

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole Counsel of GOD

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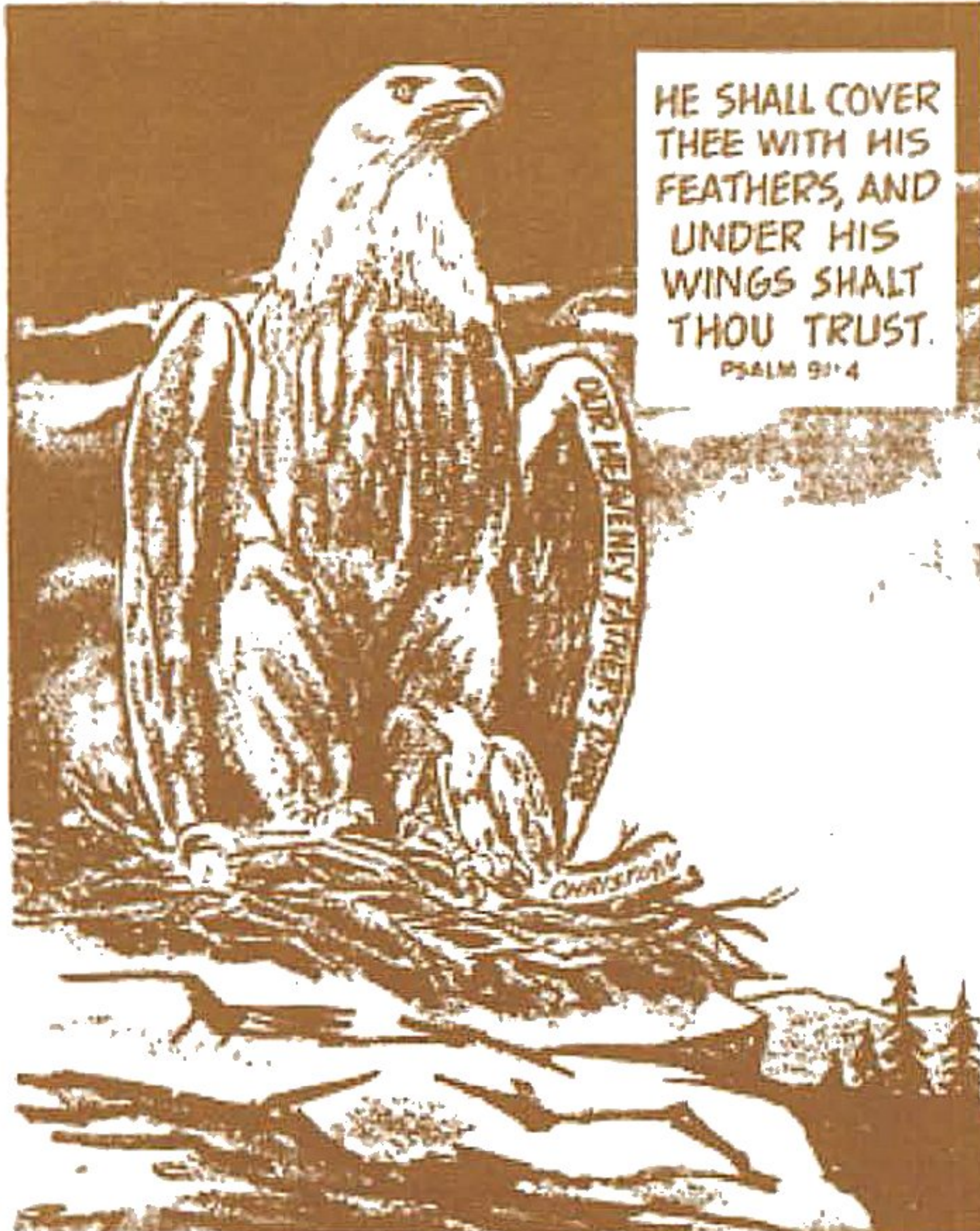


When the
righteous are in
authority, the
people rejoice.
PROVERBS 29:2

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PLACE OF SAFETY



Why should I fear the darkest hour,
Or tremble at the tempter's power?
Jesus vouchsafes to be my tower.

