

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole Counsel of GOD.

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Num. 4



HE IS RISEN

Mary M. Bodie

They put Christ in the grave.
God seemed to let Him down;
But He came forth to save—
Arose to wear a crown.

'Twas at the early dawn,
When He came forth to bless.
The weary night is gone,
For all who Christ confess.

The stone was rolled away,
And Christ arose to greet,
A new and perfect day—
Resplendent and complete.

He bore God's wrath and rod,
But lives to never die.
Eternal Son of God,
Ascended up on high.

HE CALLED HER NAME

Outside the sepulcher she stood
And' wept in deep despair.
The One she loved had died - and yet
His body was not there!
Her heart was torn that Easter mom.
Her grief was hard to bear!

She saw Him die that awful death
Upon dark Calvary;
She saw Him laid In Joseph's tomb,
But now where could He be?
The angels said He was not dead
And bade her come and see!

But lo! she turned and saw Him stand
But knew not it was He
Until He called her "MARY"
He spoke so tenderly
Her heart was stilled.
and then was filled With glorious ecstacy!



Yes. Christ was risen: He called her name
And her response must be
But one word. "MASTER:" For her Lord
She would serve faithfully!
Her heart was won to God's dear Son
And would forever be!

And still He calls us each by name:
Yes. still He longs today
To hear the answer from each heart!
Oh, may He hear us say:
"Our blessed Lord, be Thou adored
As MASTER, Lord alway!"

- Marie L. Olson



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Editor: Gene Hawkins

Definite Sign Posts Of The End

Gene Hawkins

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” I Thess. 5:3

The ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will not take place until **after** Jesus takes His throne in heaven and opens the first two seals of judgment as recorded in Revelation 6. “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals,... And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. And when he had opened the second seal,... there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.” Rev. 6:1-4 This text simply describes in great detail the order of judgment which awaits this world when the antichrist riding the white horse of peace comes forth. The world will look on him as a super-hero and the fact that he rode “...a white horse...” and “...had a bow...” (but no arrows) indicates that his mission was to conquer through so-called policies of peace. The crown which he wore is symbolic of his right to reign, a right given to him by God.

That era of peace will be short lived, for the red horse of war will quickly emerge when the second seal is opened “...and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth,...” Note, however, that Paul’s declaration of “...Peace and safety,...” was written to a group of saints who were looking steadfastly for Jesus to come and take them out of this world before the tribulation even began as stated in V. 9 of this same chapter. “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,” Such wrath cannot mean the wrath of hell, for both Paul and these saints had long ago been delivered from such destruction. The wrath of which the apostle writes here gives reference to the wrath of God leveled against the nations during the tribulation. These Thessalonians were of the same elite quality as those of the Church at Philadelphia who heard this glorious promise. “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from (out of) the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them

that dwell upon the earth.” Rev. 3:10 Thus Paul’s prophecy of a counterfeit peace is a strong indication that some semblance of peace and tranquility would occur BEFORE Jesus takes His throne, BEFORE the tribulation even begins, and BEFORE the Bride of Christ is transported to glory.

Present day events would loudly bespeak such an idea as nothing more than an elusive “pipe dream.” However, God’s Word is both sure and specifically accurate; therefore those who are looking intently for Jesus’ soon return should also be aware that there could very well be some manifestation of peace in the near future. World conditions will prevail exactly as God has prophesied, and because of that God’s people must understand that despite the upheaval manifest in recent weeks, the week of Daniel 9:27 has not yet begun. Let all believers know assuredly that Jesus has not yet taken His throne and the aforementioned seals of judgment have not yet been opened. It is imperative therefore that those who are looking for Jesus to come, be vigilant in this matter with their senses acutely aware of their surroundings.

4

The time of “peace” preceding sudden destruction will be at least one major point of Satan’s end time deception. His climactic act of deceit will be the appearance of the forthcoming antichrist. It has been repeatedly observed in these pages that the first sign Jesus announced for the end of the age is deception, warning His disciples to “...Take heed that no man deceive you.” Matt. 24:4 Ours’ is a day of deception and it is manifest universally.

Russia strongly denied that their building up of Russian troops on the border of Ukraine would result in an invasion. Current events before the eyes of the entire world reveal that claim as a complete and deliberate lie. Excuse was also made that this ungodly dictator invaded a sovereign country to keep them from joining Nato, another assertion which has also been largely debunked.

China is also a nation totally committed to deceiving the entire world. She is still vigorously guarding the secrets of the coronavirus, denying that she should be held responsible for it. China is also undoubtedly watching intently to see if Russia will “get away” with invading Ukraine, for though she denies it, this ungodly nation also has tremendous aspirations of taking control of Taiwan. The whole world is waiting to see if there will be any

reprisals inflicted by any nation around the world, especially the U.S., against Vladimir Putin for the war crimes he has already committed and of which he has no intention of stopping. It is also a near certainty that if he eludes any kind of resistance to his plans, this demonic monster will continue his advance into other countries. It is a shame that men placate a bully like Putin because he threatens to use nuclear weapons to start world war III. If men would only consult God's Word they would know that such a war will not begin until AFTER Jesus is on His throne and He will be the one to initiate it by pouring out God's wrath on all those nations usurping His authority. Furthermore, the vast nuclear holocaust which men fear wherein a full 1/3 of the world's inhabitants will cease to exist, will not take place until Jesus opens the 7th seal of judgment in Rev. 8, well into the tribulation period. "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire (nuclear war) was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed." Rev. 8:8-9

American politicians are also guilty of promoting that which is contrary to truth. The current administration blames high gas prices and the resulting out of control inflation on Putin's aggression into Ukraine. However, those conditions existed in this country long before Mr. Putin invaded that independent nation. One of Pres. Biden's first actions was in completely reversing, by executive order, the energy policies of the former administration which had made America energy independent even to the point of having the ability to export this valuable commodity to other nations. The President's act was in fulfillment of his loud and repeated campaign promise to "eliminate fossil fuels in this country." The reason for such extreme action was due to so-called "climate change" or man-made global warming which is also a completely deceptive myth insofar as man being able to control it. Jesus again warned specifically in regard to deception that, "...many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Matt. 24:5 Simply stated, this means that there are many in our world today who are in reality **trying to take His place** even now, trying to accomplish what **only God** is able to do. This is the very "spirit of antichrist," of which John warned at the beginning that this Church Age that "...even now already is it

in the world.” I Jn. 4:3 The ultimate deception of Satan will be to convince the world that the Real Christ has arrived but it will be a gross imposter known as the antichrist, or “the man of sin” who will take center stage promising that which only Jesus, the True Prince of Peace, can deliver. Let all men be advised that Satanic deception has already begun and will indeed increase until the man of sin is revealed.

