

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole Counsel of GOD

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The Lord
is gracious,

and full of
compassion; slow
to anger, and
of great mercy.

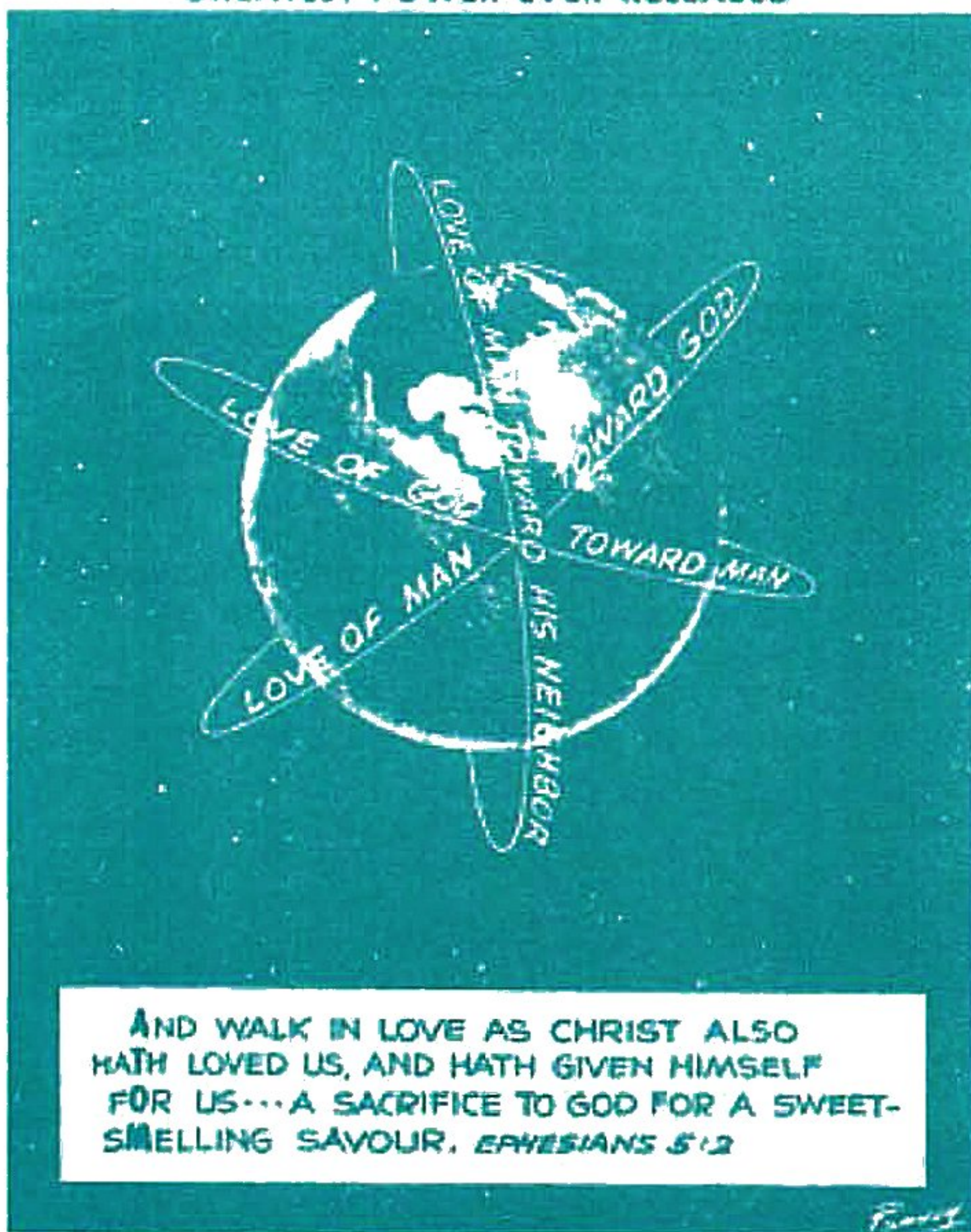
PSALM 145:8



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Editor: Gene Hawkins

Definite Sign Posts Of The End

Gene Hawkins

“Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image....

This image's head was of fine gold,...Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory... Thou art this head of gold.” Dan. 2:31-38

This record from Daniel reveals the fact that Nebuchadnezzar was ordained by God as the supreme ruler of Babylon, which according to history became the first world empire in 606 B.C. This date is generally accepted as the beginning of Gentile Times wherein God committed world dominion into the hands of four world empires ruled by Gentiles. God also gave Daniel his own vision of this same time period, but the prophet is most intrigued by the images he saw depicting a revived Roman Empire at the latter end of these same Gentile Times. “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible,... and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots:...” Dan. 7:7-8

3

John also viewed this same image but with one great difference, for he “... saw a beast rise up out of the sea, (Gentile Nations) having seven heads and ten horns,...” Rev.13:1 The seven heads correspond with the horns which Daniel beheld, but whereas Daniel originally saw ten, John’s vision revealed only seven due to the fact that he observed this beast at a later time AFTER three nations had been removed. Events of Gentile Times are further unfolded when the angel informs John that, “...The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.” Rev. 17:9-10

The previous verse in this chapter makes it very clear that this one who is “...not yet come...” is a reference to the antichrist. “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; 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 ...when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” Rev. 17:8 All these declining numbers mean simply that the prophesied end time coalition of wicked nations will begin with ten nations, which will in turn be reduced to seven. After that, five more will be eliminated, leaving only two.

4 It is rather interesting that two nations also came to the fore in the beginning of Gentile Times. Nebuchadnezzar did not really appear unexpectedly “out of the blue.” There is a somewhat detailed history of how this final goal was reached over a rather lengthy period of time. Isaiah informs us that “... in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, ...Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them.” Isa. 36:1 This was a great test for Hezekiah but more trouble is brewing for this godly king of Judah, for “In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall,...And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I... have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.” Isa 38:1-3 God’s answer was immediate, and in favor of the king as, “Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah,I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.”

Healing in body and a great political victory over Assyria came forth immediately, but Hezekiah then made an extremely devastating blunder, which literally opened the door for Babylon to eventually invade and conquer Jerusalem. “At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, ... and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.” Isa 39:1-2 The King would have been better served to simply testify of his healing and victory over the political enemies that God had provided, because Isaiah severely reprimanded him with

a warning for disclosing all the riches of Jerusalem, including those of the temple. “Then came Isaiah the prophet... and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon. Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, ...shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.” Isa. 39: 3-8

There would be a number of kings who would succeed Hezekiah, but this prophecy did most assuredly come to pass in every detail. Daniel could very well have been a direct descendant 5 Hezekiah for he was, along with other members of royalty, made a eunuch after being taken captive by Babylon. Dan. 1:3-6 The point here is that both Assyria and Babylon began their quest for power quite a number of years before Gentile Times began. Assyria was a rather dominant power as they conquered the ten tribes of Israel and also besieged Jerusalem. However, it was Babylon which eventually took Jerusalem captive and was then ordained by God as the first Gentile World Empire.