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Editor: Gene Hawkins



Gene Hawkins

“**A**nd as some spake of the temple, ...he said,...
Behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another,.. And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ;...But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified:... Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven...And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake....when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.... there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations,... Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.... And when these things **begin** to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” Lk. 21:5-28

3

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the above discourse as Jesus gave multiple signs which are even now coming to pass in these end days of the Church Age. However, the order of these events is not consistent in these records. Luke, for example declares that “...fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven...there shall be signs in the sun...moon...stars...” concluding that “...when these things **begin** to come to pass, then look up...your redemption draweth nigh.” The key here is a reference to the beginning of all these signs. Contrariwise, Matthew 24:29 declares the order to be “Immediately **after** the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:” These records are

not contradictory to one another. All Jesus' declarations are absolute truth and simply attest to the fact that all these signs will begin in moderation and steadily increase both in intensity and frequency until all of them are fully manifest in their devastation upon this earth. He likewise defines a number of such signs as "...the beginning of sorrows." Matt. 24:8 Thus, is it imperative that those who are watching these harbingers of His return unfold at this present hour define the order of them from such prophecies as Isaiah, Daniel, Revelation, and others.

Luke clearly illustrates a most comprehensive atmosphere on planet earth at this present hour, declaring that "...Nation shall rise against nation,... great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven... signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations,... Men's hearts failing them for fear,...." All of these comprise the news of our day, and it is rather gratifying to hear even those of the world asking the question, "Did you ever think that things could get this bad?"

4

Both China and Russia continue almost non-stop in news cycles, for they certainly demonstrate nations rising against nations. Both have expressed exactly the same desire of ruling the entire world and China especially seems to have established a definite timeline for doing it. Believers especially must realize that all the endeavors of these nations are rooted in the **spirit of antichrist**. John declared plainly that "...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.**" I Jn. 4:3 Such a spirit has been present from the very beginning of the Church Age, but it is becoming much more intense as these nations are emerging in open rebellion against the True Christ, trying to claim a place that belongs only to Him. That spirit prevails among all nations, for it is such a spirit that demands absolute control over all men, which is the goal of modern nations today.

One excuse for such control is found in the current doctrine of "global warming or climate change," which has

become an absolute “religion” to a great many nations around the entire world. Luke and others have plainly declared that “...great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven (over which men have absolutely no control for this is God’s domain) there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;...” Sadly, all these signs bringing great destruction upon this earth for all to see, are being dismissed as being caused by “global warming.” The grossly false idea here is that man in all his controlling ingenuity will be able to prevent all these prophesied phenomena. Not so! The absolute fact is that all these prophecies will without fail come to pass in their entirety and all the combined and feeble efforts of men will be totally unable to stop them, despite their claims to the contrary.

Two major signs marking the end of this age are deception and man’s grab for power, once again demonstrating the very spirit of antichrist. The U.S. congress recently passed the “Inflation Reduction Act,” which clearly illustrates both of these “signs” in living color. Bloomberg ran this headline proclaiming that **“The Inflation Reduction Act Is a Climate Bill. Just Don’t Call It One.”** MSNBC further explains that “The chamber approved the more than \$430 billion package...” by a unanimous margin. However, this same article continues, declaring that of that 430 billion, “The plan includes a record \$369 billion in spending on climate and energy policies, projected to slash the country’s carbon emissions by roughly 40% by 2030.” The bill was passed under a most deceptive title, the object being to literally force control of the American tax payer to fund this climate change agenda. 5

The control of money will be one primary tool of the coming antichrist, who will make sure “...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 God’s people must not take lightly the present reports of a government trying to ban the use of cash. Banks even now are required to collect signatures from their patrons who would withdraw large sums of cash from their own accounts. All these things are simply early signs indicating that even now initial steps are being taken to eventually ensure

the total control of money. The good news for those who are truly looking for Jesus' soon return is that the bridal company will be gone before these restrictions are fully implemented.

It was so very gratifying to view a telecast out of Springfield, Missouri, recently, which attested to many of the same signs of the end times displayed above and in other issues of Grace and Glory. This same telecast also rebuked the Church as a whole for apparently being oblivious to current signs which have been prophesied down through the ages in regard to the relationship that the Church should have toward Israel, the world, and the time of Jacob's trouble. However, that elation quickly dissolved into disappointment because the reason which was given for the Church to see and accept these signs was for the purpose of **PREPARING IT** for the tribulation.

