

# Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the  
whole Counsel of GOD

Number 2

February 2022

Volume 112



**T**he Lord is a God  
of knowledge, and  
by him actions  
are weighed.  
*1 SAMUEL 2:3*



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## CALL OF THE MASTER



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

PERIODICALS postage is paid at Grandview, Missouri.

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

Telephone: 816-618-3306. E-mail [gjhawk1@msn.com](mailto:gjhawk1@msn.com) Print Shop # 816-322-2257

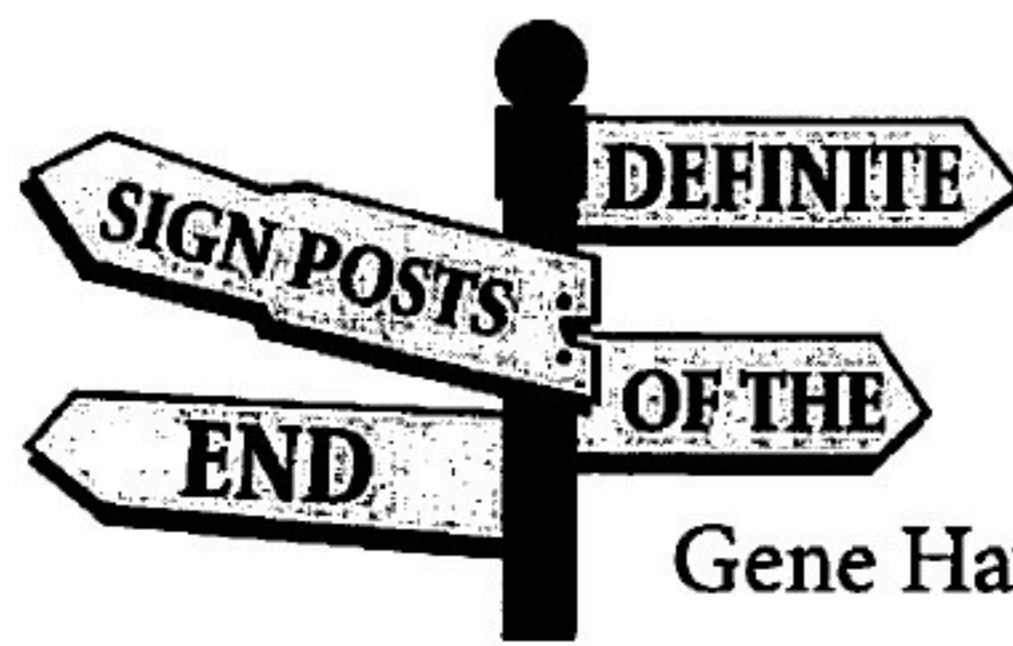
Web site: [www.gracegod.org](http://www.gracegod.org). Bible lessons and audio sermons are downloadable.

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

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

Editor: Gene Hawkins





Gene Hawkins

“**A**nd then shall that Wicked be revealed,...Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,...with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” II Thess. 2:8-10

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” Matt. 24:4-5

“**ANTICHRIST LOOMING....but he is not here yet!**”

This bold headline could be splashed across every newspaper and media outlet throughout the entire globe and it would be absolutely true at this present time. However, true believers must put it into context with the truth of God’s Word. Paul wrote the above message to the saints at Thessalonica because some were “...shaken in mind, or...troubled,...” because they had evidently been persuaded that Jesus had come, and they had been left behind with no hope of being caught up to glory. He refuted that idea of finality and tried to encourage them with these words. “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,... That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled,... as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means:...” II Thess. 2:1-3 Twice, the apostle asserts that the coming of Jesus was still future. Thus, he shouts, “Let no man deceive you...” He then begins a list of things which must take place before men will be completely cut off from any opportunity for deliverance out of this world, proclaiming that “... that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” V. 3-4 Paul’s ultimate proof that Jesus has not yet come in the manner they had assumed, is that the antichrist has not yet been revealed.

There has been much speculation throughout the ages as to who the antichrist might be or from whence he might come. Scripture does not give those specifics but God’s Word is very



clear as to the TIME of that revelation. It is quite certain that this man of sin is presently in this world, and Daniel describes him as a "prince" who "...will confirm the covenant with many for one week:..." at the **beginning** of the tribulation. Dan. 9:26-27 However, this infamous man is not officially revealed until Satan raises him up out of the bottomless pit just prior to the middle of the week when he will begin his reign of terror for the final 1260 days of the tribulation, as summarized in Rev. 17:8 "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; (meaning he had been "...wounded to death;..." Rev. 13:3) and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." This "resurrection" of the beast is described in Revelation 9 where John beheld Satan as "...a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit;..." V. 1-2

4 Thus, this ungodly man has not yet emerged at the present time but his Satanic tactics are becoming more evident with each passing day. John clearly defines the spirit of antichrist, asserting that it was present even in the beginning of this Church Age. "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." Such a spirit has become more rampant down through the ages and is coming to the fore mightily in these days just prior to the coming of Jesus. Paul's message to the Thessalonians agrees with John, "For the mystery of iniquity doth **already work:...**" II Thess. 2:7 He then explains that statement describing him as "...that Wicked....whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness..." II Thess. 2:9-10

That "...Wicked..." in the above citation is actually a reference to the false prophet, who will be able to display Satanic "...power and signs and lying wonders, but both he and the antichrist employ the same Satanic tools of deception, "...with all deceivableness of unrighteousness..." That deception absolutely pervades present day society. Satan used it very early in the Garden of Eden as he whispered to Eve, "...Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your



eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Gen. 3:4-5 The subject here is God’s decree which forbade Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan effectively convinced her that God was being very “unfair” in withholding that which was good from them. Paul is very clear, asserting that “...Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” I Tim. 2:14

Paul warns these Thessalonians “Let no man deceive you by any means:...” It has also been noted many times in these pages that Jesus’ first response regarding the signs of these last days was “...Take heed that no man deceive you.” Matt. 24:4 Paul’s final instructions to his son Timothy likewise include a warning for these last days that “... evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”

All of the signs that Jesus put forth in Matt. 24 follow the same pattern. The effects of them begin in a rather mild fashion but increase in intensity as time marches on. The atmosphere of deception follows that same path and pattern as The Master explains how this devastating tactic of Satan will become more and more intense in the tribulation. “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matt. 24:24 That “...elect...” is a special reference to the remnant of Israel at that time, for Jesus here describes the last half of the tribulation after the antichrist has set up his own image in the midst of the week. 5

Men are undoubtedly persuaded that deception has many advantages, for they use this Satanic practice repeatedly. However, one major purpose for deceiving another is to gain dominion over him. That is exactly the objective Satan achieved with Eve. He will in the last day follow the same pattern in an effort to convince the world that the antichrist is most assuredly The True Anointed Of God. Antichrist literally means “opposite of the Messiah.” Satan would bring his man to the fore in the stead of Jesus.