The question could well be asked today, “Will this same two nation dominance follow a similar pattern in the end of the age as was seen in the beginning? Is the world witnessing early signs of the antichrist’s power grab tactics at this present hour?” This world presently abounds with a great number of wicked rebellious nations who directly reject even the very existence of God, and would destroy Israel in a heartbeat if given the opportunity. Iraq actually occupies the location of the former Babylonish Empire. When Saddam Hussein was in power, his idol was Nebuchadnezzar and he did have visions of restoring that first world empire glory. All that came to naught with his death.

Iran, formerly a part of the Persian Empire, is most assuredly known by her hatred of Israel, but she is especially recognized at this present hour for her determination to build nuclear weapons. Some observers believe that will be much sooner than later and thus Iran could very well be the rogue nation that will start the nuclear holocaust described in Revelation 8 after the seventh seal of judgment is opened. "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." Rev. 8:8-9 This is a clear picture outlining the devastation inflicted by nuclear warfare, wherein "...burning fire was cast into the sea..." (nations) after which "...the third part of the sea became blood;...the third part of the creatures which were in the sea,...died," meaning that a third part of the world's population is gone in a moment of time. North Korea could also be a candidate to initiate the above devastation, but Iran is more likely due to her unabated and totally open hatred of Israel. The two most likely nations to follow the pattern set in the beginning of Gentile Times by Assyria and Babylon are modern day China and Russia. Both of them are just as aggressive and hungry for power as those long ago enemies of God's Chosen People.

Vladimir Putin is a most vicious and ungodly dictator who is interested only in power regardless of what it takes to obtain it. Bro. Smith warned his readers in these pages just after the USSR fell that they had not heard the last of Russia, and sure enough here they are. Paul Smith had no crystal ball, but he surely did know the Scriptures declaring that a major enemy of Israel would come upon them from the North. "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, ...And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel:" Ezek. 39:1-2 These verses are very clear that God will bring this enemy from the north "...upon the mountains of Israel:" and it will be for the purpose of annihilating them. There will be many nations whom God "invites" to the Battle of Armageddon, but most scholars have concluded that Russia would probably be

the nation from the North or “from the north parts.” Her current leader is a godless dictator who is now flexing his muscle in an effort to obtain eventual world dominance, and just as Assyria and Babylon began slowly and increased power, so also Putin is trying at this present time to assert his authority in vulnerable countries such as Ukraine, a former subject which gained her own independence after the aforementioned collapse. The entire world waited with “bated breath,” so to speak, wondering if the massive military build-up at the border of Ukraine would be utilized. That wait, at this writing, is now over and many wonder if there will be any kind of reprisal from other nations for such ungodly aggression against an independent land. The thirst for power in men like Putin is never satisfied and this conquest against Ukraine will not be his last. Some have suggested that monetary sanctions be imposed. Others insist that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from Russia to Germany be shut down, thereby depriving the nation of transporting oil, which is the lifeblood for the war machines of every nation around the planet. None can survive without it, and Russia’s money supply will be severely crippled without this asset. The New York Post also asserts that, “The natural gas pipeline is being built under the Baltic Sea by Russian energy company Gazprom, allowing Russia to bypass running the lines through Ukraine. Opponents of the pipeline argue that it will give Putin too much influence in Germany and throughout Europe because the Kremlin will control such a substantial energy supply.”

Germany has in recent days suspended Nord Stream 2, though more than one high ranking official had been a bit skeptical because Germany’s oil supply would be cut off. Vladimir Putin’s justification for invading Ukraine is that Nato would be much closer and become a greater threat to him if Ukraine is permitted to join that coalition. The next few weeks should determine whether Russia will gain more political power or less.

The second nation presently advancing like unto the pattern set by Assyria and Babylon is China, which has publicly asserted that she will be “leading the world” by 2050. Forbes.com published an article in Dec. 2019 explaining that one major element of that dominance would be with the use of money. This article written by Tatiana Koffman, creator of MythOfMoney.com.,

traces China's money path back to the days of Richard Nixon. Her conclusion is that "There is a new cold war on the horizon. But instead of oil, the space race, or nuclear weapons, this one is being fought through the penetration of currencies, specifically the US Dollar against the Renminbi, also frequently referred to as the Chinese Yuan...." Furthermore, "China has been...making its own move. Namely, The People's Bank of China (PBOC) is only a few months away from launching the digital version of the Chinese Yuan, making China the first country in the world to have a digital central bank currency. This historical move has been 80 years in the making, and is the ultimate checkmate in the game of economic expansion."

8 China has also been thrust front and center by the current Coronavirus. Numerous and often heated debates have been waged in Congress, wherein some even among high ranking U.S. officials argued vehemently that this ungodly virus came from a bat in a food market rather than the Wuhan lab in China. However, the evidence which has been gained suggests that this ungodly nation is responsible for it, and those making such claims to the contrary are rather unconvincing. There are also those who believe that China created and released Covid -19 on purpose due to the fact she refuses any kind of outside investigation, and some Chinese doctors who tried to warn of it were imprisoned and some even suffered death. Regardless of whether it was intentional or not, China was able to bring the entire world to a complete standstill for a rather lengthy period of time. World economies have been devastated and thus money is once again pushed front and center as a prominent element of control in these last days. This is in no wise surprising because the antichrist's greatest tool in gaining world-wide dominion will be money.

Chinese president Xi Jinping also has aspirations of invading Taiwan. War planes have already violated their airspace and a ground confrontation seems rather likely at this present time. Like Russia, if she succeeds in this endeavor, without any resistance from other nations around the world, there is no indication that China will not try to achieve the same result in other vulnerable countries throughout the world.

All God's people must be encouraged by the fact that the above scenario surrounding the two kings of Rev. 17:8-10 will

not take place until very near the middle of the tribulation week, at which time the entire Church will have all been transported to glory. Let all believers also understand that there is at this present hour no evidence of the ten nation coalition and the subsequent removal of three horns "...plucked up by the roots..." as prophesied in Dan. 7:7-8. However, Jesus specifically warned His disciples "And when these things **begin** to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Lk. 21:28

The key word here is "**begin** to come to pass." It is a reference to all the signs of coming end time events, and God's people must at all costs be aware of the circumstances taking place before our very eyes, which may escalate into the full blown actions among the nations described above. It is no accident or coincidence that the very next verse in Daniel 7 declares that, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." Dan. 7:9 This portion presents a vivid 9 picture of Jesus being enthroned in heaven, a scene which John also witnesses in Rev. 4-5. Note Daniel's account declaring that "I beheld till the thrones were cast down,..." The term "...cast down..." literally means "to throw, set, cast (down), impose." It is used here to show that Jesus throne was being "set or imposed." However Daniel speaks of "...thrones,..." plural, indicating that more than one throne is involved. The overall truth here is that while Jesus is being enthroned in heaven, numerous thrones are being "...cast down..." among the nations on this earth. Jesus plainly prophesied that "...nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:..." Matt. 24:7 That evidence has been in view for quite some time now as most assuredly one throne after another has been "...cast down..." Both Russia and China are at present actively seeking to dethrone any nation standing in the way of their agendas. This process will most assuredly continue, and escalate, until Jesus comes.

