the example of the potter and the clay to illustrate this in Jer. 18:3-4: “Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.” This was said concerning the house of Israel, but it also applies to us. God is the potter and we are the clay.

Note that Jeremiah does not say that the vessel was marred by the hand of the potter, but while it was in his hand. God never lets go of us in spite of our failures, but He must break down our flawed vessel in order to reshape us, to rebuild us, into something new, a new creation, that is pleasing in His sight. He breaks down our pride, our self-righteousness and self-works of the old creation, and then builds us up with His Word, as Paul declares in Acts 26:32: “And now brethren I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up...”

Today God is building a bride for His Son, just as He did for Adam, out of those Christians who are willing to let Him break them down first and to remove all of the impurities, as the potter did with the clay. The majority of the sleepy, lukewarm church will not submit to this, only a small rib portion, those who are closest to His heart. We must yield to the Lord and allow Him to sanctify and cleanse us with the “washing of water by the word”, as we find in Eph. 5:26-27, that we might be presented to Christ as a chaste virgin, a “glorious church [assembly glorious], “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing...,” qualified to reign with Him. Now is the time to let Him break you down and build you up to be ready for that day.

Eccl. 3:3b (cont’d): “...a time to break down and a time to build up.” This is a continuation of the meaning of this verse.

This time I would like to use the physical body for an illustration, specifically using the example of bones and how they heal. There

are two types of cells in bones that help to maintain and heal them as well as to help regulate calcium at the proper levels in the blood stream by either breaking bone down or building it up. Bone is living, growing tissue, not just a rigid lattice-work composed of calcium, phosphorus and other minerals. Osteoclasts are the bone cells that break down bone, and osteoblasts are the cells that build it up. Both are equally necessary.

So, what determines whether it is a “time to break down” or a “time to build up”? If you fall and break a bone, the injured bone bleeds. The bleeding results in chemical signals being released which cause the osteoclasts and osteoblasts in that area to become activated. The osteoclasts secrete enzymes that break down the calcium from the bone and release it into the blood stream, thereby breaking down the damaged bone. But at the same time the osteoblasts must take some of that calcium and use it to start building up new bone in and around the break to strengthen and repair it.

22 These two processes of breaking down and building up alternate until the healing is complete. This is all coordinated by various hormones that are released by the body, such as calcitonin, thyroid and parathyroid hormones, as well as Vitamin D.

How does this apply to us spiritually? In the natural, we usually break bones by falling. When God created Adam and Eve in The Garden, they were innocent and without sin and able to fellowship with God without fear. But then they fell they sinned by disobeying God, and the result was a complete break in that relationship. Sin separated man from God, much like a broken bone is separated, and death entered the world, both physically and spiritually.

But God had already prepared a plan. He sent His Son to heal that relationship. The sacrifice of Jesus was able to mend the break by paying the penalty for sin to bring man and God back together.

The provision for this healing was made for all mankind on Calvary, but each individual must accept it personally. However, sinful man does not want to seek after God. In fact, he does everything to avoid God, as Paul tells us in Rom. 3:11: “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”

So how does God break down our hardened hearts and our pride, causing us to realize our need of a Savior, and

spiritual healing? Jesus told His disciples, in John 16:7-8, that after He departed, He would send the Holy Spirit, who would "...reprove the world of sin..."

The word "reprove" means "to convince and convict". The Holy Spirit penetrates our calcified, hardened hearts and breaks down all the barriers, all the excuses, all our self-righteousness, and convinces us that we have "...sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), thus bringing conviction to our souls. The Holy Spirit functions in this manner much like the osteoclasts do in our body when they secrete the enzymes that break down the calcium in the injured bone at the site of the break and release it into the blood stream in order to start the process of healing. Do you recall that I stated that this process in the physical body was triggered by the blood that flowed into the broken area as a result of the injury? Our spiritual healing is also on the basis of the blood, apart from which there can be no redemption.

In the physical body, a hematoma, or collection of blood, forms between the two separated edges of the broken bone. The osteoblasts begin building up new bone by depositing calcium into that hematoma to form a bridge connecting the two pieces back together so that they can again become one, while the osteoclasts continue to break down the old damaged bone. 23

The same thing happens to us spiritually. It is the blood of Jesus that spans the gap between God and man. Paul tells us in Rom. 5:10 that "...we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..." The word "reconciled" means "to be brought back together".