Jesus declared above that “...there shall arise false Christs...” He stated earlier in the chapter that “...many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” Matt. 24:5

When one says “...I am Christ...” it does not necessarily mean that a person simply repeats those words, though some have



had the audacity to do it. The real significance of this term is that men **assume** more and more that they can do what can only be attributed to Divine Power. For example, the antichrist will boast a promise of peace which he can in no wise deliver, but the world at large will be deceived into thinking he does have all the answers to their dilemma.

6 It is imperative that God's people especially understand that the day of Satanic deception marking the arrival of antichrist is already here, and has been for some time during this era known as the "...beginning of sorrows..." Paul warned the Thessalonians against the "...deceivableness of unrighteousness,..." which simply means that the reasoning minds of men designate something as being right when it clearly is not. Such deceptive reasoning is manifest today, as one nation after another tries desperately to "twist the truth" in an effort to dominate another. Russia currently insists that she has no intention of invading Ukraine even though massive troops are being assembled there. Her reasoning is that she surely has a "right" to do it because Ukraine was once a Soviet subject. China likewise tries to convince the world that taking over Taiwan is not their objective despite the fact that they constantly invade their air space. China is also at the heart of the "China Virus" known as Covid. The question is often on the lips of many, wondering if China perpetrated this ungodly scourge on purpose. This godless country has also tried to convince all other nations that it came from elsewhere, even though she took steps to protect her own country while freely spreading it through unrestricted travel out of China to the entire world. This would also have been a time when only China knew it existed. On the other hand, this nation has not even tried to hide her intention of taking over the entire planet even in the next 20 to 50 years.

Once again, coming "...in my name saying I am Christ..." bespeaks the attitude of one who may in fact truly believe that they can accomplish **what only God can do**. The entire world is currently obsessed with controlling global temperature in order to avoid numerous catastrophes caused, they believe, by the weather. However all these difficulties have been specifically prophesied by God's Word for these last days, and nothing will curtail them. Nevertheless, men have been deceived into thinking that such a feat can be accomplished, even though the only thing produced thus far by such severe restrictions which accompany



“climate change,” is world-wide hardship and privation.

Another very disconcerting area at present is disease, the current menace being Covid -19. Some politicians have boldly declared “I will stop it,” but that simply has not happened, and scripture again asserts that this is God’s area of expertise. That reality will become more prominent with the increasing torment of tribulation days, as illustrated in Revelation 9. The timeline here is very near the middle of the week after Satan has been cast out of heaven, and subsequently opened the bottomless pit releasing hordes of locusts or wicked spirits “...upon the earth. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; **but only those men which HAVE NOT the seal of God in their foreheads.**” Rev. 9:3-4 This simply means that such torment will be inflicted **ONLY** on unbelievers. This is not the first time God has made a “...division between my people and thy people...” Ex 8:23 Israel did endure the first few judgments which came upon Egypt but God made a distinct separation just prior to the invasion of the flies “...into all the land of Egypt.” Ex. 8:24 Has the same pattern begun to unfold with Covid? There are many reports of God’s people being attacked by this virus but there have also been numerous accounts of those who tested positive yet felt little or no symptoms. Deception in regard to this virus has also been widely reported, for a great number of deaths have been attributed to the disease when other factors proved to be the primary cause. It should be encouraging to every believer that “**My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.**” Psa. 31:15 God’s decisions must also be paramount in our lives. Job likewise asserted, deep in the midst of his great difficulty, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, **the number of his months are with thee,** thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;” Job 14:4-5 Regardless of circumstance, God determines the day of death, and the texts above clearly state that He will separate His Own unto Himself.

Deception and unrest also permeate the global atmosphere, due to this current virus. Mask and vaccination mandates have proven to cause great confusion as well as hardship due to very conflicting reports and conduct by so-called high ranking officials. Prominent authorities have been caught on



camera violating their own demand to wear a mask. Original reports regarding vaccines stipulated that the recipient would neither be infected with the virus nor able to pass it on to others. Actual circumstance has proven both to be untrue. Regardless of that fact, the unvaccinated have in some cases been accused of being “unpatriotic” for being so insensitive to their fellowman, and the demand for mandates continues. These conflicts and contradictions have caused some politicians to declare plainly that many of these mandates are simply a ploy to exert power and authority over those under them. This is in no wise surprising because total control is the ultimate goal of the antichrist, and as noted above, Satan is most assuredly “conditioning” this entire world to accept that authority, even at this present hour. U.S. Government officials are desperately trying to enforce these mandates, demanding that if one refuses to comply; his very job could be in jeopardy. There was great rejoicing recently when the U.S. Supreme Court rejected those mandates in America but no one knows when they may arise again, or if such control could be adopted globally. Some believers are also of the opinion that one virus after another may invade the world, and the emergence of Delta and Omicron seem to bear that out. Will even more restrictive demands be made world-wide to try and control them? It has already been reported that Israel has actually approved four boosters for those already vaccinated. Such actions and mandates have caused some to wonder whether or not the world is set to endure “**a never ending pandemic,**” thus giving some leaders an opportunity to demand more control in the name of preserving national health. Many among the general populace as well as some very prominent politicians, who are also doctors, are persuaded that these mandates are not actually prompted by any desire for medical well being, but have rather provided a golden opportunity and deliberate attempt for gaining the aforementioned power and control. Let all men keep in mind that such rigorous tactics are only “a stone’s throw” from the control which will without doubt be implemented by the antichrist, “... that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Rev. 13:17

While those who are looking intently into the heavens for Jesus’ soon appearing must be very much mindful of these signs surrounding the antichrist, they must also cling to the fact



that only truth will guard against the aforementioned deception. The authenticity of the speculations and happenings in our day must be measured against "what sayeth the scripture," even as Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to "Remember... that,.. I told you these things?" II Thess. 2:5 He further instructed, that men are "...damned who believed not the truth,..." II Thess. 2:12 Not only so, but "...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and **belief of the truth:**" II Thess. 2:13 There is no substitute for appropriating all the Truth of God's Word. Those today who would be caught up to glory when that first trumpet sounds, must at all costs, embrace the ultimate truth for these last days, which is: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev. 3:11

## *Some Sure Day*

Some day we'll know why friends seemed chill  
And stood aloof when we felt ill,  
Tho' we the Prize would win.  
Some time we'll surely understand  
Why Christ seemed not to be at hand,  
But mists and doubts poured in.