It is imperative, however, that those who aspire to be in that coming Bridal Company do not become obsessed with the arrival of antichrist. Scripture simply uses the signs of his arrival

as harbingers of the REAL PRIZE, JESUS! Thus there is no substitute for being aware of the world around us, for this time of the "...beginning of sorrows..." has been in evidence for some time now. Paul clearly describes the overall attitude which we must adopt "...that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Rom. 13:11 The cry of every heart must be in total agreement with John:

"...Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Rev. 22:20

Told You So

Faith one day sought The Master.

Old Doubt too went along.

Faith said, "He'll make all things right."

Doubt murmured, "They'll be wrong."

Faith found Him and she cried aloud,

"Have mercy on me, Lord"

Doubt said, "I told you so"---

He answered not a word.

Faith fell at His feet to worship---

"I will not let you go,"

Doubt said, "Get up, you're foolish,

He even tells you so."

Faith cried "O Master, help me."

Doubt said, "He is not able."

Faith begged, "O Lord, give me the crumbs

That fall from thy full table."

The Master spoke, "I've tested thee.

Now I'll heal all thy woe."

And Faith cried out to fleeing doubt

"There, see! I told you so!"

The Dove In Scripture

Author Unknown

“Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;” Gen. 8:8

Three Hebrew words of very similar meaning are translated into three English words — dove, turtledove and pigeon. The Hebrew word “gozan,” translated “pigeon,” occurs once. Gen. 15:9. “Yonah” is translated pigeon in Lev. 1:14 and in other chapters. Yonah is rendered “dove” in our text verse, also in Song of Solomon and elsewhere.

Doves are of different colors. The dove of the Bible was snowy white. Its beak and claws were red. Its wings were covered with silver and its feathers with gold. In Christian art, the dove is pictured as having a nimbus, or golden halo about the head divided by a cross in red, or black. With an olive branch in its mouth, it is a symbol of peace. It is a symbol also of purity, innocence, tenderness and harmlessness.

Scripture Uses of the Dove

First. The dove in the Ark. The above is the first mention of the dove. It is exceedingly interesting and instructive. Three months and twenty-three days after the rains ceased, Noah opened the window of the ark. He sent out a raven, which went forth to and fro until the waters were dried up. The raven, being an unclean bird, figures the flesh. At the very best, types are only types. The ark is only a type of Christ; hence, flesh was found therein, though it intimated a new creation. The raven did not return into the ark, but was content to dwell in the scene of corruption and death. The natural man is at home with natural and perishable things though they be filthy and unclean. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him."

Then Noah sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters were abated. "But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him in the ark; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth." In the New Testament, the dove is clearly an emblem of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the conduct of Noah's dove has valuable teaching for us. During the dispensation of the law, the Holy Spirit had no abiding place for His permanent operations. He came upon certain individuals only, upon prophets, priests and kings. He was not poured out. "The Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Jesus," at His baptism. He

received the Spirit without measure—John 3:34. But yet He was not sent in fulfillment of Joel 3. The period of Christ's three years' ministry may be figured by the "other seven days" of the dove's waiting in the ark. There is a due time for every purpose of God. Again the Patriarch "sent forth the dove out of the ark." In the evening, she returned to the ark with an olive leaf in her mouth. That speaks of life and peace. The judgment was past. The waters were abating. Vegetation began to spring forth. That figures life out of death. Shortly after Jesus Christ was crucified, buried and raised from the dead, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the house of Israel. A radical change rapidly came in the religious world. Spiritual life flowed abundantly from the resurrection of the Son of Man by the mighty power and miraculous operations of the Holy Ghost. But ten years later, possibly figured by the second "yet other seven years," the Holy Spirit was shed forth upon the Gentiles in the home of Cornelius. Acts 10 And as the dove did not return to the ark the third time she left it, so the Spirit has been moving upon humanity during this church age, calling out a people to the name of the Lord. This people constitute "the church, or body of Christ." He did not return to heaven since the

12 Apostolic days. He is still here. Are we yielding to His leadership and power? That is the vital question.

Second. David's Cry. "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then I would fly away and be at rest"—Psa. 55:6. David was in dire distress. His enemy was after him, seeking his life. Perhaps he refers to king Saul, who had fiendish jealousy against him. He almost despaired of life. Fearfulness, trembling, horrors and terrors of death overwhelmed him. Evidently the wings of a dove are strong and fleet for its size. Doves fly high. It is said that if a dove finds herself away from home, she ascends straight up high in the sky and sights her home and flies swiftly to it. My father brought a pigeon in a tin lantern 10 miles from his brother to our home. Some days afterward, we missed the bird, not knowing what became of her. Later we learned that she had flown back whence she came.

The Holy Spirit can protect us from the power of Satan and carry us away in spirit in the time of trouble, so that our foe can do nothing against us. "Under His wings shalt thou trust"—Psa. 91:4. He can lift us above the strife of tongues and fill our mouths with music.

Third. Solomon's Eulogy of the Shulamite S. O. S. 6:13. Three times he calls her his "Dove." The Shulamite was so gentle, tender, harmless and precious, that the King gave her a title which reminds us of the Holy Spirit ; for He gave her those qualities. Did not Paul write that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance?" Viewed by the eye of prophecy, our Lord terms His bride His "turtle-dove"—Psa. 74:19. This agrees with Psa. 22:20, where the Bridegroom calls her "darling," or "the only one, the choice one." Twice Solomon declares to the Shulamite that she has "doves' eyes." That is, they are full, penetrating, beautiful, enticing and far-seeing. Consider his words — "Behold, thou art fair, my Love ; behold, thou art fair ; thou hast doves' eyes." Ch. 1:15, 4:1. There is a rare charm in the twinkle of the eyes of a beautiful woman. A real lover alone understands this. The king said, "Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes." One look seized and carried him away with joy and encouraged him. Usually a woman sees quicker and further than a man. Her quick, clear vision has turned the course of many a husband. It has avoided many wreckages. When men are filled with the Spirit and guided by the Spirit their course is sure to be blessed, safe and useful. God says, "I will guide thee with mine Eye. I will guide thee with my counsel and afterward receive thee to glory." The Holy Spirit is His Eye, His Counsel. The bride company has doves' eyes. They see as God sees. The Holy Spirit searches the deep things of God and reveals them to us. As we receive them, we are made to walk in wisdom's way. 13

Fourth. King Hezekiah's Complaint — "Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter. I did mourn as a dove. Mine eyes fail, looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed. Undertake, or negotiate for me." Isa. 38:14 Hezekiah was very sick, even unto death. The Lord had said, "Set thine house in order for thou shalt die and not live." But he turned his face to the wall on his dying bed and prayed unto the Lord. He wept sore. Sometimes the announcement of God's edict is simply meant for a test and to provoke earnestness and persistence. For God reversed His decision. He said to the King, "I have heard thy prayer. I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria." Spirit-filled folk mourn like doves, because of the adverse conditions in the world.

Jesus Christ has so few real faithful friends, and these suffer in spirit greatly, dying daily. Study the three "groans" or "groanings" of Rom. 8:22,23 & 26. "In these tabernacles (our bodies), we do groan being burdened..." II Cor. 5:4.