Make no mistake! Every government around this entire world is at this present hour steeped in corruption driven by this same spirit of antichrist. Canada’s leader of a supposed democracy recently showed his true colors in acting more like a dictator against those truckers supplying goods and valuable services to his own country. Australian believers have likewise complained greatly about the policies of that country demanding that men bow to ungodly practices directly contrary to the truth of God’s Word. Some have balked at giving aid to Ukraine because it is such a corrupt government, but again they are not unique in that matter. The list could go on and on for God will of necessity judge every nation on the planet for their rebellious spirit of antichrist in refusing to surrender their arms and bow to Jesus, The True Christ, Who will soon reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

There is nothing any mortal can do to reverse the trend outlined above. It must also be understood that such things will also grow progressively worse. However, God did not leave us without hope and those who would win Christ as Bridegroom do well in taking His instruction to heart. Jesus not only warned of the horrendous deception permeating the world today, He also promised that “...there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.” (made known) Mk. 4:22 Many lies and much deception have already been uncovered as noted in the above account, but that is but a brief example of that which will eventually be made known on a much broader scale world-wide. This text promises that nothing will be hid or kept secret, but all “...should come abroad...” That declaration comes on the heels of this assertion. “And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.” Mk. 4:21,23 The emphasis in these verses is on Light, enlarging on the fact that TRUTH will eventually prevail because of it. The

question, and very often the dilemma for godly men today, is WHEN will such callous deception come to light, for true believers must make decisions regarding their own lives AT THIS PRESENT TIME. There are a great host of voices today clamoring for attention, but which one is a credible source of information, for so many are directly contradictory, the one to the another.

That answer is found in this same portion of scripture. Jesus' closing exhortation that men "hear," is almost verbatim to that found in each of the seven churches addressed in Rev. 2&3. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;..." meaning that there is no substitute for hearing the Word of His mouth. The Light for all mankind is found in The Truth of God's Word, but it must be openly displayed, or "...set on a candlestick..." to achieve the desired result. God's people must appropriate for themselves the light of God's Word in order that they might be such "...a candlestick..." and thus enabled to discern between the light and darkness of these last days.

7

It was noted previously that mere mortals will not change the current trend prophesied for this world, and never did God charge His People with such a mission. Jesus did say "Ye are the light of the world....Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:14-16 Paul also instructs, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith,...." I Cor. 16:13 He also exhorted the Church at Ephesus to "...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.... But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Eph 5:11-13 Furthermore, the chief apostle for this Church Age also defined the mission of the Church with these exhortations to the Ephesians. "...be strong in the Lord,... Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to **stand** against the wiles (deceit, cunning) of the devil....take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand. Stand** therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,..." Eph 6:10-14

Paul also identified those resisting the purposes of Satan as "hinderers." "And now ye know what withholdeth (hinder, restrain, hold down, seize) that he (antichrist) might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (hinders) will let, until he be taken out of the

way. II Thess. 2:6-7

All these citations decisively reveal the very purpose with which God has charged men of faith in these last days. It can be summed up as simply **standing** where God has placed us, shining with all the brightness one can muster against the dark atmosphere of sin and unrighteousness which is gradually overwhelming this entire world. Much of this darkness is absolutely being thrust upon citizens of righteousness by their own political governments, but The Light of God's Word must be in His People to "hinder" such advances, "...until he be taken out of the way."

God's light declares that He "...created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1:1 Men have created the illusion that this deliberate creation was just a happenstance or coincidence, evolving over time. The theory of evolution or any other explanation of how this world came to be, is in fact a denial of God Himself. Paul declares that The Creator left His handiwork as living proof of His Own Existence. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" Rom. 1:19-20

Many across the world have decried Pres. Putin for his war crimes against innocent humanity which included the targeting of children and pregnant mothers in a maternity hospital, along with shelling a theatre used as a shelter with clear signs that children were inside. What a display of hypocrisy and deceit when so many of these same voices advocate abortion to the point of basing their choice for Supreme Court Justices on whether or not a candidate would legalize this ungodly practice which is undoubtedly the ultimate of shedding innocent blood forbidden by God's Word. Catholicism has also seemingly excused it because Pres. Biden, a self proclaimed Catholic has suffered no consequence even though he firmly pushes that ungodly agenda.

Same sex marriage and relationships is another area in which the spotlight of God's Word reveals the darkness and sin actively promoted by American government. Paul asserts that "...God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman,

burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly,..." (Shameful) Rom. 1:26-27 The O.T. is even more emphatic. "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." Lev. 18:22 Not only so, but this practice is mentioned in the same breath as forbidding one to "... lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion." (unnatural bestiality) Lev. 18:23

Another common practice in these last days is simply "living together, engaging in intercourse outside the confines of marriage." Modern man often calls it "an affair," but God's Word pronounces it "fornication," and sin, from which the offender is to immediately cease and desist as in Jesus' command, "...go, and sin no more." Jo. 8:11

A more recent term added to man's vocabulary reflecting the absurdity of men is, "transgender" which is once again a bold infraction leveled directly against God's Word. This issue is so convoluted in the eyes of men that when Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Jackson was asked the question, "Can you define the 'word' woman," she answered "I can't." Scripture is very emphatic. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Gen. 1:27 However, men are at this present time telling children as young as 3 yrs. old that "you can choose whether you want be a boy or a girl." The conclusion here would be that "God made a mistake," which is completely impossible.