Some day we'll see behind the cloud,  
When we felt lonely in a crowd  
With no one near to pray,  
The face of Him who never fails,  
Whose tender hands control the sails  
In spite of storm and spray.

Some day we'll be surprised and glad,  
And wonder that we e'er were sad.  
(Our times are in God's hand.)  
Yea He is framing every ill  
Into His plan, our lives to fill  
With heaven, sublime and grand.



## Power Of Decision

Albert J. Woehr, Jr.

**“A**nd, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD. And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou.” I Kings 20:13-14

Why do many of God's children fail to enjoy the victory which Christ purchased for us on Calvary's Cross? Listening and watching others, as well as examining my own heart and life, have brought some things to light which we wish to discuss from the Word of God. I Kings 20:1-14, records a story of Ahab, who was besieged by Ben-hadad the king of Syria. The Syrian general was a very successful one. He had never suffered defeat at the hands of man. No matter whom he fought against he always came off the victor. He now sent messengers to Ahab, king of Israel, demanding their possessions. Ahab realized that Israel was no match for the Syrian; so he went to God about it.

10

The prophet was sent by the Lord to Ahab to tell him that He knows about Ahab's trouble and the odds against him and promises him victory. The Lord said, "I will deliver it into thine hand this day, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." Ahab, startled at the promise said, "By whom?" The Lord answered, "Even by the young men of the provinces." Then Ahab said, "Who shall order the battle?" The LORD answered, "Thou!" This is a remarkable story. It appeals to us from every angle. What a message it carries to the Christian, especially in a day when things look so dark and foreboding, a message of encouragement to trust the Lord Jesus regardless of what the conditions may be. Now in examining this Scripture, note some things very carefully:

1. Ben-hadad, king of Syria is a type of Satan.
2. Ahab, king of Israel is a type of the Christian.
3. Ahab's silver, type of a Christian's redemption.
4. Ahab's gold, type of the glory of the Lord in the lives of Christians.
5. Ahab's wives, type of the Christian's possessions.
6. Ahab's children, type of the Christian's fruit.
7. Ahab's goodliest, type of the Christian's desires toward the Lord.



8. Elders of Israel, type of the Word—the promises of God to the believer.
9. Young men of the princes of the provinces, type of the Christian's resources at hand.
10. Ben-hadad's seige, type of the troubles surrounding the Christian.

Keep these notes handy. Examine the story carefully. Pray about them. Ask the Spirit of God to make this story life to you. Then you will find it a great source of strength and comfort. And God will magnify it for you. You may also discover truth in your prayer and meditation, which has not been revealed to the writer. Now Satan always desires to cheat the Christian by deceiving, bluffing, or blinding him from the benefits of redemption, of glory, God's glory in the life of the Christian, and of becoming fruitful. He would blind us to our rightful possessions in our Lord. Satan desires to so engage the Christian's mind that even right motives, thought and desires Godward are diverted, unless we are careful. He tries to make the Christian waver, by showing him conditions and circumstances instead of the power of God, that thereby he may yield to unbelief. By being so enticed, the Christian is bluffed into thinking that the enemy is too great to be overcome. Consequently, his blessings are lost.

**11**

Note that in listening to the enemy, Ahab became frightened and was ready to yield up all his possessions to Ben-hadad. How like our experience when we listen to Satan's suggestions. Note also that God knew all about Ahab's trouble, and He was ready to deliver the enemy into Ahab's hand. When? "Today." Get that, Christian. Today! Now! Now is the accepted time. Now is God's day for your victory. Do not wait until you get to heaven and then talk about it; but now God will deliver. While you thought nobody cared, God knew all about your trouble and the pinching it was giving you.

The Spirit of God moved upon the Word — the promises of God to the believer (elders of Israel whom Ahab consulted). The promises raise their voices against any more of surrender to the enemy. They counsel the Christian to refute the enemy's demands and bluffing. Note: The enemy bluffs in the face of the Word. Things look worse. He sets his fighting equipment in order. Boasts of his power. Strengthened by the Word, the believer looks toward God for help. Ahab answered the enemy, after being counseled by the elders in Israel. The Prophet gives God's promise.

"Hast thou seen all this great multitude? Behold I will deliver



it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." Ahab believed it possible; so do we. But how can it be done? he asks, "By whom?" Observe the Lord's answer —

"Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces." Ahab depended upon those young men all over the kingdom. They helped keep order. Their union was his strength. They were the most important men in the kingdom. They are a type of the resources that the Christian has at hand — faith, hope, love and steadfastness developed by the Word. Ahab again, trying hard to believe God inquires, "Who shall order the battle." The Lord, making the issue direct, answered "Thou!" Again we note some important things. It was not Ahab's fault that he was king. He became such through no merit of his own, but because he was born into a kingly family. He received his title because of the death of someone else and by birth. Christians become such through no merit of their own, but by being born into a kingly family. We receive our title of Christian because of the death of someone else, Christ, and because we were born again.

12 It was not Ahab's fault that Ben-Hadad wanted his possessions. Nor is it our fault that Satan wants to rob us of our possessions gained through Christ. It is Satan's business to rob Christians and lay seige against them. Ahab was not to defeat the enemy. God said, "I will deliver." We cannot gain the victory ourselves; but we have the victory "through Christ our Lord."

What Ahab had at hand was to enable him to stand against the enemy, his strength, the "princes of the provinces." What we have at hand makes it possible to stand against the enemy — our strength — God's grace, the Word of God, faith, hope, love and steadfastness developed by His Word. They are our "princes," our important figures in life.

What could Ahab do? He could trust God. He could order the battle. He could set in battle array that which he had. These denote his obedience. What can the Christian do? Trust God through Jesus Christ. Order the battle by deciding whom to trust. We can set in battle array that which we have — Spiritual weapons. The Word of God, Yieldedness to God.

What can God do? Win the fight. He said, "I will deliver." — When? "This day," the time of victory. What can you do now? Decide for God, or surrender to the enemy. Which way will you decide?

I want you to notice particularly that the whole matter of victory depends upon how you decide to fight the enemy. Your



decision determines what kind of victory you will get. Your decision is the ordering of the battle. If you decide to trust God completely in your trial, you will set the battle in order and marshal up the things "at hand" against the enemy. You will know that the enemy cannot be fought with carnal weapons, because it is the powers of darkness which you are fighting; so you will use spiritual weapons — the Word of God, faith, hope, love and steadfastness. You will use the shield of faith which will enable you to quench all the fiery darts of the enemy. In trial, trouble, sickness and perplexities, the chief concern of God is not whether He is stronger than Satan. He already knows the answer to this (the true answer). God is not concerned about whether He can defeat Satan, or not, but He IS vitally concerned about how you will order the battle, how you will put in array your "things at hand" against the enemy. Whether you will entirely call upon the name of the Lord, trust Him and use God's Word against the enemy, or use other means. If you decide God's way, He will win the victory and deliver you. Otherwise suffering, delay and many other things will develop until you finally come God's way.