Fifth. Airplanes Foreshadowed. "Who are these that fly as a cloud and as the doves to their windows?" Isa. 60:8 Isaiah sets before us a millennial scene. Israel will be in their land in great victory, glory and prosperity. Their evangelistic ministry will be very effective. "The Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising." "Thy sons shall come from far and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee; the forces (wealth) of the Gentiles shall come unto thee." "I will glorify the house of my glory." Jews and Gentiles will most likely travel through the air without any collisions, or wrecks. Wicked, boastful, conceited, self-seeking men will not be the pilots; but men filled with the Holy Spirit. Their flight will appear like doves flying to the windows of their cotes. The Holy Spirit gave Philip a trip thru the air without a machine. Acts 8:39 What may our glorious Lord not do in that
14 great "day of the Lord?"

Sixth. The Wisdom of Doves. Where does the dove dwell? "O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth." Jer. 48:28. The Revised Version says, The dove makes her nest "over the mouth of the abyss," that is, an opening in the rock. No place is safer than a rock, a shelter from storm and from foes. Such is the wise instinct of the dove. That speaks of the unlimited wisdom of the Holy Spirit. He is termed "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding." Isa. 11:2. Jesus said, "When He, the Spirit of the truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." Jn. 16:13.

What does the dove do in time of danger? She flies to a mountain for safety. "But they that escape of them shall escape and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys." Ezek. 7:16. Both the rock and the mountains figure Christ as the only hiding place from the enemy of our souls. He is the Rock of ages. Jesus exhorted His people to flee to the mountains when the tribulation days come on; but He is our mountain peak of security from Satan and his hoardes.

Seventh. Some doves are silly, or easily enticed.

"Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart; they call to Egypt; they go to Assyria." Hos. 7:11. Comp. ch. 11:11 Believers are pronounced silly when they turn away from the Lord and lean on the arm of flesh. "God's ear is not dull that it cannot hear, nor His arm shortened that He cannot save;" yet many go to the world for help instead of to Him. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is ; for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river and shall not see when heat cometh ; but her leaf shall be green and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Jer. 17:7,8.

Eighth. The Dove is a fit Emblem of the Holy Spirit. She is thus introduced at the beginning of the New Testament. "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him; and lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:16,17 The other Gospel writers also record that great event. Luke states, that the spirit came upon Jesus "in a bodily shape like a dove." Not only is the Holy Spirit powerful and severe when necessary; but He is also tender, gentle, soothing, wooing, kind. Like a mother bird, He "brooded over the face of the waters" in the beginning. Gen. 1:2, R. V. He does the same today. The fruit of the Spirit, which yielded saints bear, indicates this fact — "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Gal. 5:22,23 If we yield to the Spirit, He makes us dove-like, tender, loving and kind.

15

(Reprint 1938)

Worth Pondering

"The Bible was written by some forty writers. It was written in three different languages. It was written over a period of approximately sixteen hundred years. Its writers were scattered over some eight different countries, and drawn from every level of society and education. In few cases did the writers have contact with one another or have access to the writings of one another. It is inconceivable that with such a background of human authorship, a book could be written with such perfection in unity, in purpose, in logic, in spirit, in power, except by the Holy Spirit of God."

THE GOD OF THE LIVING

"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Matt. 22:31-32.

This was Jesus' invincible answer to the Sadducees, who taught that there is no resurrection. He first quoted from Ex. 3 Jehovah's words of comfort to Moses, which were confirmed to him by adding, "This is My Name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations." Ex. 3:6,15 Then Jesus gave the interpretation of those encouraging words, because He Himself is "...the resurrection, and the Life..." Jn. 11:25 Though the bodies of the patriarchs were still in their graves, yet their spirits were alive, because they were a new creation. The new creation is never dead. Though on earth, he dies daily by being poured out in sacrifice for others, yet he is alive forever and never can die. Jehovah is his God. He knows no other, needs no other.

16

They who have a form of godliness and deny its power are lifeless. The living God is not their God. They are dead in trespasses and sins, despite their profession of righteousness. "The god of this world," the devil, is their god. He, too, is dead to the things of the Spirit of the living and true God. How blessed to be born again, born of the incorruptible Seed of divine Truth, and know the Scriptures and the power of God and live in sweet fellowship with Him forever. It is wonderful to be alive unto God and know it and to be so assured of it that we never can be mistaken about it. Hence, if our bodies go to the grave, we know that they will not remain there; for our God is the God of the living. It is not possible that they should be holden of death, because they belong to Him who is "...the Resurrection, and the Life..." Our bodies are asleep in Jesus (John 11:11; I Thess. 4:14), while our spirits depart "to be with Christ," (Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:8) awaiting the trumpet sound. I Thess. 4:16 Paul's experience of being "caught up to the third heaven...whether in the body, or out of the body,..." (II Cor. 12:2,3) also demonstrates that our God is the God of the living.

Anon

THE LILIES OF THE FIELD

When you read in the Bible of how Jesus walked upon the hills of Galilee and spoke of "the lilies of the field," do you have a picture in your mind of just how those lilies looked? Do you think of the lilies that He saw as being like our white lilies?

Travelers tell us that everywhere in Galilee, wild flowers grow in beautiful profusion, that they are the most beautiful of all the flowers that grow in the Holy Land. Phlox, lupine, oleander, poppies, hyacinths, iris, gladioli, and jonquils grow everywhere upon the hills of Galilee.

As to the lilies, they are not white at all. They are scarlet and purple - gorgeous things to see. Think of the color of these lilies - scarlet and purple! ... even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" - Matthew 6:29.

"A greater than Solomon is here." Matt. 12:42. The scarlet speaks to us of the Blood of Jesus Christ, and the purple speaks to us of His Royalty. In these are pictured His, two advents - His suffering at Calvary, and His soon coming when He will rule and reign.

"His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh" -Song of Solomon 5:13. We see His suffering here also, in the myrrh. His Bride is spoken of as a lily, in the Song of Solomon 2:1,2. She will be "like Him." She suffers now, and will reign with Him then.

17

WILL THERE BE DENOMINATIONS IN HEAVEN?

It has been said that John Wesley had a dream in which he appeared at the gate of hell. He cried out, "Are there any Presbyterians in there?" "Yes," came the reply, "a great many." He asked, "Any Church of England members?" "Yes, lots of them." "Are there any Baptists?" "A large number." "And, are there any Wesleyans?" Again the answer came, "Yes, many of them."

Disappointed, especially at that last reply, Wesley next dreamed he was standing at the gate of heaven. He repeated the same questions. Each time he received the same troubling answer: "No, not one!" No Baptists, no Church of England members, no Presbyterians, and no Wesleyans!

"Who, then, is in heaven?" Wesley exclaimed. The reply came: "We know nothing here about the names you mentioned. The only name that matters here is CHRISTIAN. We are all Christians here."

REFLECTIONS

...From the Editor

“...for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth...”

Jer. 31:22

The context surrounding these words could refer to a number of “new things” that God has created, such as the birth of Christ, which many believe is the primary thrust of this prophecy. The criteria of this verse could also bear reference to the birth of Israel as a new nation. It could further include the birth of the “man child” of Rev. 12. The overall point, however, is that God is an “Originalist,” in the sense of having introduced many “new things” concerning humanity. When Korah rebelled against The Lord and against himself, Moses put his own reputation on the line saying “If these men die the common death of all men, ... then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth,.. and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.” Num. 16:29-30 That new thing did come to pass immediately as God surely affirmed His prophet.