The heart of every believer should recoil violently against any of these displays of sin, unrighteousness and darkness. If that does not happen in one's innermost being, something is desperately wrong. Jude plainly tells us in view of these present evil days that those of "...most holy faith..." must hate "... even the garment spotted by the flesh." Jude 20,23 That is a strong statement, but it signifies hatred for sin, rather than the sinner, a distinction God has made throughout the ages. He in His amazing grace will without fail "forgive" the transgressions of any repentant sinner, but He will **NEVER EVER EXCUSE** them. Anyone with a guilty conscience due to sin must admit his wrong in order that God may grant him the grace of total absolution, for "...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Jas. 4:6

Let every God-fearing believer also realize that though none but Jesus will ever turn back the forces of evil pervading this world today, we must at all costs simply stand our ground and refuse to compromise with the ungodly standards set before us. The path for those who would hinder the onslaught of evil which surrounds us today is not necessarily found in what we DO but rather WHO WE ARE: instruments of God's Light and Righteousness. Those who resist must not do so in anger, revenge, or any other motive, but rather as one who would stand steadfastly for the righteous standards which God has ordained, without compromise. Just BE the light God intended us to be.

There may be times when some may be afforded the opportunity to verbalize their inward convictions, for Paul admonished the Colossians to "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Col. 4:6 Giving answer implies that a question had been asked and the response must of necessity be with the Light of God's Word, rather than private opinion. The "candle" must burn brightly.

10

Peter gives some tremendous advice on how to shine forth, in these closing days of the Church Age regarding another subject which is for the most part soundly rejected by many even among Christians. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer **to every man that asketh you** a reason of the hope that is in you..." I Pet. 3:15 Some lament that "if only the "right" political power were in charge, the trend outlined above could be reversed." Scripture begs to differ, and even though there may be a temporary respite of peace and safety, sudden destruction will claim man's day. The only way out is **UP!** Thus the preeminent hope at this present time must be the coming of The Lord, but it is in no wise a universally popular message. This same apostle informs us that "...that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?..." II Pet. 3:3 The point here is that the "candle" must radiate hope in order that those around him may enquire about it. The **ONLY** answer must then be:

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

Betrayal, Anguish, Hope

Ruth Margaret Gibbs

IN THE GARDEN

I tried to serve Him - there was time to flee –
Had I not said, "Lord, I will die for Thee"?
The Garden could have hidden Him from sight,
The olive trees were close, and dark the night;
My sword had struck - it might have put to rout
The band of men and turned the traitor out!
For they were stunned, their lanterns moving slow
I could have saved Him then, if He ... but no ...
He only stood and turned to me instead:
"Put up your sword into the sheath," He said ...
Oh, why would He not take that moment's breath
To flee like any man from such a death?
Or why not strike them down! He had the power ...
He moved like one toward an appointed hour
As though He waited for their threatening hand
To seize and bind Him - Cowards! Judas band!

IN THE PALACE

The palace yard was cold: I stood without,
So numb with fear and captive to my doubt;
Like gluttons cluttered, ready for the feast
They held Him there, to mock before the priest.
I know not how I entered through the gate
And found the blazing fire and sat to wait
Among the servants huddling there, Whose sport
Made echoes in the hallway of the court.
I know not how I came, I only knew
I could not save Him then, the Just, the True...
And suddenly: The finger of the maid!
"I tell you I know not the Man," I said ...
Three times I spoke - I, Peter (called the "Rock"),
And like a prophet's voice the crowing cock
Was shrill within my ears. I turned to see,
And it was then the Master looked on me ...

AND HE. WENT OUT

I never shall forget the look He gave:
I see it now before me, fastened grave
Upon my face. No condemnation there,
But pity only, rising in a prayer ...
A moment's look of deathless grace and love –
My Master Whom I was not worthy of
To walk with Him, to stand and dare to die,
It was not meant for such a one as I.
Poor fumbling coward, wretched fugitive
With cursing tongue! Oh, God, in heaven, forgive ...
If I might but be washed by Him again,
These lying lips, this heart with blackened stain;
If I might but be cleansed, be purged complete
As when He humbly bent to wash my feet ...
"My hands, my head!" I cried, and Lord, You knew
How feeble was my boasted love for You.

12

DARKEST NIGHT

I have outridden many a furious gale
On Galilee, and watched the shredded sail
Go down before the wind, but always still
I found some some thread of hope to spur my will.
Now, on this night - the darkest night of all –
There is no hope - no light - a brazen wall
Stands up between my soul and heaven's throne!
Our Lord is dead ... and we are left alone
Like running sheep that scatter to the prey ...
Our Shepherd hung upon a cross today.
Oh, that I might have hung with Him and died
Like yonder thief who turned in faith and cried,
"Remember me!" Oh, that I might have heard
The answer and the echo of each word:
"Father, forgive; they know not what they do ..."
Lord, count me one within that circle, too ...

END OF THE SABBATH

The days are strange: The whisper on the street
Of sealed stone and tread of marching feet
For Roman guards keep watch beside the tomb.

Oh, God, how can it be that in the gloom
He sleeps, the One who made the dead arise
And brought the light of heaven to men's eyes?

How can it be those lips are silent now,
Before whose Word the demons had to bow;
And that majestic form, who came to save
Lies with the ancients in a rock-hewn grave ...?

The Sabbath now is past, the prophets' theme
Of ages gone is crumbled. Kingdom dream
Was lost forever in that bitter cry:

"We have no King but Caesar!" Master, why
Did You not take their challenge and come down
To wear upon Your brow the Conqueror's crown?

AT THE DAWNING

I seem to hear the insistent knocking still
The voice of Mary calling through the chill
Of early morn, the trembling words she spoke.

A scent of spices lingered on her cloak
And spilled a fragrance gently through the air:
"The stone," she cried. "Our Master is not there!"
We stood transfixed, as those who look on death-

"It is a dream," we muttered, and our breath
Caught in our throats - "A fancy of the mind,"
We said, somehow to chide and yet be kind.