Let us see it this way, by way of illustration. It was not my fault that I was born a sinner. That was somebody else's fault. Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden; henceforth sin was inherited by mankind all the way down to me. Though it was not my fault; yet I was a sinner nevertheless. I could not save myself; but God could save me. Hence I had a decision to make — come God's way, or perish; heaven, or hell; which? It was up to me to decide. Up to me to order the battle. How was the battle to be fought? Would I set the battle in array thus: reform, try to do good, turn over a new leaf, cut out bad habits, become a good neighbor a good father, a kind husband, a zealous churchgoer, give all I had to the poor? If so I would still be a lost sinner. Victory was only secured for me by Christ through redemption. He alone is the Deliverer, not I. If I set the battle in array like God wants me to, and repent of my sins and be cleansed from them through the blood of Jesus Christ and accept Christ as my personal Saviour, then God will save me. See?

I set the battle in order. I marshal the things God has made possible for me, against the enemy. I set the battle in array — decide to go God's way. He, no one else saves me, or delivers me, or defeats the enemy. Now, beloved, if it works like that in redemption, then it must work like that all the way through this new life in Christ. How will you decide?

(Reprint 1938)



## *Personalizing the Promises of God*

Jennifer Donnelly

**“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Rom. 8:31-32**

This is a promise of spiritual growth and blessing to the new creation, the body of believers known as the Church. Although granted to that body (a group) as a whole, God wants us to view and believe this (and all other promises in the Scripture) as personal promises directed to each one of us. He will freely give me all things in Christ and He wants me to believe it now in my walk with Him. That beloved old hymn about standing on the promises requires participation by our own two feet and our own two legs.

14 What are the means through which God and our Lord freely give us all things? First, there are different types of circumstances God allows in our lives to give us opportunity to stand on His promises. Ephesian 3:18 promises that we can expect to have times wherein we experience the “...breadth, and length, and depth, and height,” of Divine Love. These include what we would call the “good times” of prosperity, in other words the times of immediately seeing the blessing of something and immediately giving God the glory. But these words also include times of difficulty and trial, when it is only by spiritual faith that we can believe, or even less than that in really tough times (anticipate), that a blessing is there. God’s purpose with these varying circumstances is to “know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Eph. 3:19

The promise of Rom. 8:31-32 which concludes, “...how shall he not with him also freely give us all things,” is one of an almost countless number of promises to us in Scripture. We do not intend here to attempt a summary of them, for they are inexhaustible, but for purposes of this message, there can be no disagreement among believers that we have PROMISES! We can be confident, as “a new creation” in Christ, that the promises are of infinite value.

We would endeavor in these thoughts, to present some



principles for standing on the promises in times of trial and difficulty. One is that we should not allow natural thought to project how we might want the promises to manifest themselves in our experience before they actually happen. In other words, we should avoid allowing our own minds to define in advance how God will bring His purposes to pass. We think of Paul being lowered out of a house in a basket to avoid detection in a circumstance that his detractors would say portrayed him to be cowardly, but it was God's choice for the way of his physical deliverance from danger at that particular point. "And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands." II Cor. 11:33

Were we in Paul's shoes, sensing the danger about to befall us, perhaps we would be tempted to imagine a heroic escape planned by God. But, that may not be His intention, and we do not want to deprive Him of any glory by being "disappointed" that His promise did not manifest itself as we had imagined or dreamed.

The tendency to project in advance how something will work out is a mechanism of the flesh. When faced with a difficult situation, our instinct may be to protect ourselves by trying to fix it, locating a way of escape, or just ignoring the problem—anything to avoid that place of dependency on God. Projecting, daydreaming, imagining, letting our thoughts run freely, whatever it may be, is of the flesh. Being in a tough spot is at times exactly where He wants us, and that pattern is by His design. He has us in these "crosshairs" on various occasions. He can bring us down to the studs and "push our buttons" that we might arrive at the place where we in reality stand on His promise as Children or sons of God. When we stand, we must believe in God's goodness, but not project the desired outcome before His particular path is manifest. We must spiritualize the hard times. 15

These principles are beautifully outlined in Exodus 15 as the Children of Israel came to the waters of Marah. They surely must have felt like they were in the crosshairs for they were desperate for that essential, life-sustaining substance. This was not a problem they could get away from or solve themselves. It looked like all hope was lost. "So Moses brought Israel from



the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.” Ex. 15:22 Then, they found water at Marah. Is it possible, before trying to drink this water, that the Children of Israel projected in their mind that, of course, this water is the manifestation of God’s promise of protection to them? This is the water they need. They will simply drink until they are satisfied and go their merry way. Their hopes probably skyrocketed. For example, we do not read that the Children of Israel asked Moses, “now is there anything else we need to have before drinking this water?” Or “should we seek God’s guidance whether this water is His plan for our deliverance without more instruction?” The passage contains no such account. Rather, it reflects simply that they “came to Marah” and thought they could drink.

16 Drink, or at least taste, they did and this passage does not indicate that the partakers included only Moses and a few of the group to test the water out, but rather all of Israel. However, the water at Marah turned out to be bitter, not at all drinkable. It would not, without some intervention, be God’s chosen path of deliverance. If the Children of Israel had, at first sight, let their minds project God’s Plan before He made His decision and path known, their disappointment would have been greater and their willingness to give God glory much less which is indeed manifest in this account. “And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?” Ex. 15:23-24 Murmuring is the opposite of praise. At this point, looking at undrinkable water, Israel would not say God had fulfilled a promise.

It was at this point, however, that God showed His plan for deliverance, which is a marvelous portrait of redemption involving a tree, wood, symbolic of the Cross. “And he [Moses] cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them.” Ex. 15:25 The end here proved that water and a tree manifested God’s promises of protection and prosperity. This had to have



been something Israel could never have imagined in advance.

Israel's murmuring was in the flesh. It was far afield from their triumphant trek through the Red Sea. "And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses." Ex. 14:31 It might be rather easy for us, knowing the outcome, to think Israel was weak in their faith, but we would all probably be tempted to behave as they did. Let us learn from their experience.