6 The question must be asked: "Where in scripture are believers ever instructed to prepare for tribulation?" The closest thing to that premise would be Jesus proclaiming most assuredly that "...In the world ye shall have tribulation:..." He quickly added, however, that His hearers should not be obsessed with tribulation, but rather with Himself, exhorting "...but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Jn. 16:33 The Apostle Paul likewise sought to encourage the Thessalonians with these words. "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ," I Thess. 5:8-9 The justification for claiming this "...salvation..." is because "...God hath not appointed us to wrath..." Such wrath cannot mean the wrath of hell, for these believers had already been delivered from that fate. Not only so, but Paul had also stated, "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." I Thess. 5:6 Let all men understand: only believers "...sleep..." Sinners are said to be "...**dead** in trespasses and sins..." Eph. 2:1 Thus, the chief apostle to the Church beseeches this very elite company at Thessalonica to guard their minds with the helmet of salvation because God had not appointed believers to the "...wrath..." of tribulation, but rather deliverance from it. There would, for this cause, be no need to prepare for it.

This is exactly the same promise which Jesus held out to the Church at Philadelphia. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from (out of) the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3:10

The author of this teaching that the Church must endure the tribulation was then in essence asked, "What will you do if Jesus does appear before the tribulation comes?" His answer was, "I shall be very pleasantly surprised!" That particular scenario is also unscriptural, for Paul plainly admonished the Thessalonians, "...ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." I Thess. 5:4 In other words, the coming of Jesus should be no surprise to them who are looking for Him. Jesus likewise warned, "But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." Matt. 24:43 The apostle also imparted the truth of this same message to his Hebrew brethren, stating emphatically: "...unto them that **look for him** shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The qualifying factor is to LOOK for Him in order to enjoy His salvation, and it is quite apparent that if a person is occupied with preparing for tribulation, he is not obsessed with Jesus' return. Paul also instructed Timothy, "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.**" II Tim. 4:8 How can it be said that one **loves** His appearing if he is not actively **looking** for Him? This truth is beautifully illustrated by a woman who recounted her story some years ago describing how that, as a young child, she was surprised by her mother who caught her in the kitchen with her hand in the cookie jar. She declared "I love my mother dearly but I did not love her appearing at that moment." Those who are truly looking for Jesus to come will not in any wise be surprised when He appears.

Paul also records the fact that a crown awaits all those who do "...love his appearing..." Such a crown is plainly set forth by the twenty four elders in Rev. 4-5 The four living ones or "...four beasts..." of Rev.4:6 and the 24 elders represent two

sides of the same bridal company which will reign with Christ. The elders have "...crowns on their heads..." (Rev. 4:4) and the entire group declares unto Jesus that, "Thou art worthy to take the book,.. for thou wast slain,... And hast made us unto our God kings (elders with their crowns) and priests, (living ones full of eyes) and we shall reign on (over) the earth." Rev 5:9-10 The glorious truth here is that this entire company will be **in heaven** when Jesus takes His throne **before** the tribulation even begins. The horrendous judgment of the tribulation period does not occur until after King Jesus is on His throne and opens the seals described in Rev. 6.

8 It was noted earlier that Jesus' discourse did not establish a specified order for the tribulation period, but details in other prophecies marking various timelines are extremely clear. The Master plainly predicted the fall of Satan with these words. "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Lk. 10:18 He did not tell the disciples when this would take place but John saw it in vision on the Isle of Patmos. "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit." Rev. 9:1 Specific numbers of days given in Daniel and Revelation reveal the fact that Satan will be cast out of heaven around 250 days before the middle of the week after which he will loose the antichrist to begin his 1260 day reign of terror.