Then up I sprang like wild beasts that dart
Against the net - with terror in my heart
Lest some foul one had dared to steal our Lord ...

And John was at my shoulder with a word;

And still I feel the surging pulses beat
And hear the echo of our running feet ...

THE LORD APPEARS

How can I tell with stumbling lips of clay
The rapture that has come to pass this day
Since that first moment when we saw the tomb –
The stones were silent in that empty room;
But grave clothes lying, undisturbed and whole,
Spelled out the birth of wonder to our soul;
And faith was slowly dawning on our eyes.

Upon the threshold of Divine surprise
We stood, with hearts that pondered, lifted up
Like blinded Bartimaeus with his cup.
How can I tell, the least among all men –
I have beheld my Master's face again ...
Here from the blindness of a deep distress
I come to touch His wounded side, confess
I am not worthy now even to know
That He has risen, who hast loved us so.

14

HE IS RISEN

In this the day that dawned like other days
With tears of anguish, and no song of praise?
And am I Simon yet? My eyes have seen
A greater miracle than Magdalene
Could tell us of! Oh, Master, can it be
Thou has come forth from out the tomb for me...?
I could not keep Thee from the cross, the grave;
But Thou hast risen, glorified, to save
My wretched soul ... the One who conquered sin
Came down to plead for us, our cause to win.
Rome has its legions, Satan has his host
Thou art the greatest triumph heaven can boast!
Thou art the living Lord of life and death ...
Oh, teach me then Thy ways, give me new breath;
Lord, loose my tongue henceforth to praise Thy Name
That in the palace yard I brought to shame.

(Reprint 1974)

The Lamb

David Hintz

“**A**nd the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the shall be the first month of the year unto you.” Ex. 12:1-2

Notice the instructions given through verse 12 of this chapter outlining Israel’s preparation for the Passover. Every man was to take a Lamb according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house. (The Lamb was always sufficient.) The first chapter of Leviticus also lists some of the animals used in the sacrifices and how each one portrayed Christ in different aspects of His life. The bullocks, sheep, lamb, goat, turtledove or pigeon represent different grades of typical sacrifice and test the measure of our comprehension in regard to the varied aspects of Christ's one sacrifice on the cross.

Think of the number of Mosaic offerings that would be required for each year, at least two per day in some cases. Oxen and bullock 104, sheep and lambs 1895, rams 38, goats and kids 23. Other sacrifices included doves, turtledoves, or young pigeons. Those actually offered of oxen and bullock would be 2,975, sheep and lambs 144,000, rams 485, goats and kids, 13, doves/turtledoves 3 and young pigeons 3. The number offered for 1,450 years would be around 150,800 oxen and bullock, 2,746,756 sheep, lambs, 55,100 rams, along with 33,350 goats & kids. Add to that all the doves, turtledoves, pigeons.

The above figures in amount of blood is staggering to even think about. All of the blood that was shed, plus the personal offerings, and offerings for cleansing from defilement, would amount to even much more.

Revelation 13:8 refers to Christ as the “...Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Paul declares in Philippians 2:7-8 that He “...made himself of no reputation, and took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in the fashion as a man, He humbled Himself; and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Christ came to give His Life as a ransom for many, and He bore our sins on Calvary's cross. Paul also declares in Heb. 9:22 that, “...

almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

There are three statements mentioned in Ex. 12:1-7 giving reference to the Lamb. Verse 3 requires “...A LAMB...” So many people try to approach God in their own way only to find that it fails. Jesus insisted in His declaration to Thomas, “...I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Jn. 14:6 We cannot obtain any favor with God by our own works, finances, abilities, or education. Only “...A LAMB has the ability to provide life, and the steps to obtaining it are unfolded in Romans 10:8-13. “For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” That glorious salvation is provided by the blood of the Lamb, as is so beautifully stated in that old song, “When I see the Blood, I will pass over you,” in perfect agreement with God’s promise in this chapter. “And the blood shall be to you for a token ...and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you,...” Ex. 12:13 What a precious verse! Thank God for the blood that was shed for our sins, and as we accept Christ as Savior, it is the blood, shed for us in the Person of Jesus Christ, that provides life.

16

Verse 4 of this chapter calls attention to “...THE LAMB...” John 1:29 & 36 announce this same title given to Jesus as “...the Lamb of God,...” Job declares “Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.” In Job 22:21 How good to acquaint ourselves with THE LAMB! This Lamb can make you a son of God. Rom. 8:14 He can make you an heir, heir of God, “...and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Rom. 8:17 We are blessed with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Eph. 1:3.

Chosen in Him; accepted in Him; have redemption in Him; forgiveness of sins according to the RICHES OF HIS GRACE. He can be your peace, life, joy, righteousness, comfort, healer,

help, if you will let Him be. Look to God to receive THE LAMB personally, and see what He can and will do FOR you as you put your trust and faith IN Him. Praise God for THE LAMB!

Finally V.5 announces "...YOUR LAMB..." Yes, there is A Lamb, there is The Lamb — and if you have not done so yet, make Him YOUR Lamb. He knows all about you. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. He knows your thoughts afar off, and He wants you for Himself. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Have you made Him YOUR LAMB? If not, why not? He loved us while we were yet in our sins. We were born in sins and shapen in iniquity and Jesus came to give us life and that more abundantly. Cast all your cares on Him for He careth for YOU. Confess your sins, ask Him to come into your heart, accept Him as YOUR LAMB, and as Jesus has said, your name would be "...written in the Lamb's book of life." Rev. 21:27b. Praise His Dear Name!

Make Way For The Bride

Forward! yes forward — the victory shout,
Altho' in our pathway lie mountains of doubt,
And we are cast down in a valley obscure,
Encompassed by fears we can hardly endure.
Onward we march; for our triumph is sure.

Lo! see yon clouds: they begin to divide.
Forward, the watchword; make way for the Bride.
Naught in the world can these victors withstand,
Forging ahead at their Leader's command;
Having the power of God in their hand.

Hark! 'tis the King with His crook and His rod,
Coming in clouds with the trumpet of God,
Calling His Choice One from hill and from dale.
Forward! yes forward. Meet Him without fail.
Heaven is open; come inside the vail.