It is a work of the flesh to let our minds project how God might carry out a promise before He actually does. A commentator discussed in an article about FDR many years ago just as he became president during the Great Depression, how one public figure (Will Hays, a member of the opposite political party from FDR and whose candidate had lost the recent election) was quoted as saying that the country was looking at the new president "as a drowning man looks at a life saver...one eye on him and one eye on God." Let us keep both eyes on God and both feet and legs planted on his promises in patient expectation. This requires self-control that only the Holy Spirit can give and develop in us. During a long, drawn-out trial, many instances of self-control may be required. God may lead us slowly through a difficult time to where it feels like He's just leading us about, that we are wandering without any direction or hope, but He will not lead us in a wrong direction or against His promises.

17

So take encouragement during hard times and see how God provides in a personal way for you. Stand on the promises with patient expectation and full dependence on Him as He brings the manifestation of His promises in Christ Jesus to pass in your own life.

\* Brains may produce bright sayings; but brightness is no passport to heaven. Learning comes from a college; "but salvation is of the Lord."

\* If we do not believe God when our circumstances seem against us, we do not believe Him at all. ---- Spurgeon



# REFLECTIONS

... From the Editor

“**O**ne God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Eph. 4:4,6

18 Paul stresses unity in this chapter and then posts a list of 7 “ones” to enlarge upon that subject. The above text records the finale of that list and forms the basis for the rest of them, as the apostle then describes God in three major ways. First, He is “... above all...” in perfect agreement with Isaiah’s declaration “... that there is none beside me.....” Isa. 45:6 This glorious statement, however, becomes much more meaningful when believers realize that “One God...” also includes Him as “...Father...” Jesus said “My Father,...is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” Jn. 10:29 Men who refuse to believe the glorious truth of eternal life cannot understand the Fatherhood of God because they will not accept the fact that He truly is “... above all...” or “...greater than all,” and thus there is no force anywhere which “...is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” Note also Rom. 8:35-39

Next God is “...through all...” signifying the fact that He is omnipresent and nothing happens in heaven and earth of which He is not aware. This should be a great comfort to all of God’s people because it means that He is never caught unawares by the many things that befall His people.

There are, however, those today who insist they want to “get away from God.” That is impossible, for He is most assuredly “...through all...” but there will come a day when Christ rejecters will get their wish, for they will be totally separated from Him in outer darkness. It will not be a pleasant experience for them.

Finally, this “One God...is...in you all.” The world interprets this to mean that there is “a little bit of God” in every man, but that is not so. Paul is here writing to believers for God is only in men **through** Christ Jesus, Who declared this truth when He prayed “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: ... **I in them, and**



**thou in me**, that they may be made perfect in one;” Jn. 17:21,23 God is in us only because Christ abides in our hearts, but these words go far deeper than the new birth. They are a beautiful expression of the oneness and intimate fellowship with God to which we have been called through Jesus. Not only so but Jesus’ petition in V. 23 continues, asserting “...that thou hast sent me, and hast **loved them**, as thou hast **loved me**.” It is hard for some to comprehend such depth and intensity of God’s love for us, but so declares the scripture. Jesus insists here that God’s love for us is exactly the same as that which He experienced, the reason being that this same Son now dwells in our hearts.

Jesus also prayed that we might have another glorious benefit resulting from this oneness with God and the love which bestows it. “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” Jn. 17:24 The marvelous news for Christians today in regard to this glory, is that Jesus previously prayed in this chapter that “...the glory which thou gavest me I have given them;...” Jn. 17:22 Paul likewise speaks of this same glory, promising joint-  
19  
heirship with Christ “...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Rom. 8:17 Not all believers will qualify for all these expressions of oneness and glory, but Bless God the provision is still available at this present hour for those who would indeed appropriate it.

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### ANNOUNCEMENT:

This is simply a reminder that the current Covid disaster has opened up a new avenue for spreading this glorious gospel of Divine Grace. Services here in Grandview are now being streamed at [www.gracegod.com](http://www.gracegod.com) Service times are Sunday School at 10 A.M. CST with worship following at 11 A.M. Afternoon services will begin at 1:30 P.M. Bible College classes are likewise streamed on Mon., Thurs., & Fri. Evenings beginning at 7 P.M. CST.



## *God's Timing and Purposes*

Dr. Vicky Moots

“**A** time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together...” Ecc. 3:5a:

Naturally speaking, if you have a piece of rocky ground and you want to plant a garden in it, you would need to discard the stones that are in your way, for you would consider them to have no value. And yet, at other times, stones are gathered together to make rock gardens or to construct stone fences or buildings. It is all a matter of your perspective and what you perceive as being important at that time.

An important spiritual correlation to this is the fact that Jesus is called the Cornerstone by Paul in Eph. 2:20: “...Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” In addition, we, as Christians, are called living stones by Peter in I Pet. 2:5: “Ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house...”

20 So let us explore this a little further. That would mean that there would be a time when spiritual stones would also be cast away and a time when they would be gathered together. To cast away something means “to discard or abandon” it because it is deemed as having no value.

Isaiah prophesied in Isa. 53:3 that the Messiah would be rejected: “He is despised and rejected of men...and we esteemed him not [as nothing].” But Isaiah also refers to Him as a precious corner stone in Isa. 28:16: “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.” Peter refers to this same Scripture in speaking of Jesus and explains to us how that He is both precious and yet rejected, in I Pet. 2:7-8: “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed [rejected], the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient.”

To better understand the rejection of Jesus as a spiritual corner stone, I need to discuss the purpose and importance of an earthly corner stone in those days and how a corner stone was selected for use. A corner stone is also called a foundation stone because it is the first stone that was set in the construction of a



building. It was usually a very large stone, the larger the better, that was cut out of a mountain for that specific purpose. It needed to have a 90-degree corner angle, because all the other stones were placed in reference to the cornerstone. Its purpose was to determine the position of the entire structure and to stabilize it. Before a corner stone was selected for use, it was carefully measured and tested (or tried) to be sure it was square, to ensure proper alignment for the rest of the building.

So why was Jesus rejected? We know that He was perfect in every way, just as the Passover lamb had to be perfect. I believe it was because He did not measure up to the religious expectations of a Messiah. Although Jesus lined up with God's measurements, He did not line up with their religious views. He was considered to be too small and insignificant, just like the small size of the manna in the wilderness.

He was poor and had a lowly birth that was deemed questionable. He was esteemed as "nothing", as far as the religious world was concerned, and unworthy to be a King or Messiah. He came unto them "lowly, and riding upon an ass" as was foretold in Zech. 9:9, rather than a horse drawn chariot. They not only rejected Him, they hated Him and cast Him away as a small stone would be cast away.

Because the world hated and rejected Jesus, the Corner Stone, it will also hate and reject us and cast us away, since we are His living stones, connected to Him. Jesus warned us of this in John 15:18-19: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world...therefore the world hateth you."