The record above also shows that the bride of Christ is without doubt in the throne room before the tribulation begins. The next rank to be taken out of this world comes **AFTER** the tribulation has already begun. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, **which no man could number**, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" Rev. 7:9 One of the elders then asked John, "... What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:13-14 John saw this vast multitude in heaven but the elder specifically declares that they "**...came out of great**

tribulation...” The order is strikingly clear. The Bride is in glory with Jesus **BEFORE** the devastating days of tribulation begin, but the bulk of the Church arrives **LATER**, having come **out of** that spectacular and troublous time. The exact time in which that will happen is not specified, but it is important to understand here that the same criteria for first rank will also be true for second: “...unto them that **look for him** shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Heb 9:28 It is a certainty that the second rank of the Church will **LOOK** as avidly for Jesus’ return **DURING** the tribulation as the bridal company has done **BEFORE** those horrendous days of trial arrived. The fact is that the Church must be purified by the fire of tribulation due to their heretofore carnal conduct and unbelief. They will, in fact, learn exactly the same lessons as did the bride of Christ, but it will be too late to claim that first place. The parallel with Israel’s experience is remarkable. Never did God intend that Israel should spend 40 years in the wilderness. That only occurred because they refused to believe God and immediately take their place in the promised land. Likewise, God did not foreordain the Church **9** for tribulation, but because of gross negligence and unbelief, even like unto Israel, the bulk of that body will suffer such a fate.

The next **order** or rank of the Church is found in the 144,000. They are “sealed” with the power of the Holy Spirit in this same chapter 7, but they are not seen again until they are reported to be in heaven. “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” Rev. 14:1 Mt. Zion is a reference to “...the heavenly Jerusalem...” according to Heb. 12:22, but when did this company of 144,000 arrive there? The record in Revelation shows only one group transported to glory since Chapter 7 and that is of the man child. It occurs at the same time when “...there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron:

and **her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.**” Rev. 12:3-4 That red dragon is none other than Satan, and this portion describes the same vision related by both Jesus and John, as he is cast out of heaven just prior to the middle of the week. Thus, the time here is unmistakable. This man child will be caught up from this earth to the throne of God about 250 days before the middle of the tribulation week. Some have tried to teach that the man child is Christ, but how can anyone insult Him in such a manner as that? He has not been designated as “a child” since He was born in Bethlehem. Not only so, but as has already been stated, He is at this time of the tribulation ruling as King of kings and Lord of lords.

10 Isaiah likewise confirms this same order of birth regarding the manchild. **“Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing?... Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.”** Isa. 66:7-8 There are those who insist that the man child and the nation born in one day are the same. That cannot be, for Isaiah clearly states that **“Before she travailed, she brought forth....”** This means that the man child came forth **BEFORE** Israel’s great travail of the tribulation or the time of Jacob’s trouble. The man child is in heaven **BEFORE** the most devastating 1260 days of the tribulation begin. Thus, the entire Church, the 144,000 being the last rank of it, will be in glory before the middle of the week. Israel as a nation will then spring forth afterward as a nation, a direct result of the “labor pains or travail” experienced during the 1260 day reign of antichrist.

“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 This must be the mantra of every believer today who has the desire to reign with Christ. They must not be distracted by all the hardships and troubles depicted by the signs of the end time, nor can they be obsessed with preparing for tribulation. **“...look up!...”** cried Jesus, and it is imperative for our own well being that we constantly cling to His promise **“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”** Rev. 3:11

Mystery Of The Bride

Dr. Vicky Moots

The mystery of the Church, the body of Christ, composed of all believers, both Jew and Gentile, is hidden in the Old Testament and revealed to us in the New. Inside this mystery, there is a second mystery: the mystery of the bride of Christ. Israel is mentioned several times as the wife of Jehovah, but that refers to Israel as a nation. These are two separate subjects and two separate groups. This study only concerns the bride of Christ, which includes both Jew and Gentile believers.

Paul first speaks of the bride of Christ in II Cor. 11:2, when he says, "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." It is as though Paul were acting as the father of the bride, who looked forward to the privilege of giving his daughter away at the marriage of the Lamb. He desired that they would give up their childish ways and let the Word of God purify their hearts, so that they could truly become a chaste, pure virgin, perfect and spotless just like the Lamb, and be presented to Christ as His bride. However, this letter to the Corinthians is also applicable to us today, as are all of Paul's inspired letters.

11

The espousal invitation has been offered to the whole Church, not just the Corinthian saints, but sadly, not all believers are willing to accept it. Many lukewarm Christians only desire a friendship relationship with Christ, or only wish to be a good servant. As we study this subject, allow the Holy Spirit to woo you into a deeper, more intimate place of fellowship with Christ and give you the desire to lean upon His breast, as did John, the beloved disciple.