18

Scripture is also very clear that God did a “new thing” when the rains came in the days of Noah. “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark...” Heb 11:7

However, one of the most stupendous “new things” God has brought forth is creation itself. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Heb. 11:3 This latter statement asserts that God took “nothing” and made something out of it. The things that were made did not come from that which was already manifest or evident. Thus, let all men understand that the 6 days of creation in Gen. 1:2-31 cannot be the original creation to which Paul refers in this verse. That fact is clearly established in Gen. 1:2 for “...Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,” meaning that the waters were ALREADY HERE. Verse 9 likewise proclaims, “...Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear:” once again declaring that, “the land” was

already here under the waters. Thus, the “original creation” of V. 1 to which time Heb. 11:7 bears witness could have taken place millions or even billions of years before the account given of the six days recorded in Gen. 1.

Not only so but this second verse in Genesis 1 clearly asserts that “...the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The “...earth...” as well as “...the deep...” was surely here at that time, but there is no way that God would have created the earth in the condition of being “...without form and void.” The prophet Isaiah plainly explains, “For... the LORD that created the heavens;...that formed the earth... created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited:...” Isa. 45:18

Paul does emphatically inform all men that the Master of Creation has left His handiwork as proof of His Very 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,...so that they are without excuse:” Rom. 1:19 The reason men try to replace creation with the theory of evolution or the “big bang” theory is because they think if they can get rid of creation, they can also justify the idea that there is no God.

19

However, despite all man’s unbelief, this Great Master Of Originality will not be denied, for He will yet create something out of nothing and introduce a “new thing” even after the Millennium is over. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;...Behold, I make all things new....” Rev. 21:1&5

It is absolutely unknown what New Stupendous Plan The Great Creator may have in mind after time as we know it has expired, but it will without question be Spectacular!

GH

STREAMING INFORMATION:

www.gracegod.com Service times: 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: Synthesis: Mon. Exposition: Thurs. Prophecy: Fri. All classes begin Evenings at 7 P.M. CST.

God's Timing and Purposes

(Continued)

Dr. Vicky Moots

“**A** time to get, and a time to lose...” Ecc. 3:6a:

We spend our entire life accumulating things and never seem to be satisfied that we have enough. Of course, there are certain things that we have to buy when we are starting out on our own or when we get married, so that is “a time to get”. However, no matter how much we “get” in life, we lose it all when we die. What about in between these times? Is there “a time to lose” before we die?

In Mark 8:34-36, Jesus told the people, “...Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

20

Some people say that we need to just “get a life”, but the only way to “get a life” is to lose the one we have now, the one that is only temporary, and exchange it for one that is eternal. In Matt. 19:16-22 we read the story of a rich, young ruler who came to Jesus to ask what he must do to have (or “to get”) eternal life. Because he was rich, he was used to being able “to get” anything he wanted. However, he was greatly disappointed when Jesus told him in v. 21 that he would need to sell everything he had (because he was trusting in it) and give it to the poor. Verse 22 tells us, “But when the young man heard that saying, he went away very sorrowful: for he had great possessions.” He was not willing “to lose” everything that he had been able “to get” in this life in order “to get” eternal life. Sadly, at that point, his earthly riches seemed more important to him than his soul.

In contrast, we read in Matt. 4:18-20 where Jesus called Peter and Andrew to be fishers of men, “And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.” Then in v. 21 He called James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were in a ship with their father. Verse 22 tells us, “And they immediately left the ship and their

father, and followed him.” So, we see that these men, unlike the rich, young ruler, were willing to lose their life (to leave their livelihood and their family behind) in order to find it in Jesus and become His disciples.

The apostle Paul described his own “time to lose” in Phil. 3:7-8. However, in the previous three verses he listed the things of which he had been boasting in the natural and that he had considered gain prior to his conversion. But one day on the road to Damascus to persecute Christians he came face to face with Jesus in a vision. The light of it was so bright that he fell to the ground and lost his eyesight for three days, until God restored it. That was the first thing recorded that Paul lost, but it would not be the last. God opened his blinded eyes, both physically and spiritually, so that he could see clearly who Jesus was. As a result, Saul the persecutor, became Paul the apostle, for he chose to deny himself, take up the cross, and follow Jesus.

Paul states in Phil. 3:7-8, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” 21

Are we willing to lose all that we hold dear to us in order to win Christ? We may not actually have to lose everything we have, as Paul did, but we need to not hold on to the things we possess and the people we love in this world more tightly than we do to Jesus. Jesus must take first place in our lives. He must become our first love.

Jesus, Himself, willingly experienced “a time to lose” and because of that, we can have the gift of salvation. In Phil. 2:5-8 Paul describes how that Jesus suffered the loss of all things, including His life, in order that we might have life. He left the riches and glory of heaven, and as we read in vv. 7-8, “took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

He did this for us, so that it would be our “time to get,”

as Paul tells us in II Cor. 8:9: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

Our “time to get”, as far as spiritual riches and gain are concerned, is now; but first comes our “time to lose”, our time to follow the example of Paul and of Jesus and to humble ourselves. It is “a time to lose” our old life, to forget those things which are behind, and to “...press toward the mark for the prize of the high [upward] calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14), for Jesus is coming soon.

“...a time to keep, and a time to cast away.” Ecc. 3:6b:

My mother lived during the Great Depression, and she used to keep everything just in case she might need it later or because it was too good to throw away. That included saving all the bread wrappers, plastic cottage cheese containers, etc., anything that she thought might be useful for something.

22 Many of us tend to do that to a degree with some things, such as clothing that no longer fits, since we hope to lose weight and be able to wear it again. Unfortunately, after a while we end up with a lot of clutter and overflowing closets, and we have to start discarding some things or donating them. The “time to keep” sooner or later becomes a “time to cast away.”

Spiritually, even after we are born again and become a new creation in Christ, our old nature (our “old man”) wants to hang on to and “keep” some of the things of the flesh, the old creation, things that are displeasing to God and detrimental to us. Paul admonishes us in Eph. 4:22-24 to “...put off concerning the former conversation [manner of life] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And...put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

We are to cast off the old garment (lifestyle) of the old creation which is “no longer fitting” for a Christian, as Paul tells us in Rom. 13:12: “...let us therefore cast off the works of darkness...” and in v. 14: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”

In addition to casting away the works of darkness, we must also cast away our self-righteousness, which is nothing but filthy rags in God's eyes, according to Isa. 64:6: "...all our righteousness are as filthy rags..." Paul described his own self-righteousness as "dung" in Phil. 3:8, which certainly must be cast away and exchanged for Christ's righteousness, as he says in v. 9: "And be found in him [Christ], not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Now is the time for us to clean house and to take out our spiritual garbage; it is a "time to cast away".