Now, what about the gathering of stones? Stones were gathered together for the purpose of building something. Spiritually, it can refer to Christians gathering together in Jesus' name to worship and fellowship with each other as a body. Jesus said in Matt. 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This is important to us spiritually, and we are warned in Heb. 10:25 to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

We are joined to each other, as well as to the Lord, for a purpose, which Peter explains to us in I Pet. 2:4: "To whom [Jesus] coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but



chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house..." Paul enlarges further regarding this spiritual house in Eph. 2:20-22 when he says that we are of the household of God, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Now is the time for gathering stones together. The Holy Spirit is currently gathering us, as living stones, together during this church age and placing us appropriately (fitly framed together) to form a spiritual temple for the Lord. Each one of us, no matter how small, is also chosen of God and precious in His sight, as was Jesus.

Even if we have been cast away by the world, the Lord will never cast us away. Jesus assures us of this in John 6:37: "... him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Each one of us is important in God's eyes.

22 God has chosen us and placed us alongside Jesus, the Corner stone, lining us up with Him (not with each other). This is done in the same manner in which a stone building is constructed, for all stones must be lined up with the corner stone itself. Paul tells us in I Cor. 3:10 that we are God's building, and He is the one doing the work.

One day soon there will be another important time of gathering together of stones, God's precious living stones, when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and with the trump of God, and we will be caught up together with Him in the air (I Thess. 4:16-17)!

"...a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing." Ecc. 3:5b:

To "embrace" means to "clasp in the arms, usually in an expression of affection or desire, to hug." It can also mean "to accept readily, to encircle with the arms or to cling to." This can refer to embracing people, things, ideas or actions.

Let's start with the thought of embracing people. We usually hug people whom we care about to show them that we love them. Currently, during this pandemic, we have been told to refrain from embracing and to practice social distancing to avoid spreading the virus. But I feel that this lack of closeness with



other people has partially contributed to the mistrust and civil unrest that we have seen recently in our nation.

Jesus expressed His love for the little children who were brought to Him by their parents in Mark 10:16, where it says, "... he took them up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them." The disciples thought that Jesus would not take the time to be bothered by them, but He showed them that it was "a time to embrace" children because they were important to Him, and they should be important to us also. Our children need to be embraced and taught to embrace Jesus while they are young.

We find a more intimate type of embracing described in S.O.S. 2:6, which is a picture of the spiritual relationship of Christ and His bride: "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." The Lord desires to be so close to us that there is nothing between us in our relationship with Him as He holds us securely with His strong right arm.

Oh, how we need to let His arms encircle us and embrace us tightly today in this troubled world so that we may be at peace. But we also need to seek that intimate place of closeness with Him as our Bridegroom. That is the place which the apostle Paul stated in II Cor. 11:2 was his desire for us as believers: "...for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Are you willing to accept that espousal? Now is the time to embrace Christ as your preeminent love, to cling to Him and His Word instead of the things of this world.

23

What other things should we embrace? Solomon instructs us in Prov. 4:7-8 to embrace wisdom: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom...she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her." True wisdom comes from above, not from man. We are to encircle wisdom with our arms and tightly cling to it. Jesus Himself is the personification of wisdom, and so is the Word, for Jesus is the Word. When we lay hold of God's Word, it will bring us to honour and not to shame.

We can also embrace those things which we cannot see, but which God has promised. They may be future but can become real to us now by faith, as we read in Heb. 11:13: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them..."

Many people today doubt that Jesus will come again, saying, "...Where is the promise of his coming... II Pet. 3:4



But we can eagerly embrace it as if it were to happen today, as Peter tells us in II Pet. 3:8-9: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward..."

Now, what about the things that we should not embrace? When is it a time to refrain from embracing? Jesus embraced sinners, not with His arms, but with His love. However, He did not embrace their actions. He told them to "go and sin no more". We should follow His example in embracing them with our love. We can associate with them, as He did, but we must be careful not to become associated with their lifestyle while we witness to them. We should socially distance ourselves from even the appearance of evil.

24 In conclusion, is there ever a time for Christians to refrain from embracing each other? We love to embrace our spiritual brothers and sisters at church and fellowship meetings, but we can be sure that Satan is looking for any opportunity to cause us to stumble or for our actions to be evil spoken of. Embracing the opposite sex can be looked upon by unbelievers as an intimate gesture and be taken the wrong way.

Embracing means any encircling of the arm which would include coming alongside a person and placing your arm around the back of their neck to their opposite shoulder. Even innocent physical contact can be construed as sexual in nature. This is one reason why Paul warned Christian men in I Cor. 7:1, stating, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman." Billy Graham was so careful concerning this that he would not even enter an elevator if there was a woman in it alone, in order that he could not be falsely accused of touching a woman. He avoided slander of any kind in his ministry by following Paul's advice.

The proper "time to embrace" is in the presence of other believers, and the "time to refrain from embracing" is any time or any place where the motive for your actions could be misinterpreted as more than just a friendly hug. Therefore, I would suggest to all Christian men that before you hug a woman at church, you should ask her permission first, and it should never take place in a room where you are alone with her. By taking



these precautions, you will be following Paul's wise counsel in Rom. 14:16: "Let not your good be evil spoken of."

Please be assured that nothing that I have said was intended to keep us from expressing our Christian love to each other by hugging. It is only to say that there is "a time to embrace" and "a time to refrain from embracing," as Solomon had stated so many years ago.

### ***WE MUST BELIEVE***

How else can I see  
That He died for me,  
Lest to His cross I am led?  
How else can I know"  
Of His heart felt woe,  
Lest my heart like His has bled?

How else can I feel  
As He felt long ago,  
Lest in a garden I pray?  
How else to recall  
The long "Pilate's hall"  
Lest friends like His turn away?

How else see the hill  
More bitter still,  
Lest to the cross with Him I go?  
How else can I wait,  
At this darkened gate?  
Lest I know He took my woe?

How else then at last  
To see cross is past  
Lest I, a new man behold?  
Then up through the skies,  
By faith I arise;  
And with Him walk streets of gold.



## *Meditation Checkups*

Carson Richards

WHILE reading I Thess. 4, I remembered Bible School days. It includes the "final checkup," as one has called it, before saints are perfected in spirit and soul and made ready to go up in that glorious new piece of workmanship, our redemption body. We were suddenly impressed with the little word "work" in Chap. 5:13, and remembered that such little electrical contacts made by the all-wise Holy Spirit are to invite further research on all His high lines to the storehouse of Divine Wisdom. I heeded Paul's advice to "meditate on these things." I was not disappointed therein with a gradual transition from the sordid scene of men in darkness to some pleasant and profitable reflection from the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Light, the Love, the Lord. I decided to record a few mental notes which were sweet to the mouth. Nevertheless these may become bitter to the belly in a not too distant future, as was the case with the Apostle John in Revelation.