Mary M. Bodie

REFLECTIONS

... From the Editor

“But now is Christ risen from the dead,....” I Cor. 15:20

Paul reached this glorious conclusion AFTER he had laid a foundation for it, and listed a number of great provisions provided by redemption, which would not be true if there were no resurrection. He begins this chapter with the assertion that, “...I declare unto you the gospel...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;...that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:” I Cor. 15:1-4 His first proof of the resurrection is that it was prophesied by scripture. He then produces a number of first-hand witnesses to verify his claim for, “...he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once;...he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time....” (born again before the rest of his beloved Nation of Israel) I Cor. 15:5-8

18

Next this chief apostle of the Church age lists a number of very detrimental results if the resurrection of Jesus had not materialized, the first being “...ye have believed in vain.” V. 2 This point is so important that he twice more emphasizes it in verses 14 & 17 “...your faith is also vain...your faith is vain;...” (empty)

The list continues with four more consequences for “...if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain,... we are found false witnesses of God;... ye are yet in your sins....they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” I Cor. 15:14-18 The summation of this dark picture announces that “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” I Cor. 15:19 This simply means that if Jesus was not raised from the grave, there is no hope beyond this present existence.

The glorious good news is thrust front and center by the little word “But...” in the text above, loudly proclaiming that “...now is Christ risen from the dead...” This means that all the negative elements of darkness which would have been true if Jesus

were not raised up, have been completely and totally reversed. Paul's message of hope for man; spirit, soul, and body, has been preserved intact, for this same Risen Christ has "...become the firstfruits of them that slept." His resurrection is the guarantee of our own glorious hope far beyond this life.

19 "But now is Christ risen from the dead,...." gives rise to all the tremendous victories recorded in the remainder of this chapter. Because of the resurrection, Jesus "...must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." I Cor. 15:25 That includes "...all rule and all authority and power" recorded in V. 24 referring to the rule of men as well as Satan himself. Scripture then proclaims that "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." I Cor. 15:26 Death has been Satan's primary weapon since the Garden Of Eden, and both he and this scourge will be destroyed. It must be noted, however, that these great victories of the resurrection will not come to pass until AFTER the thousand year millennium. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations... And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire... And I saw a great white throne,...(after the millennium is past) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;... And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Rev. 20:7-14

This end victory over Satan and death will not come to pass until the time outlined above, but God's people can and must claim those victories now, for Paul closes this resurrection chapter with these glorious provisions. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?... thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I Cor. 15:55-57

ANNOUNCEMENT:

"Streaming" means that viewers can join us at Gospel Fellowship in "real time" as the services are taking place. Sunday School at 10 A.M. CST with worship following at 11 A.M. Afternoon services begin at 1:30 P.M. Wed. prayer meeting and bible study at 7 P.M. Bible College classes: Synthesis: Mon. Exposition Thurs. and Prophecy, Fri. all begin at 7 P.M CST.

God's Timing and Purposes

(Continued)

Dr. Vicky Moots

“A time to rend...” Ecc. 3:7a:

“To rend” means “to tear.” The tearing of one’s clothes in Old Testament times, was considered a powerful outward expression of an inner grief. It was done as a sign of mourning, sudden loss, or in repentance. Some Jews still practice this today in a modified manner. According to tradition, a mourner was supposed to tear the clothing over the heart to signify that his heart was broken.

In II Chron. 34 we read that the book of the Law was discovered by Hilkiah, the high priest, in the house of the Lord and brought to King Josiah. Verse 19 tells us, “And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.” Josiah was grieved to learn of the curse that would be upon them because they had been disobedient to God, and so he tore his clothes in repentance and mourning.

20

But God knew his heart and comforted him as we see in v. 27: “Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God...and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also...” God looked past the outward tearing of his clothes and saw down into his broken heart.

Did God listen to Josiah’s cry of repentance because he tore his clothes? Do our outward actions impress God or earn His favor? No! Because “...man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (I Sam. 16:7).

In Joel 2:12-13 God exhorted the backslidden Jews through the prophet to repent: “Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart...And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God...”

David tells us in Ps. 34:18, through his own experience, “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...” When we rend our hearts and we are broken before Him, then His ears are open unto our cries, David also assures us of this in Ps. 51:17: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

Even though it was the custom at that time, not everyone was allowed under the Mosaic Law to tear their garments in response to grief. Lev. 21:10 informs us that the high priest was

not allowed to do this: “And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured...shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes.”

Since Jesus is our spiritual High Priest, it is not surprising to find that God did not allow His clothing to be torn at the time of His crucifixion. This event was recorded in John 19:23-24: “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots...” Jesus’ garments were not torn, but His heart was. It was broken for us. Nor was his head uncovered, for He wore a crown of thorns, His priestly mitre.

21 However, there was something else which was very important that was torn at the time of Jesus’ death, as we discover in Matt. 27:51: “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom...” The veil was the curtain in the temple that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. Only the high priest was allowed to go past the veil into the Holy of Holies, and that was only once a year on the Day of Atonement in order to place the blood of the sacrifice on the Mercy Seat to atone for the sins of the people.

When the veil was rent, it allowed free access into that sacred place where only the high priest had been able to meet with God. Who rent the veil? It was God, Himself, because it was torn from top to bottom.

We learn from Heb. 10:19-20 that the veil represented Jesus’ fleshly body which was sacrificed for us to make atonement for sin. The veil of Jesus’ flesh had to be torn away on the cross so that we might have access to God’s presence without fear. The work of salvation had been completed when Jesus cried, “It is finished.”

From that point on, it was no longer necessary to have an earthly priest to intercede for us, because Heb. 9:11 explains to us that Christ became our High Priest, and v. 12 declares, “...by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Then in v. 24 we read, “For Christ is

not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

Because of this, Paul states in Heb. 4:14,16 that we can now safely approach God in prayer for all our needs: “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Praise God for the veil that was rent on Calvary! Now is the time to rend our hearts and to enter into God’s presence through the veil that was rent for us: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest [Holy of Holies] by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh...Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...” (Heb. 10:19-20,22).