Besides the garbage in our lives, we find in Heb. 12:1 that there are other things which we, as runners in the race, must cast away in order to win: "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." First of all, we must cast away all the burdens and cares of this life that weigh us down and hinder us from running to win. How do we do that? We cast them upon the Lord, and let Him carry them, as Peter urges us to do in I Pet. 5:7: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

Now, what about the "sin which doth so easily beset us"? Is this referring to a specific sin in each of our lives over which we have been unable to get the victory? Possibly, but I believe it is most likely referring to the sin of unbelief, failing to lay hold of God's promises by faith. It was unbelief that kept some of the children of Israel from entering into the promised land of Canaan (Heb. 3:19). Unbelief keeps our eyes focused on ourselves and the circumstances instead of on the Lord. We must cast away our unbelief by crying out, "...Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," as the father of the child with the deaf and dumb spirit did in Mark 9:24, so that Jesus could heal him.

A time of casting away is obviously necessary, but there are also some times in the Scripture where we have been advised "to keep", or to "hold fast" certain things which are important to us spiritually. Let us first look at Prov. 4:13: "Take fast hold of instruction: let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life." This is, of

course, speaking of the wise instruction which can only be found in the Word of God and is able to bring life. Not all instruction which we are given is wise, and so it must be measured against God's Word, as Paul tells us in I Thess. 5:21: "Prove all things; hold fast [keep] that which is good." It is not good unless it agrees with God's Word. If it does not agree, then it must be "cast away".

Paul warns the young minister, Timothy, in II Tim. 1:13-14 to shun such false teaching and to "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me...That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." We, too, must be sure to hold fast and "to keep" securely the sound words of the apostle Paul, for they will instruct us in the path of life.

24 And lastly, Jesus Christ, Himself, the Righteous Judge, who was seen by John in Rev. 1:13-18, warns the overcomers in Rev. 3:11 to "...hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." To what crown is He referring? Paul declares to Timothy, shortly before his execution, in II Tim. 4:7-8, "I have fought a good fight...I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

It is therefore "a time to keep". A time to keep running the race, to "hold fast" to the truth of the Word of God, and to the promise of the coming of the Lord, so that we, like Paul, may also receive our crown.

*In full and glad surrender
I give myself to Thee;
Thine utterly and only,
And evermore to be!*

*O Son of God Who loves me,
I will be Thine alone;
And all I and all I have
Shall henceforth be Thine Own.*

Frankie Wharton

Unsavory Salt

L. Barrowcliff

“Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?” Lk. 14:34

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” Matt. 5:13

We are confronted in our lesson tonight with the problem of “unsavory salt.” From this we may safely conclude that salt may lack those vital constituents whereby its seasoning qualities are manifested when it is tasted. Food which normally requires salt, when served without salt, is distasteful. The dish is rejected rather than relished. This principle is forcibly brought out to us in the lives of those who profess to be well seasoned.

The Lord Jesus Himself was full of grace and truth. He was well-salted. Grace is typified by salt for no offering under the Levitical sacrifices was acceptable without salt, which made it clear that only by the grace of God could the offerings be accepted. Behind the offerings under law, hidden within its commands, the principle of grace was set forth. Though by law men offered sacrifices, it was only by the grace of God such sacrifices were acceptable. And it is written in John 1:14,16, "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; and of His fulness have we all received and grace for grace." Verse 17 of that chapter states, "But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." He was the showing-forth, the complete manifestation of the grace of God. He was the Lamb offered up as an atonement, the complete sacrifice, the perfect Redeemer, acceptable unto God for the souls of men. He was the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, the sin and the trespass offering all combined, none of which was acceptable without salt. Since the salt figured grace and our Lord Jesus was full of grace, we see that the salt was evidenced in the offering of Himself.

His life upon earth was exemplary. No guile, no sin was found in Him. We who profess to follow Him, to love and to

serve Him, should manifest the same grace as He. Not that we are called upon to imitate Christ. Indeed no! Our God does not want imitations. He wants the real thing! He created all things. Shall we offer Him a substitute? To do so would be most impertinent and certainly would not be accepted. We must offer God the real thing — not a sham. Imitation Christians abound on every hand, in organised religions, in religions with a "Christian" prefix, but nothing of the Christ within. Those are shams and not desired. Real Christians are the only ones He will have! And what is a real Christian? A real Christian is one who has been born again, born of the Spirit of God, washed in the blood of Jesus, and henceforth indwelt by the living Christ, who was crucified in weakness, yet raised in power, henceforth to live for evermore. They are Christ-ones. And having become Christians by this wonderful rebirth even by the power of the Holy Spirit, they are the salted ones, and with them henceforth it is "no longer I, but Christ that liveth in" them.

26 The Christian is a two-natured person — a human being with a divine life. He is no longer an ordinary human being, conscious only of right and wrong; but he possesses a life which is altogether opposed to every form of sin that the flesh is heir to. He is a man indwelt by God. As such his experiences differ from those of other men who are not so indwelt. The unconverted, whilst he remains unconverted, can never enter into the ways of the Christian; and never again can the Christian become as he was before conversion. He is a new creature — a new creation — a complex being because he is a human with a super-human nature, seeking to lift him above the carnality and sin of this world. His old Adamic life has not ceased to exist. It is still there—still corrupt, still evil; but it no longer has undisputed sway: for the new man, the inner man, now controls. Thus a warfare ensues which has far reaching consequences. The soul is the battleground. The warring factors are spiritual forces. The fight is terrific; the onslaught stupendous; but the final issue is certain — the new man shall prevail. The old natural life, full of sin, or in typical language, full of leaven, resists the promptings of the new nature. It may ferment and seek to "break-out;" but so long as the Christian

remembers that Christ within is able to quench all those evil desires, he may continue in victory over every sin; for the Christ within is salt to the Christian. Salt keeps the leaven from rising, salt counteracts its working, "Where sin abounds, grace did much more abound." Though in the flesh the leaven is plentiful; yet there is grace sufficient for every need. Nevertheless, tho' there is salt in immeasurable store, yet it must be desired and obtained for each individual need. Though Christ obtained Eternal Redemption for all men; sinners who believe are saved. Even so only those who will absorb the salt will find its effective working. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "Have salt in yourselves." Mk. 9:50 And Paul, writing to the Colossians (4:6), said, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." Hence, both our Lord and His apostle to the church taught the need of lives seasoned with salt.

And what did they mean when exhorting their hearers to have salt in themselves --- and let their speech be always seasoned with salt? They were warning them against loose living, loose talking. Indeed, the one will surely produce the other until he who talks loosely lives as loosely as the other, and he who lives loosely cannot help but talk as he lives. According to the effectual working of Christ, so do we find Christians to be savoury or unsavoury. A Christian is expected to abstain from those things obviously sinful. He should not allow his conduct to fall below the standard of uprightness set by the Word of God. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Psa. 1:1. These should be signposts to the Christian for the pathway he ought to choose; and that he may surely follow the pathway of righteousness, he should take the Psalmist's advice --- "But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." Psa. 1:2 So the Lord. His every act a deed of grace, should the Christian be. His constant delight should be to walk well-pleasing unto, every word an utterance of goodness, his every thought a hallowed meditation, his heart being filled with love. Even so will his words be words of grace, seasoned with salt. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth

speaketh."Matt. 12 :34.