If the osteoclasts represent the Holy Spirit who breaks down our hardened hearts and brings us to God, then what do the osteoblasts represent? What is it that builds us up after we have been broken down? It is the Word of His grace that functions for us spiritually like the osteoblasts do physically, as Paul tells us in Acts 20:32: "...the word of his grace...is able to build you up..." The Holy Spirit convinces and convicts us of sin, breaks us down and draws us to God, and then reveals God's Word to us to enable us to grow and be built up. Paul explains to us in Eph. 4 that the gifts of ministry (listed in v. 11) have been given to the church, for the purpose of "edifying", or "building up," the body of Christ.

As we listen to the ministering and teaching of God's Word, specifically the Word of His grace, and receive it personally and

study it, it will begin to work in our lives, just like the osteoblasts, to build us up. During this process, if our hearts become hardened or lifted up with pride, the Holy Spirit, like the osteoclasts, will be faithful to break us down again, to allow the work to progress. The breaking down and the building up will continue alternating, with the ultimate goal of building us up unto "...the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

In summary, in the Garden of Eden the relationship between man and God was broken when Adam fell. Sin separated man from God, but God has restored that broken relationship through His Son.

In the physical body, the resulting new, healed bone that is formed from a broken bone by the action of the osteoclasts and osteoblasts is actually stronger than the original bone before it was broken. And so it is in the spiritual realm regarding the union of man and God that was brought about by redemption. It is a new, permanent bond, one that cannot be broken, as we read in Rom. 8:38-39, that nothing "...shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

24

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## **GOD IS COME TO EARTH**

*Heaven was lit with cherub-eyes,  
Night lay holy-still!  
Three men watched (God calls them "wise")  
A star above a hill.  
"Yes," they said, "He's come to birth;  
God is here on earth!"*

*Shepherds watched their sheep that night,  
Faithful shepherds they!  
Angels winged in awed delight -  
Christ is born today!  
Virgin pure has given birth,  
God has come to earth!*

*Jean Wilson*



## Apostolic Fortitude

David Albrecht

“**A**nd they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” Acts 5:41

The book of Acts, Chapter 5, offers us a snapshot of some of the opposition leaders encountered in the beginning of the church age:

The early church Apostles were audacious, loquacious, bold and proud! They stood up for their convictions to the Jewish religious leaders. They went against the flow after being warned not to preach in the name of Jesus (V.29). Being empowered and filled with the Holy Spirit, they just couldn't quit talking about Him. They were bubbling over with the hope that was within them (V.32). Even after being beaten they continued to teach and preach Jesus Christ with boldness (V.2). And they rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer shame for His name (V.41). These were proud emissaries for our Lord Jesus Christ, on a mission with GOOD NEWS for the world, willing to put their lives on the line for the one they loved.

25

They were commissioned to be eye witnesses of His life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension, living daily with Jesus, watching, learning, witnessing the miraculous over and over again was the norm. Who better than a group of dedicated friends and first generation disciples to carry on the vision? The Apostles were bastions of the faith, spreading the gospel everywhere, potentially and provisionally to the ends of the earth and consequently to every successive generation. Men and women of that day, sometimes facing great opposition, exhibited a certain grit and gumption. A truly genuine and even fearless serpent-trampling kind of courage was their's. All of this to say, we do not mean to glorify them (that is God's place). However, we can step back and pass by with casual observation to reference exactly what God had worked in the lives of regular human beings, that is the key. Because you and I can have the same thing they had: FORTITUDE!