“...and a time to sew...” Ecc. 3:7b: “To sew” means 22
“to join, to make, mend, fasten or close, usually with needle and thread.” It would make sense that after a time of rending there would come a time to sew, for that which was rent (or torn) might need to be mended, to be joined back together.

The first time that sewing is mentioned in the Bible is in Gen. 3:7, after Adam and Eve disobeyed God by partaking of the forbidden fruit: “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.” It is interesting to note that they both did the sewing, not just the woman.

God, however, was not impressed by the fig-leaf fashion statement that they made; and neither is He impressed by our own feeble attempts to cover our nakedness and shame before Him. Their self-made garments were not adequate to cover their sin, and so we read in Gen. 3:21 that God, Himself, had to do some sewing in order to clothe them: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”

Their new garments were not cheap to make. The material was costly, for it required innocent blood to be shed. Our new spiritual garments which God, Himself, has fashioned, and not our own hands, are also costly, but paid for in full by the blood of the Lamb, sacrificed for us.

Some people enjoy sewing and making new clothing or

other items, but not me! My sewing consists of mending things that need repair. As a physician I enjoyed sewing up lacerations or doing surgery to remove suspicious skin lesions.

But God is not in the repair business when it comes to sewing. He did not choose to have the veil in the temple sewn back together, for it was only a shadow, a figure of the true substance, and it had served its purpose. It had to be torn away to make room for the new and living way through the Resurrected Christ.

Neither did God sew a patch on the old creation to repair it after man sinned. Jesus explained why in Mark 2:21: “No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.”

23

Instead, He made us a new creation in Christ, just as He made new clothes for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness. We need new clothes for the new man. Therefore, it is time to tear off our old garments of self-righteousness and be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, the Lamb of God who was slain for us.

A number of years ago, when I was on a medical mission trip to the Dominican Republic, a man was brought to the local hospital, in the town where we were stationed, after he had received a wound to the chest with a machete during a fight. He was bleeding profusely because it had penetrated into the outer portion of his heart. By God’s providence, one of the surgeons on our surgical team just happened to be a cardiovascular surgeon as well as a general surgeon, and so he knew just what to do to save the man’s life. He was able to successfully repair the damage to the heart by making a patch from the tough, outer covering of the heart, called the pericardium.

The next day the man was, of course, thankful to be alive but very angry and threatening to kill the man who had injured him. During his recovery, our mission team was able to witness to him about the love of Jesus, and he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior.

The surgeon had repaired his physical heart by sewing a patch on it, but God performed an even greater surgery than that. Spiritually, the man’s heart had been torn by sin, but God did not repair it. Instead, He exchanged his hate-filled, sinful heart for a new one, a heart that was willing to forgive, and clothed him with

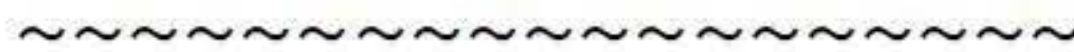
garments of salvation.

The garments of salvation have been sewn by God's hand and not our own. But there is another garment currently being fashioned in which we can have a part in the sewing process by yielding to the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We read of that garment in Rev. 19:7-8: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness [righteous acts] of the saints."

The process of making fine linen from flax is a lot of hard work, for it entails growing the flax, drying it out properly, and then stripping it of all the impurities in order to make it white and soft. After that, it must be woven into cloth. We read of the virtuous woman in Prov. 31, a type of the bride of Christ. Verses 19-22 tell us that she weaves her own material to make clothing for herself, for her household and to give to the poor; and in v. 24 we read, "...she maketh fine linen..."

All of those things represent her righteous acts through which she is weaving the linen for her wedding dress. Then in Rev. 19 we see that she is granted the honor of wearing it. In addition, we read in Psa. 45:13-14 that this beautiful white dress has been embroidered by her, one stitch at a time, with threads of pure gold, which is the result of her fiery trials: "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework..." Now is the time to start sewing our garment, to be ready for that glorious wedding day.

24



LONGING FOR HOME

I long to go home To meet Jesus in the air.
I want to be with Him In that city bright and fair.
The signs are all around us; He could come today.
Oh, come, Dear Lord Jesus And take your bride away.

--Beula Clark

WORDS OF LIFE

Orville A. Freestone, Sr.

“**T**hen Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” Acts 5:29-32.

25 With these words did Peter and the other apostles witness to the high priest and the council concerning Jesus, by Whom they were enabled to perform mighty miracles. They had shortly before been cast into prison with a guard placed for their safe-keeping only to be released by an angel of the Lord who bade them to “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.” V. 20. The resulting counsel of the enemies of those bold witnesses was a decision to scourge the apostles. After this was done Jesus' loyal followers rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake and continued to witness of His death and RESURRECTION. How can such courageous defenders of the Faith be defeated? And from whence obtained they such indomitable courage? From "the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him" Had Jesus not said, "Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with POWER from on high." Lk. 24:48,49

As there were some in Peter's day who, though very religious, refused to accept God's unspeakable Gift even His Son, so there are many with us in the present time who disregard God's way of salvation. It is only through Jesus that we may be saved from eternal judgment. God's Word declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and "Without the shedding- of blood there is no remission" of sins. Ezek. 18:3 & Heb. 9 :22 Jesus declared of Himself, "I am THE WAY, THE TRUTH and THE LIFE: No man cometh unto the Father but BY ME." Jn. 14:6. This agreed with the announcement of John Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God

which taketh away the sins of the world." Jn. 1:29 Truly did the sacrifices of the Old Testament point ahead to the perfect sacrifice of the sinless Son of God.