But these things are not always evidenced in the Christian life. We have not been promised a life on earth free from temptation, but we have been promised power to overcome when we are tempted. The assurance is given that "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." Whence cometh then, these failures to maintain victory? It is of the flesh. The sin in our members is still in existence. The leaven is there after conversion even as it was before. The difference lies in the salt now deposited in the soul redeemed. And as these two contend for victory, the individual soul chooses which it will serve. The leaven could not so easily work if left alone; but the spices of this world, the sugar coated temptations are aids to sin. If the soul yields to taste the bitter sweets he once renounced, then he will find the leaven working. Sin again will manifest itself in his members.

28

Oh, sad the day when once more he is entangled with the toils of sin! His peace is gone! His joys are cut off; the Lord is a delight to those who trust in Him, whereas he has trusted in his flesh. And if he fails to realize his folly and immediately seek re-cleansing, he will learn that the downward path of degradation can surely be trodden down by the Christian as by those who profess no faith in Christ, at all. His pathway will be harder than theirs; for all the while he knows the inner man is fighting. His merriment is forced, his laughter hollow, and his fellow creatures who have caused him to be drawn from his path of chastity, knowing his former claims, look upon him with derision. They, allies of the devil, revel in their villainy. Knowing full well the Christian's plight, they never cease to jibe him when opportunity presents itself. His conscience is seared, his heart is heavy. He cannot fellowship with those who love the Lord, because he is conscious of his own defilement. His ungodly companions do not offer him such sweet fellowship as that of those he knew when he served the Lord. The leaven he finds is very bitter indeed. And the more he partakes of the poisoned sweets of sin, the more vicious does the leaven work. His plight is truly great. "Oh, what can I do? Oh, what can I do?" he sadly moans. But the unsavoury salt is

not desired. He is cast out by the world. "This man commenced to build but could not finish," they mock. Where can he turn?

Ah, the Grace of God is boundless, vast and free. If the defeated one will repent of his misdeeds and return unto the Lord, He will love him freely and have mercy upon him. Oh, backslider in heart, or outwardly, you know the unsavouriness of your life. You are well aware of the distress in your soul; but there is mercy flowing even now for you. The salt of the Covenant is not lacking. Our Lord has made a full provision in His grace for you. Tonight, return to your Father; tonight, come, partake of the salt of your God. As you again feed on Christ and continue to partake of Him, the days of evil shall cease to be. Your peace, your joy, your gladness will return and the unsavoury salt shall be resavored.

And can such mercy and such love be always spurned? Nay! Though men cast out the fallen sinner whom they consider viler than themselves and treat the backsliding saint just the same; yet to them both our Lord extends His ever faithful promise—"Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." To those who seek a cleansing from sin and shame, to those who seek healing from some sin-inflicted wounds, to those who come with penitential heart and seek His grace, to them our Lord puts forth His Hand, and taking theirs in His, He draws them to Himself. With Arms so strong, nor death, nor hell can wrest those He embraces from Him. He draws them to His heart of grace and Truth and love, where He shall reign in glorious might whilst endless ages roll. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Amen.

(Reprint 1938)

* Dr. W.H. Grifficht Thomas gave a beautiful interpretation of the word "Responsibility." RE...SPONSE... ABILITY --- "man's response to God's Ability"

* This world would be a perfect place --- almost--- if every man was a good as he expected his neighbor to be.

* It did not take long for The Lord to take Israel out of Egypt, but it took forty years to get "Egypt" out of them.

Death In The Pot

Harold T. Gruver

“**A**ND Elisha came again to Gilgal, and there was a dearth in the land: and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot and seethe the pottage ... And one went out into the field to gather herbs and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds ... and came and shred them into the pot of pottage; for **they knew them not**. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating... that they cried out and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof. But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.” II Kings 4:38-41

Elisha and the sons of the prophets were having a convention at Gilgal. They were all gathered there before Elisha, who was their head, and looking to him for their supply for spirit, soul and body. They were entirely dependent on him, and were expecting him not only to instruct them in the Word of the Lord, but also to feed them.

30 This is a picture in many ways of this Easter convention. Elisha means, "God our Saviour," and Gilgal means "a rolling away." Gilgal was the place where the new generation of Israel was circumcised when they entered the land of Canaan. Circumcision speaks of the cutting off of the old creation; of having "no confidence in the flesh." Phil. 3:3 We are gathered here with Christ, "God our Saviour," our Elisha, as our Head. We are dependent on Him, looking to Him to meet our every need for spirit, soul and body. Phil. 4:19 And we are gathered at the place of counting the old man dead, cut off, crucified with Christ. We "glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." "And there was a dearth in the land." There was a scarcity of food. Amos 8:11, 12 says, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord; and they shall wander from sea to sea and from the north even to the east. They shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." There is certainly "a dearth in the land" today of the Word of God. One pastor of a certain denomination said to another. "I don't know what to preach to my people any more. I've

told them everything I know. I've gone through my whole library now and I'm completely preached out." The other said to him, "Did you ever think of trying the Scriptures on them?" No man can ever "preach out" who preaches the Word of God. It is hard to find a place where the true Word of God is preached. There is a dearth in the land.

"He said to his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe the pottage for the sons of the prophets." He wanted them to have something to eat. Our "Elisha" wants His people to be fed, so He commands His servants (the ministers of the Word) to prepare something for them. And they must bring it from the Scriptures.

"One went out into the field to gather herbs and found a wild vine." That poisonous vine was a result of the curse. In the beginning, "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good." Gen. 1:31 There were no harmful plants, no thorns, or thistles. They came in when man fell. Gen. 3:17,18 So the wild gourds speak of something of the old creation, something of the flesh, with which the preachers try to feed the people of God. They give book reviews, nice little essays, philosophical discussions, or speak on the latest discoveries of science, or popular topics of the day, instead of giving the people the Word of God. Or, they bring in some harmful doctrine, or theory, and mix it in with the Word of God.

"...they knew them not...." That is the root of the matter. They did not know the difference between the good and the bad. That is the reason for so much error and false doctrine today; the preachers do not know the difference. They are trained and taught in everything else but the Word of God. Paul says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Tim. 2:15 Praise the Lord that there are some faithful servants today, who have studied the Word of God and can handle it alright. You need not fear to eat what they feed you; but such ministers are few and far between.

No doubt the wild gourds looked very good, just as "the woman saw the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." Gen. 3:6 Satan is a wise old fellow. He dresses his poison up to make it look nice, and taste good because if he did not, people would not swallow it. The false doctrines, which have come right out of

the pit, all have something about them to make them attractive to the natural man. But they do not look good to one who knows the Truth. I can tell the literature of some of these false cults as far away as I can see it. What a need there is today for ministers, especially, to heed Paul's exhortation to "study to show thyself approved unto God."

"And it came to pass, as they were eating, that they cried out and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot." What a pitiful cry! Truly, there is death in what many preachers are dishing out to the people. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 14:14 Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Jn. 6:63 But the words of man's philosophy are only death and destruction.

32 "And they could not eat thereof." They were accustomed to good, wholesome food, and their stomachs rebelled against the wild gourds. People who are accustomed to a wholesome, spiritual diet cannot stomach "wild gourds." They discern the difference. I Cor. 2:15 Just let some fellow come into this assembly preaching error, and see how far he would get. They would not swallow his concoctions, because they know what the Truth tastes like. Anything else would produce spiritual indigestion.