Not only that, but they were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write. They recorded the whole New Testament with help from a few other inspired writers which has become a major part of the Bible. And it's a love story. A story of voluntary humbling

and humility, a story of sacrifice and blood shed for the likes of lost sinners who did not have a prayer, of God's mercy and grace beyond measure extended to all mankind no matter whether Jew or Gentile. Thank You Jesus! You could search through the libraries of this world and never find a book like it, the Bible. The religions of the world have never offered hope like this; not even close. This book is solid as a rock. This is where right and wrong come from and can be verified, this is where the best counsel you could ever find comes from. This is truth and it contains promises you can stand on and live by. There is truly nothing like it! And I have heard preachers stand with a Bible in their hand (with a call to repeat after them) and say, "This is God's Word; I am what this book says I am, I can do what this book says I can do and I can have what this book says I can have because this is God's Word." I like such a reminder and declaration because we have an enemy, nearby always trying to tell us otherwise. Thanks also to those writers, the Apostles and a few others with tenacity and obedience to the leading and inspiration of the Holy Spirit that future generations might be able to point to a book and claim, right here, "It is written"! Never has there been a time more important than today for you and I to have something as concrete a foundation of faith to rely on as God's Word, the Bible. There is no substitute, period!

The New Testament brings hope, and the truth of salvation by grace through faith, when applied, sets the sinner free from the penalty, the bondage and baggage of sin. Then each sinner who is set free is given a new address. They are delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Believers will some day, soon, be permanently set free also from the very presence of sin. Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans declared, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Ro. 1: 16). This book, authored by God and written by men is an irreplaceable source of fortitude for you and I.

Paul suffered immeasurably for the gospel's sake. He may have suffered more than any of the other Apostles. He was tested in many ways and yet remained faithful to the end. Paul had that special strength ... and fortitude ... he had what it takes! You can read of his testing and trials along with his conclusion regarding

them in II Cor. 11:24-28 also II Cor. 4:8&9, 16-18. The Apostle Paul's life and track record represent a level of commitment that, I'm afraid, many of God's people today are not familiar with. Lord help us!

We live in a time of trouble, confusion and distractions. Many distractions among which just one of them is the "love of money" as identified by Apostle Paul. Money is a great servant but a terrible master. It's really gone in a flash unless invested in the kingdom of God. Solomon said, "riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." Prov. 23:5 It is time to invest, not only our money, but our affections, our minds, our focus, our lives toward things of eternal value.

We are in the last days! Jesus is coming, and coming soon! And, yes, our enemy is working overtime trying to drop anything in the road ahead of us to hinder in any way possible our progress. We may have to make choices we've never made before in the days ahead, exercise strength we have never needed. Criticism, ridicule, religious bias and even punishment because of our faith and convictions may come. We may need, like early Christians, to obey God rather than man. At the same time, we need more than just a readiness of mind. We need to be ready! We need that special inner strength and perseverance to overcome and be ready. I know what I need to see me through. While sitting in church listening to a message unrelated to this topic, the Holy Spirit whispered to me. In a moment's time I was impressed with this: If there is anything in this world I NEED as a Christian in these last days it is Apostolic Fortitude. I define that as an ALL IN commitment with no reservations to love, follow and serve my Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ ... no matter the cost!

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." Eph. 6:10 If you are spiritually sleepy, WAKE UP! Be ready! Be faithful! Be focused! Be expectantly watching and awaiting Jesus' return! And have that necessary FORTITUDE ... you know ... the APOSTOLIC kind ... for this stretch to the finish line!

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*Unto Us  
a Child is Born*



## GIVE AS HE GAVE

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

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

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

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

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

Rose-Terry Cooke

## HOSEA

(Introduction)

Gene Hawkins

“**T**he word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beerī, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.” Hos. 1:1

It is rather interesting that even though Hosea prophesied for a rather lengthy period of time covering the political regimes listed above, his name is not found in the records of Kings and Chronicles, nor in any of the prophets. Paul does quote from his prophecy when he proclaims the restoration of Israel in the end time. “As he saith also in Osee, (Hos. 1:10 ) I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.” Rom. 9:25-26

Hosea’s name means “to save” and expresses God’s intention to deliver this nation unto Himself. He is the son of “Beerī” meaning “my well,” which again illustrates the tremendous well of provision awaiting Israel as promised by this prophet. However, this book is a rather detailed description of Israel’s idolatry which must be remedied before she can enjoy all the glorious opportunities God has provided through Christ Jesus, her Messiah.