26 The Thessalonians, were "up-goers," and not at all inclined to stay in Adam, number one's abode of sin, slime and spiritual soot. Paul besought them to know them which labor over you in the Lord and to esteem them very highly for their work's sake. Thus, some worthy spiritual leaders must have labored among the Thessalonians and had a work which was not of their making, but of the Lord's making. It seems that there can be no more important revelation in an age of too much religiousness which is "slammed" by the Apostle Paul, who termed it "This present evil age" (Gal. 1:4), than to know the Lord's work and His workers. When he wrote this letter, Paul was the number one worker, and spiritual overseer for the Lord's work on earth. Only Thessalonian saints, whom I mean as a particular class of God's people, recognized Paul and His work then. They evidently did not see this part of the age of "blood, sweat and tears," which condition did not start with bombs on Warsaw, but with a couple of relatives of ours, enjoying a little menu of vitamin-filled fruit in the Garden of Eden.

Therefore, the Thessalonians were expecting something during their fleeting hours below to fly above the seat in the heavenlies, already prepared by their Joshua and to receive their inheritance allotted in accordance with their battles of faith. Their eyes were in the heavenlies, so they could know those whom



the Head had ordained and could recognize His workers down here. They were not concerned with Judaizers and works of sight, show and splendor, for these must have been in evidence then as now. Paul wrote of those who wanted to "make a fair show in the flesh." He commended Timothy saying, "He worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do"—I Cor. 16:10. Some spiritually directed physical energy was being expended which was of God, in those days. However, we can see in Paul's writings that there was much work, even sweating, groaning and drudgery for a salvation which was not the product of the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ who directs the members of the Body, His Church, to do His work.

Yes, how simple, smooth and perfect must God's plan for service have been. Every member had a job marked out for him in the original purpose of God, for Paul wrote that "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"—Eph. 2:10. Since the New Man has his work mapped out already, our stay here on the training ground is short. It seems sad that everyone does not blend into his individual job. The word "work" is used a considerable number of times in Paul's epistles. They give the rules for the whole work of the Lord, the end of which is not to convert the world but to "build a bride" for our blessed Lord Jesus. The speedy Philippian who desires to press toward the goal held before the Thessalonians, the out translation from among the Church, is exhorted to work out his own salvation. The next breath from the ever pertinent Holy Spirit, cuts off Mr. Legalist, already starting to roll up his sleeves to amaze the Heavenly "Probate Judge" with his whirlwind efforts to "win the prize," salvation at last. The next breath, then, says "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his His good pleasure." Thank God for His careful, patient, loving operations in the saint as he yields.

Poor self-directed worker who does his "daily dozen" to no avail. God, gracious and loving, blesses him frequently as He can, because He sees the life planted there as that of Christ and He patiently endures the abundant activity not ordered by Him in view of the day the worker tires out and sees mother Grace, ready to take him up and "nourish And cherish" him. Oh, praise the Lord for His patience and perseverance in working in us . He must desire, as Paul wrote Timothy, to have "a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every



good work."

I believe the words just quoted give the secret, which really seems to be a secret, of the ministers who attain the place mentioned in our original scripture in I Thessalonians 5. They are proved faithful, tried under fire, and no doubt given periods with no work for the Lord, that is, while God did His work of preparation. Paul had it, Timothy had it. The Lord Himself subjected Himself to His Father's training. Perhaps the consideration of the training for the "work" of the Lord gives us an insight into the reason for the esteem and love we should have for these workers. They did not just set out to "work for the Lord" and then reap abundantly in a short time. God set them out and men did not recognize them readily, but when they were ready for the job the Father had it ready for them. Their work stood the bombardment of the enemy. It is God's work and God has a way of standing with those who learned to stand with Him, or more, in Him.

28 Paul was such. There was someone or some ones over the Thessalonians bearing the Godly stamp of approval. There must have been some of God's own work down through this age. There must be some now. God only can reveal to us His own choice lighthouses. Without Him, none would "know those over" us at His appointment. Thessalonian saints being a select company must have select officers. Special troops have officers of corresponding caliber. My cry when I really yielded to God was to see as He sees, to see His own work. To get down to present day realities, I am convinced God directed me to His best in leading me to Kansas City to Bible School. I came to realize it was His work, His servants there and that Grace and Glory was His paper. "Oh," someone says, "so that is God's only work." No, but Thessalonian saints have special officers and a special goal. I trust the reader gets my meaning on "specials." It isn't egotistical to label God's work as His, anymore than for Paul to say, "Be ye followers of me even as I follow Christ." God had prepared him! He could stand the test. When many of God's ministers see their place in God's work they will be ready for work and we might predict, it will work. Thessalonian saints! These are the days to settle differences as nailed to the cross of Jesus and to have highest esteem for God's leaders over us. God demands it. We are leaving soon, you know.

(Reprint 1943)



## HOSEA

### Ch. 2 Cont'd.

“**A**nd there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.... And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” Rev. 17:1-5 The word “whoredom” used here in Hosea means “adultery; figuratively, idolatry:--whoredom.” The “whore” which defines the False Church means “a strumpet; figuratively, an idolater:--harlot, whore.” “Harlot” likewise signifies “to act the harlot, i.e. (literally) indulge unlawful lust, practise idolatry:--commit fornication.” This doomed woman of Revelation 17 is also defined as “...THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH,” reinforcing the idea of “a detestation, i.e. (specially) idolatry:--abomination.”

Catholicism is guilty of the same practice ascribed to unfaithful Israel, who blatantly gave credit to others, for that which can only be attributed to God and His Christ. Catholic doctrine boldly teaches that salvation comes through Mary or The Church rather than declaring unequivocally that, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12 The verses immediately preceding this one declare that Name to be “...Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead,... This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Acts 4:10-11

Catholic catechism likewise asserts that Mary is the intercessor and her followers are exhorted to address their prayers to her because she has more influence with “her son” than does the petitioner. Scripture begs to differ. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;” I Tim. 2:5 The oft repeated “rosary” is also blasphemous, exhorting Catholic followers to “hail Mary full of grace...” when scripture undeniably identifies Jesus with that distinction. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory,



the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” Jo. 1:14 John then declares that, “...of his fullness (not Mary’s) have all we received, and grace for grace.” Jo. 1:16 Add to that the fact that Catholics world-wide bow down to their priests, calling them “father” when God’s Word strictly forbids calling any man by this official title. “And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.” Matt. 23:9

30 Catholic followers are also taught that their “priest” can forgive sins and more often than not such “forgiveness” will include monetary compensation, a direct and blasphemous insult to the redemption provided by Christ Jesus. Even the Pharisees, as corrupt as they were, asked the question “... who can forgive sins but God only?” Paul also preaches Jesus in this matter, shouting loudly, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” Eph 1:7 He is also most emphatic on this subject in writing to the Hebrew Christians, who were still steeped in the law, declaring plainly that only the blood of Jesus, rather than any complement of money, can free the conscience of guilt. “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Heb 9:14 His message to the Gentiles at Rome also testified that money for forgiveness of sins is worthless. “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” Rom. 3:24 There is, however, no doubt that those demands for money have greatly contributed to the riches of which Catholicism boasts today.