"But he said, Then bring meal; and he cast it into the pot; and there was no harm in the pot." Meal is nothing but grain which has been ground and sifted and prepared. It has been tried and proven to be wholesome, healthful, nourishing food. This speaks of the tried and tested Word of God, which has been ground and sifted over and over and found to be good and wholesome. The Word of God applied to the mixtures that men try to dish out will take the harm out of them. It will separate the harmful things by making them manifest. The tried and tested meal of the Word will take the harm out of any Gospel Message.

I am glad we need not fear to eat what is set before us here. The servants who prepare our spiritual bill-of-fare are workmen who need not to be ashamed, because they have studied the Word of Truth, and can handle it aright. There is no "death in the pot;" but there is plenty of good "meal" in it.

(Reprint 1938)

HOSEA

Chapter 3

“**T**hen said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.” V. 1

The word “...friend...” has a wide range of meanings such as “brother, companion, fellow, friend, husband, lover, neighbor.” The context of this book overwhelmingly suggests that “husband and lover” would be the meaning here. The closing verses of chap. 2 exhorting that Israel should “...call me Ishi (husband) rather than “...Baali” (Lord) indicate that the instruction for Hosea in this chapter is that he should take Gomer again unto himself. She, like Israel, has proven to be “... yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.” Though both of these “women” were loved by their respective “husbands,” they transgressed against them, and chose other heads. The latter phrase of this verse explains specifically how both also loved **33** “...flagons of wine,...” signifying drunkenness on the wine of religion.

Hosea’s response to this adulterous situation and, according to God’s decree, is that “...I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:” V. 2 Silver is consistently used in scripture as a symbol of redemption. The text here loudly proclaims the fact that God likewise “bought” Israel back unto Himself through Jesus’ redemptive work on Calvary and she too will be restored as a wife, even as Gomer demonstrates.

The result of such redemption bespeaks an eventual eternal union, for “...I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.” V. 3 This end result will only come to pass after the days of tribulation wherein Israel as a nation will accept her Messiah. However, much suffering and privation is ahead for them, “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without

a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim:" V. 4 The local fulfillment of this prophecy lies in the fact that these ten tribes were taken captive by Assyria during a time in which, they had no "king...prince...sacrifice..." etc. But the greater fulfillment of these "...many days..." is a reference to Gentile Times which began when Nebuchadnezzar was given world dominion in 606 B.C. That time includes the Church Age, which extends down to this present hour. Israel as a nation has been set aside, during those "...many days..." and though they were recognized as a nation in 1948, Israel has never had the freedom to offer a full complement of sacrifices unto the Lord. Their bondage under Gentile Rule will continue, even to the point of making that infamous covenant with the antichrist, as recorded in Dan. 9:27. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured
34 upon the desolate." The "...desolate..." is Israel which must be decimated to the point of finally accepting their Messiah in the midst of that unprecedented time of "Jacob's trouble." Then shall the final verse of this chapter be fulfilled.

"Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days." V. 5 "Afterward..." indicates after the "...many days..." which will be consummated when Israel as a united nation will actively seek the LORD and enjoy all the benefits of the Davidic Covenant when their King shall reign, and Jesus shall become King of kings and Lord of lords.

(To Be Continued)

*Tho' trouble assail and dangers affright,
Tho' friends should all fail and foes all unite,
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide
The Scripture assures us, "The Lord will provide."*



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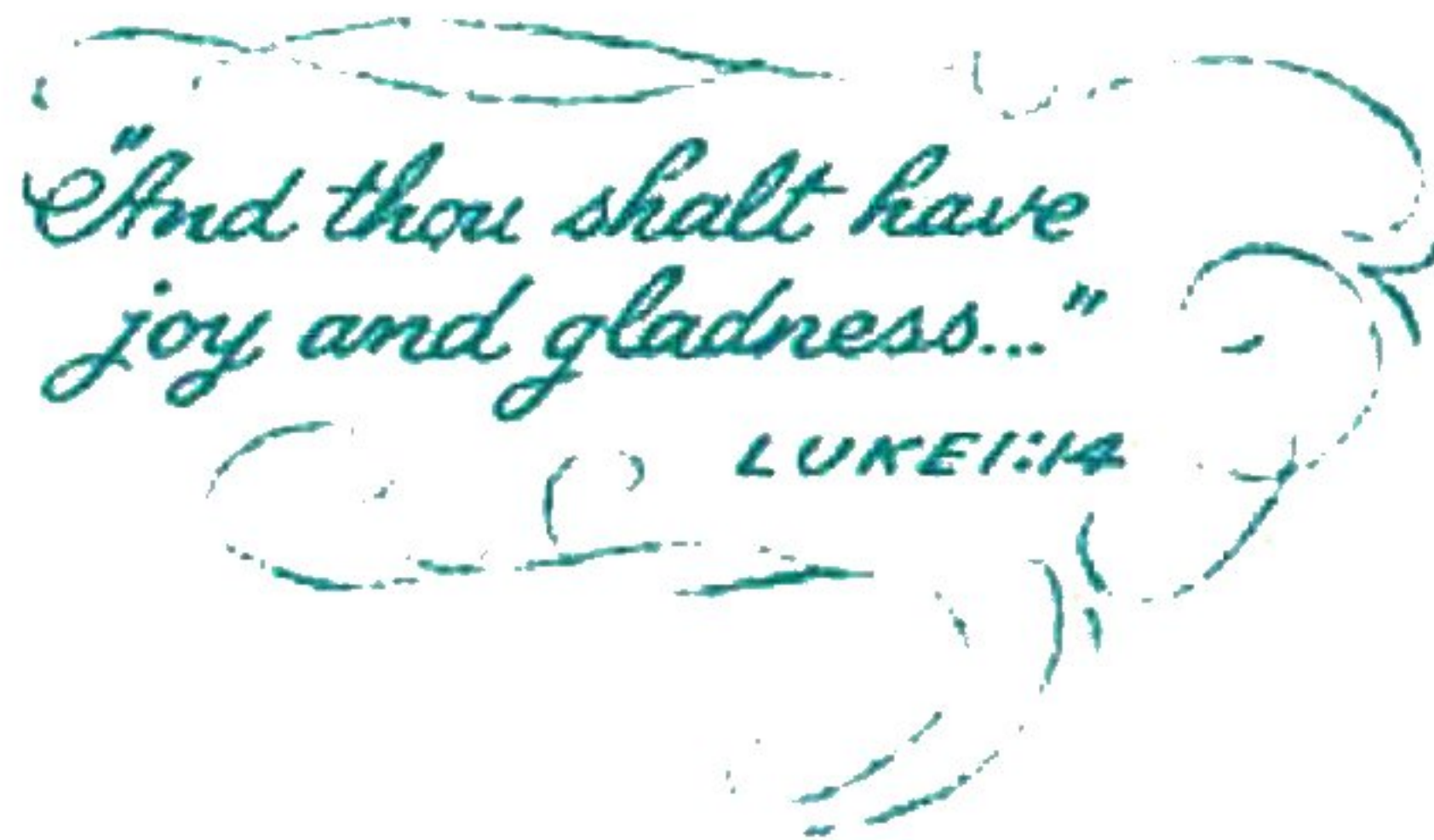
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*"...ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy
may be full."*

John 16:24