The accounts of Hosea take place after the twelve tribes of Israel have been split, wherein two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, are identified as “Judah,” while the remaining ten tribes are known as Israel and also “Ephraim.” God Himself orchestrated that division after the reign of Solomon was over. “And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, ... even he lifted up his hand against the king.... And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah ... found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment;... And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake,...)” I Kings 11:26-32

According to Isaiah, those ten tribes also became known

be broken, that it be not a people. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, (capital of Israel) and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son....” Isa. 7:8-9 Remaliah’s son is identified as Pekah, next to the last king of Israel when a portion of the land was taken captive by Assyria. “In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria,... Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.” II Kings 15:29 Thus, Hosea uses the terms Israel and Ephraim interchangeably throughout this book.

30 The record is also clear that even though God assured Jeroboam he would rule over the ten tribes of Israel, he was not a man of faith and very quickly took things into his own hands. “Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim,... And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again ... unto Rehoboam ... and they shall kill me, ... Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” I Kings 12:25-28 Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, introduced idolatry into the ten tribes of Israel or Ephraim, and that practice not only continued but prospered to the present time recorded by Hosea in V. 1. Jeroboam is once again named as king, but he is the “... son of Joash,...” rather than Nebat, meaning that the record in Hosea occurs quite a number of years after Judah and Israel have been separated. The history recorded in II Kings 15 reveals that Jeroboam was just five kings removed from Israel being taken captive by Assyria. Thus Hosea’s prophecy is very timely, and agrees with Isaiah that the demise of Israel as a nation is eminent. Hosea does include Judah in his message, but his primary target against idolatry is Israel. He prophesied during the days of the above mentioned kings of Judah, but there is no indication that a specific message is addressed to any of them as is found in Isaiah when Hezekiah is singled out.

### **Chapter 1 Israel’s Idolatry**

“The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.” V. 2 God will use the

actual life of Hosea to literally “act out” the offense of Israel against Himself, thus the prophet is directly instructed to marry a woman “...of whoredoms and children of whoredoms:...” That word means “adultery: idolatry:...whoredom,” illustrating the fact that natural fornication is simply a type of “spiritual fornication,” which is idolatry against God. That practice is described here as “...departing from the LORD.” There is a great possibility that Gomer (V. 3) was not a harlot when Hosea married her, even as Israel was not guilty of such a thing when she was first chosen of The Lord. However, the term “...wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms:...” means that she came from a long line of such conduct, which actually became a way of life for them, and is perhaps herself the daughter of an harlot.

Hosea is obedient unto the command of the Lord and “... he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.” V. 3 Gomer’s name means “completion,” which signifies “coming to an end, either of success or failure.” Here it means failure insofar as spirituality is concerned. She is also “...the daughter of Diblaim;...” meaning “the double fig cake” which is prophetic of the potential fruitfulness which could have belonged to Israel had she not adopted the path of idolatry. 31

Hosea’s wife did bear him and son, “And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.” V. 4 Jezreel means “it will be sown of God,” and the subject of such “sowing” is that of judgment upon the house of Israel for the acts of Jehu. Scripture is very clear that God used Jehu to destroy Baal and the house of Ahab. “And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.” II Kings 10:30 However, a careful study of II Kings 10 may reveal that Jehu was a bit over zealous in his quest because he slew some who were of Judah rather than the house of Ahab. Furthermore, “... Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.” II Kings 10:31 Thus Hosea concludes this indictment by declaring that God would “...cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.” This does not mean that the ten tribes would be annihilated. It

rather proclaims that Israel will soon be taken captive by Assyria for "... it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel." V. 5 The record is clear in II Kings 15 that Assyria invaded Israel during the reign of Israel's King Pekah, and part of the land was taken captive. The full captivity came to pass during the reign of Hoshea when "... the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria,..." II Kings 17:6 Though idolatrous Israel was taken captive by Assyria at that time, the fullness of Hosea's prophecy is a reference to the Battle of Armageddon which will yet take place in the valley of Jezreel. The "... bow of Israel..." or all the strength in which they will yet trust, will be exhausted and they will at that day, in the midst of the tribulation, accept their Messiah.

32 The local fulfillment of these decrees attests to the fact that the ten tribes were interspersed and intermarried throughout Assyria even down to the days of Jesus. Thus the woman of Samaria questioned Him, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Jo. 4:9 The Samaritans were despised and rejected because they were perceived as not being "pure blood" Jews.