Jesus is the only man Who ever met all the requirements of the Scriptures qualifying as Israel's King and Messiah and Redeemer of all men. As Redeemer, He Who was guiltless paid the penalty for the guilty. John bore witness to His claims: "... Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Jn. 1:29 and "Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." Jn. 5:33-35 The mighty miracles which Jesus performed bore witness to His claims. "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Jn. 5:36 And God, the Father, bore witness to His claims: "...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:17 "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;..." Matt. 17:5 "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. ...And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not." Jn. 5:37,38 Had Israel's spiritual and political leaders not been so rebellious and stubborn they would have recognized even after Jesus' death that all of the prophets spoke concerning those eventful 3 1/2 years which had just transpired. Particularly will we quote from Zech. 9:9. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." The same was fulfilled but a few days before Jesus' crucifixion when He was brought into Jerusalem amid the shouts and acclaim of multitudes.

Had those ruling Jews but pondered the words of their high priest of that year, surely they would have known that God was pronouncing judgment, and the priest was but an instrument, unbelieving though he was. For when they were plotting to take Jesus, Caiaphas, the high priest, had said, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he

not of himself: but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Jn. 11:49-52

A graphic picture of the Jewish nation's attitude to Jesus in His rejection and suffering on Calvary hill is found in the words of Isaiah, penned about 700 years before. "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet did we esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Isa. 53:3,4

But Isaiah saw what those envious Jewish rulers did not and he spoke in behalf of them that believe. "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes, we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53:5,6

27

Constantly Satan stirred wicked men to acts of prejudice and hatred. A Roman guard was placed at Joseph's tomb where Jesus' body lay with a great stone, upon which was fixed the Roman seal, placed against the entrance. These were not enough to secure the body of Jesus for there was a great earthquake and the angel of the Lord came to Jesus' help and rolled back the stone and sat upon it. The guards feared greatly and became as dead men but later made their way to the priests to inform them. These same wicked men bribed the soldiers to say that Jesus' disciples stole His body away. How absurd! How could the soldiery which were armed allow themselves to be overpowered by citizens who were too fearful to stand by at Jesus' trial and crucifixion? As Augustine put it, "They were asleep or awake. If awake, how should they allow the body to be taken? If asleep, how could they know that the disciples took the body? How dare they charge that Jesus' body was stolen?"

These evil leaders in Jewry sought to oppose Jesus' followers who became amazingly bold after receiving the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Some were imprisoned, some beheaded, some stoned, but in general most of them were subjected to persecution of one form or another. Sometimes the Lord wrought for them miraculous deliverances (as indicated in the text) but sometimes He allowed them to be martyrs as in the

case of James, the brother of John. Acts 12:2 But the more Satan stirred up opposition the more the "Word grew and prevailed." It was like trying to beat out a grass fire with a flail. The flames of faith only leaped and spread to cover much more territory and inspire many more people.

Unable to stamp out Christianity thru' persecution, Satan resorted to new tactics. He ceased to stir up resistance on a large scale and thru' Political world rulers, beginning with Constantine, caused Christianity to become a popular profession and unbelievers began to claim, although they had not been "born again," that reality of faith which believers possessed. Thus the leaven of unbelief, prevalent among the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day, spread rapidly thruout Christendom. There have been many revivals of faith in the Church, the Body of Christ, but never with such outstanding results as in the revival which began about forty years ago, in 1906, and soon encompassed the globe.

Again we can see how God began to bless not among the established Churches and organizations but among the poor and needy Who were seeking to know God. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." It was among these folk that God began to manifest the gifts of the Holy Spirit as recorded in I Cor. 12.

To the natural, unregenerate man, these people acted and spoke strangely at times. But God has not changed nor has the nature of the natural man. As on the day of Pentecost some mockingly said, "These men are full of new wine." Acts 2:13 So today, the learned and would-be-representatives of God try to explain away the supernatural workings of God which He is performing because He raised up His Son from among the dead. God, in His unbounded love for humanity, is still presenting indisputable evidence that Jesus was His Son; That He died ; was buried; arose the third day according to the Scriptures; and was seen of many witnesses; that He ascended to glory and His return to earth was announced. I Cor. 15:1-6 & Acts 1:10,11 The fact that the Lord confirms His Word with signs (miracles) , and this being done in the Name of Jesus, ought to be evidence conclusive enough to convince anyone.

Many turn from the truth because it brings reproach. Somebody ridicules or pokes fun at them and they can't endure it. Pride, conceit, and curiosity are but a few traits of man which

cause some to seek to pry into the secrets of God only to be led into error and spiritual darkness by Satan. As a result we have many schisms and divisions in Christendom and some groups are so far from the truth as to deny the supernatural virgin birth of Jesus; or that He was more than a good man and a great teacher; or that God accepted the sacrifice of His Son and that the "Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." They even seek to legislate and enforce (rather than persuade) others to conform to their earthly conception of God's heavenly kingdom and shear spiritual saints of their liberty in Christ. These folk will attend church, gathering together making a great profession, especially on Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday and perhaps Pentecost Sunday, but they need to be "Born again."

Let us, who are saved, boldly declare the Gospel as did Peter and the apostles. Later Paul and his fellow laborers "spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus," being "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation; to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Gentiles)." Honest souls, seeking fellowship with God, will not be deceived. God will cause them to recognize the Truth for He will reveal it to them. So Jesus said to Peter. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto you but My Father, Which is in heaven." Declare the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for He died in our stead and His resurrection is proof that we shall be raised or changed and be like Him, "Who was delivered (unto death) for our offenses, and was raised for our justification." Rom. 4:25 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." I Jn. 3:2

- * Bubbling over, running fast.
Looking upward, going past.
ASC.
- * Life's greatest tragedy is to lose God
and not miss Him.
- * "The poorest of all people is he who has
nothing but material riches."

Hosea Chapter 4

Gene Hawkins

“**H**ear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel:...” V.1

The prophet once again levels his assault directly against the ten tribes of Israel which have fully bowed to the ungodliness of idolatry. Though Judah is warned in V. 15 not to “...offend...” in the same manner as “her sister” and will eventually be taken captive by Babylon, she is not yet fully engaged in idol worship. Thus Hosea addresses Israel explaining that, “...the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.” The land to which he refers is that occupied by the ten tribes, who now claim Samaria rather than Jerusalem as their capital. They have most assuredly departed from “truth...mercy.....” and the “...knowledge of God,” which now results in “...swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.” V. 1-2 All these are simply manifestations of the flesh when men walk contrary to the ways of the LORD and the term “...blood toucheth blood,” is simply rampant murder which prevailed throughout the entire land.