The indictment against Israel in V. 4 also bespeaks a very independent and self-reliant attitude, as She lays claim to “...my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.” The end time Church also claims this same self-sufficiency. The Church at Ephesus portrays the beginning of the Church Age, while Laodicea graphically demonstrates conditions at the end of it. The Judge’s overall grievance against the religiousness at the end of this age is “...thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,...Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;....” Rev 3:16-17 Catholicism claims to be The Church in the end of this age and she too is assailed for “her riches” and independence for, “...she hath glorified herself,



and lived deliciously,... for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.” Rev. 18:7

This is but a small portion of blasphemous Catholic teaching and conduct which denies Jesus His glory because she refuses to acknowledge His Supreme power and attributes His glorious provisions to others, after the same manner and pattern in which Israel committed “whoredom” against her Husband.

The swift and sure judgment for Israel’s adulterous atrocities is now outlined in the following verses. “Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.” V. 6 7

The confused and futile efforts of Israel described here were most assuredly fulfilled during the impending captivity to Assyria at the time then present, but the greater fulfillment of this prophecy applies to the end of this age. Israel, even at this present hour confides more in the strength and ingenuity of the nations rather than the Lord. However, those efforts will fail as she desperately tries to “...follow other lovers...” but they will in no wise be able to help her. It is at this time of total depravity and consternation that this small nation will learn the lesson God intended, and turn back to Him.

Hosea continues to explain the reason for her plight, declaring that her ignorance of God’s blessings is the culprit. “For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.” V. 8 What a sad circumstance is herein described! Not only did Israel receive all these blessings from God and then attribute credit for that bounty to the nations as noted heretofore, she also used some of those same provisions in her idolatrous worship of Baal. God is not only insulted, but greatly injured and “Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.” V. 9 Israel’s land was certainly denied prosperity during the days of Hosea, but the greatest fulfillment of these words will come to pass in the midst of the tribulation, when God will withhold all blessing to the point of making Israel totally destitute. Jeremiah describes this same period, declaring



that, "...that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jer. 30:7 Jesus likewise defined its unprecedented severity as He answered the disciples' questions regarding the end of the age. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matt. 24:21-22

God's purpose for such extreme measures is then explained for, "... now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD." V. 11-13

32 This closing statement declaring that Israel had forgotten The LORD, is the summation of the indictments against her. She had chosen others in His stead, despite the fact that God, her Husband had supplied all her tremendous resources. Note once again that she attributed the glorious God-given provisions to others, saying "...These are my rewards that my lovers have given me:..." Thus all of them will be removed and her land will be overrun by beasts while she is taken captive. That did happen soon after Hosea predicted it, but this local plight is but a small foretaste of the greater misery she will suffer during the "...wilderness..." of tribulation. "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her." V. 14 The good news here is that, the wilderness experience, described above as "the time of Jacob's trouble" will be the gateway to her restoration. When this fallen nation discovers how destitute she truly is through this horrendous time of tribulation, God will then be able to speak "...comfortably unto her." This is exactly the same message conveyed in Rev. 12:6 wherein this needy nation is protected from the onslaughts of the antichrist. "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred



and threescore days.”

Hosea then asserts that more blessing will follow, for “...I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.” V. 15 The bounty of millennial vineyards are here promised but the door of hope associated with Achor is rather interesting. Achor means “trouble” and is associated with Achan, which name also means trouble, who was stoned to death because he took of the accursed thing in Josh. 7. However, the trouble of tribulation which Israel has experienced will become a door of hope due to lessons learned from that experience. Thus, “... it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali.” V. 16 “Ishi” means “Husband” which expresses a far more intimate relationship than “Baali,” or Lord, and draws the conclusion that Israel has now repented of their adultery when they “...forgot me, saith the LORD.” V. 13

Not only so but, “...I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.” V. 17-18 This is a promise which addresses the literal restoration of Israel’s land after those devastating losses announced in V. 12 Isaiah likewise promises that, “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” Isa 35:1 The further promise to “...break the bow...” signifies that during the Millennium, there will be no more war, which brings forth the real “peace and safety” which the antichrist in whom Israel trusted, promised but could not deliver.

But greater blessing follows for Israel because “... I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.” V. 19-20 What a contrast to the beginning of this book wherein Israel is portrayed as an harlot by Gomer, the unfaithful wife of Hosea. The accompanying traits of God’s renewed betrothal to this nation; judgment, lovingkindness,



mercies, etc..., are simply manifestations of the Christ life within them because they have now accepted their Messiah.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;” V. 21 The term, “...in that day...” gives reference to the day, in the midst of tribulation when Israel turns to The LORD, thus paving the way for her full restoration. He will reign over the entire universe as King of kings and Lord of lords and will “...hear the heavens.” Those same “heavens” will in turn “...hear the earth...” meaning that The Very God of the heavens will see the needs of the earth and respond to them. The specific need of the “land” in that hour will be rain, and thus explains how the land of Israel will “...blossom as the rose,” as noted above. It is at that same time when “... the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil;...” V. 22 There are some farmers who have testified that, under certain conditions, very dramatic and almost instantaneous growth is produced and the human ear can actually “hear” the corn grow. That seems to be the message here as the corn, grapes, and olives immediately spring forth in rapid abundance. This land will once again literally be a land which

34 “flows with milk and honey.”

The promises of this verse end with; “...and they shall hear Jezreel,” signifying that the LORD, the heavens, and the earth will hear Jezreel. Jezreel means “sowing,” and signified a sowing of judgment as seen in Ch. 1:4. There is a different application here, however for this chapter closes with the indication that the spiritual growth of the nation will follow the same pattern as that demonstrated by Israel’s fruitful land.

“And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.” V. 23. That “sowing” is an indication of permanency. Israel will no longer be a people tossed to and fro, but will rather be a planted fixture in their own land directly because God has shown them great mercy and they have responded to it, boldly claiming Him as “...my God.”

(To Be Continued)

\* Faith in God sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible





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