"And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away." V. 6 Judgment against this nation continues to be graphically illustrated by the new daughter of Hosea. She is to be called Loruhamah, meaning, "not shown mercy." Such a description applies only to the ten tribes of Israel at this time, for God also declares immediately that "...I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen." V. 7 These verses are to be fulfilled at the time then present. Israel receives no mercy for "...I will utterly take them away." This does not indicate that there are "ten lost tribes of Israel," as some suppose. It rather means that those ten tribes were taken captive by Assyria and were not restored as a nation. Judah, on the other hand was "saved" by the Sovereign Hand of God on numerous occasions. However, she was later taken to Babylon, after Nebuchadnezzar had come to power in 606 BC. All nations, including Assyria must bow to his dominion, but after 70 years,



any Jew desiring to do so, was allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild both the temple and the wall. Judah retained her identity as a nation, while the ten tribes did not. Hosea will declare later in his message however, that all 12 tribes will be restored as one nation when this present Church Age is over.

“Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.” V.8-9 Once again, names tell the story, this one being that God will set them aside, at least for a time. They forsook Him in the first place and now He will simply leave them to their own devices. The good news is that Hosea’s message does not end here as he announces hope, declaring plainly that despite this ‘interruption,’ “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.” V. 10 Paul quoted this verse, as noted above, and then pronounces the glorious conclusion for the entirety of this nation, asking and answering the question, “...Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.” Rom. 11:1 He then uses himself as an example and representative of the entire nation to prove his point, declaring in this same verse that, “...I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.” Paul’s history is identical to that which will be true of national Israel. He refers to himself as being, “...one born out of due time,” (I Cor. 15:8) meaning that he was born “again” before the rest of the nation. Just as he was struck down into the dust on the road to Damascus, so also will Israel be brought to their knees during the tribulation. They also will follow his pattern of crying out “...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?...” Acts 9:6 Saul of Tarsus subsequently became Paul and ministered to the Gentiles. The primary ministry of the restored nation of Israel will likewise be ministry to the Gentiles during the Millennium, wherein they will finally fulfill the great commission. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” Matt. 28:19

Hosea promises great prosperity for Israel because they are now recognized as “...the sons of the living God.” He then likewise includes both Judah and Israel. “Then shall the children

of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.” V. 11 They shall “...appoint themselves one head...” is a direct reference to the fact that they will as one united nation choose Messiah Jesus as their Head, and “...come up out of the land...” in separation unto Him.

Finally, it is also said of their restoration, “...great shall be the day of Jezreel.” This simply means that the judgment, identified as Jezreel or Armageddon will be against the nations. It will be a great day for Israel as they rejoice because God has judged these same nations, who have punished and abused them throughout the ages, and Israel emerges triumphant over all of them. They will finally be recognized as God’s Chosen People and will in fact enjoy the status promised long ago, for “...the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath;...” Deut. 28:13

(To Be Continued In The Next Issue)

### ***THEIR GIFTS***

34

*In a rude stable cold,  
The friendly beasts their stories told.  
“I,” said the donkey, shaggy and brown,  
“Carried His mother up and down;  
Carried her safely to Bethlehem town.”  
“I,” said the cow, all white and red,  
“Gave Him my manger for His bed;  
Gave Him my hay to pillow His head.”  
“I,” said the sheep with curly horn,  
“Gave Him wool for His blanket warm;  
He wore my coat on Christmas morn.”  
“I,” said the camel, all yellow and black,  
“Over the desert upon my back  
Brought Him a gift in the Wise man’s pack.”  
“I,” said the dove, “from my rafter high  
Cooed Him to sleep, my mate and I.”  
And every beast by some good spell,  
In the stable of darkness was able to tell,  
Of the gift he gave to Emmanuel.*

Author Unknown



# Our Corn Crib

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Earnest but Wrong	Light on the Law	The Sin Offering
Eternal Life	Living Ones	The Unforgiven Sin
Extra! Extra!	Made Sin for Us	This is That
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Fear of the Lord	Mercy or Judgement	Tithing
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Five Much Mores	Not Legislation, Revelation	Wheat and Tares
Five Consequences	Oneness of Christ	Why am I Not Healed

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