30

Such gross infractions now lead to severe consequences for, “Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.” V. 3 This mourning and languishing is a direct prophecy of Israel being taken captive by Assyria at the time then present, but these same manifestations of judgment also apply to the entire nation of Israel who must endure the most intense time of the great tribulation at the end of this Church Age. John describes this same scene when he records the opening of the seventh seal of judgment. “And when he had opened the seventh seal,...I saw the seven angels...and to them were given seven trumpets....The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth:... And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And

the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;... and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.” Rev. 8:1-11

The following admonition will also undoubtedly prevail in the end time. “Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.” This decree forbidding any kind of reproof may seem a bit strange, but the reason for it is two-fold. One is that the day of warning is over and judgment must ensue. The other is that none is more righteous than another, and even the prophets and priests are included. “Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.” V. 5 This would be a reference to those “prophets” who were not in any wise in harmony with God and His Word as noted in the next verse. “...I will destroy thy mother...” is yet another reference to the entire nation of Israel who has transgressed against God after the same manner in which Hosea’s wife Gomer had transgressed against him.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” V. 6 God never repeats Himself unnecessarily and this is the second time in these few verses wherein He has assailed Israel “...for lack of knowledge:” and apparently both the prophets and priests must take center stage in this infraction. It seems that they have literally chosen to reject the knowledge proffered them and there is a tremendous price to pay for it. God will in fact reject them, “...seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” Not only so, but “As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.” V. 7 God had increased this nation greatly after they came into the land of Canaan, and even after they “rejected Him” by choosing a king in

the days of Samuel. “And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.” I Sam. 8:7 Despite that fact, God did choose a “man after His own heart” which was David and this nation prospered both in the days of David and his son Solomon, wherein they truly did celebrate 40 prosperous years of glory. However, the glory of this time faded away as “...they sinned against me:....” Such sin will not go unpunished and “...therefore I will change their glory into shame,” meaning the shame of bondage to Assyria. Scriptural history has most assuredly confirmed the authenticity of these words.

“They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.” V. 8 This could be a reference to God’s instruction to the priests of old. “Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering:... The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it:...” Le 6:25-26 If so, it means that they were only “going through the motions,” rather than actually acknowledging sin. The term could also mean that Israel were “eating” their sin of idolatry as though it were not something “unclean,” setting ...their heart on iniquity,” or pursuing it as if nothing were wrong with it. Furthermore, it seems that the priests themselves had become no different than the “common people” for “...there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.” V. 9 Rather than being the leader God intended, the priests actually led the way in committing the atrocious acts of idolatry, and their punishment would soon follow.

“For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.” V. 10 Real satisfaction or having “... enough...” never comes through natural riches as many suppose. Furthermore, the “...whoredom...” demonstrated by Hosea’s wife Gomer in the opening chapters of this book, will not bring the prosperity for which Israel had hoped. They had actually attributed their “...increase...” to these false gods as noted in chapter 2 where God defined it as whoredom and idolatry, but

such increase will not continue "...because they have left off to take heed to the LORD."

"Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart." V. 11 This reference to wine would probably be more of a reference to the religious intoxication of Israel to idolatry rather than any natural stimulant for God is once again leveling His charges of whoredom against them. The next verse also records in depth their idolatrous acts, for "My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God." V. 12 The "...stocks..." simply means "a tree" and testifies of Israel bowing down to that which has been made by man as described by Isaiah. "He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved." Isa 40:20 The text here in Hosea seems to suggest Israel's expectation that the stock or "tree," along with their "...staff..." or walking stick could supply them with the counsel which they sought. Instead, God declares that they are driven by the very "...spirit of whoredoms..." which has in fact removed them "...from under their God." That is their idolatry has removed God's protection over them.

That practice of idolatry is further described as "They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery." V. 13 The shadow which they claim simply describes the quest for their own comfort or pleasure, but once again there are severe reprisals for such conduct as both spouses and daughters "...shall commit whoredom...and adultery." This would surely mean that the families could follow the example of their leaders in committing such atrocities against God, but it may also indicate literal whoredom or fornication against their own fathers and husbands. This would surely be in keeping with God's response that, "I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores,

and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall.” V. 14 Men do not always realize that “...the spirit of whoredoms...” against God does have a definite impact and consequence on natural relationships. So it is that He refuses to punish those transgressors.

“Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth.” V. 15 Hosea once again reiterates that Judah as this time has now fully bowed to the idolatry seen in the ten tribes, and thus they are admonished not to “offend.” However Israel is instructed not to make a trip “...unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The LORD liveth.” Gilgal had a prominent history of being a very victorious place for Israel. It is the first place they visited after crossing the Jordan River into Canaan and it was here that God said, “...This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.” Josh. 5:9 The reproach of Egypt is a reference to their bondage in that land, but now these ten tribes are severely bound by whoredom and idolatry. Elijah also came to Gilgal just prior to the time he was translated into glory. Thus God basically informs this idolatrous nation that they need not come to Gilgal because they will in no wise reap the glorious spiritual benefits associated with it.

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(Ch. 4 to be continued)

The Christian Answer

Recently an African Muslim was converted to Christ. When someone asked him why he had become a Christian, he answered, “Well, it’s like this. Suppose you were going down a road when suddenly it forked in two directions. You didn’t know which way to take. There at the fork in the road you could see two persons--one dead and one alive. Of which one would you inquire the way?”

This new convert had grasped the supreme difference between Islam and the gospel. The Muslim regards both Muhammad and Christ as prophets of God. But whereas Muhammad lived and died and passed from the scene of human history, Jesus lived, died, and arose! He is alive today as our contemporary.

—JOHN T. SEAMANDS in *Message of the Cross*
(Reprint 1974)



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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
First Day of the Week	New Birth	Water Baptism
Five Much Mores	Not Legislation, Revelation	Wheat and Tares
Five Consequences	Oneness of Christ	Why am I Not Healed

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