The marriage relationship was first instituted by God shortly after He created man. Genesis 2:18, asserts that, "...the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should dwell alone; I will make a help meet for him."

This was not just an after-thought of God simply because poor Adam looked lonely. God had already created the animal kingdom, male and female, to have mates. Why did He not just create both Adam and Eve at the same time out of the dust of earth? Would that not make more sense? Instead, He created Adam and then formed Eve out of one of Adam's ribs. The reason for this unusual surgical procedure is a great mystery that we would not

be able to understand if it had not been revealed to the apostle Paul, who then revealed it to us.

Everything that God did was done for a specific purpose, according to His plan. When God created the heaven and the earth, He intended for it to be a forerunner, or type, of the new creation, He had already planned that Jesus would later become the “last Adam,” the Head of the new creation, as we read in I Cor. 15:45-47: “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening [life-giving] spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.”

So, we see that God intended the natural to be a picture of the spiritual. The first man, Adam, was given life (God breathed life into him), but the last Adam, Jesus, gave life to us (His life is breathed into us by the Holy Spirit when we are born again).

12 Now, we are going to see that when God formed Eve, the first Adam’s wife, from his rib, He intended for her to be a spiritual picture of the bride of Christ (the last Adam). Paul unfolds this mystery in Eph. 5:25-27. He first gives us the natural order of the husband and wife relationship, and then reveals that it is a spiritual picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride: “Husbands, love your wives, **even as** Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church [assembly glorious] not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

Notice that it is Christ Who is doing the work in us to sanctify and cleanse us by washing us with the Word, which not only removes every spot and blemish, but irons out all of the wrinkles, to make us pure and holy. The word “sanctify” means “to separate” or “to set apart”. Our part is to submit. He then presents the “glorious assembly,” the ones who have submitted to His Word in order to be made pure, to Himself as His wife.

Paul uses the truth of Vs. 30-32 of Eph. 5, in reference to Gen. 2:23-24, as he confirms the connection between the physical process which God used to form a wife for the first Adam in the Garden of Eden and the spiritual work which He is doing now to prepare a bride for His Son, the last Adam. “For we are members

of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

The little word “of” which is used three times in v.30, means “out from among”. In Gen. 2:23, Adam said concerning Eve, “...This is now bone of [out from among] my bones, and flesh of [out from among] my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” God formed Eve from a rib that He took out of the first Adam’s body. God is also forming a spiritual bride from a spiritual rib that is being taken out of the body of Christ, the last Adam.

A close examination of the account in Genesis wherein God formed the first Adam’s bride calls for a direct comparison with the spiritual formation of the bride of Christ. Whenever God does something in a special manner, He is doing it for a special purpose, and it always has a spiritual meaning.

Eve was not formed in the same manner, out of the dust of the earth, or at the same time as was Adam. Because of that, Adam realized in Gen. 2:20 that even though all of the animals had mates, he did not have one. This verse seems to imply that he was actually seeking a mate for himself: “And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him.” What does this mean to us spiritually? It is a picture of Christ, the last Adam, who also is seeking a bride for Himself.

The next two verses, 21-22, tell us how God responded to Adam’s desire for a mate and also how God’s plan and desire for Adam was fulfilled: “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.” Note that this surgery required only a small portion of Adam’s body, a single rib, used by God to form Eve. She was then presented to Adam to be his wife.

What is the spiritual significance of this? Adam represents Christ, as already stated. Paul declares in Eph. 1:22-23 that His body is the Church, stating that God raised Christ from the dead, “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body...”

I Cor. 12:13 makes it clear that the body of Christ, the church, is composed of both Jew and Gentile believers: “For by one Spirit [not by water, but by the Holy Spirit] are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” Then in V.27 Paul plainly asserts, “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

This means that all true believers, all over the world, all those who have been born again, whether they have joined a particular church or not, are a part of the body of Christ. God joins us to the Living Church, not a religious organization, and we become members of the body of Christ the moment we accept Him as Savior. Then out from among this large body of believers, God is separating out a small rib portion of saints, all those who desire to be a part of the bride of Christ and who are willing to submit to the scalpel of His Word.

14 We read in Gen. 2:21 that God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam while He was removing a rib to form Eve. Does this mean anything to us spiritually? We know that in the natural, in order for a surgery to take place, a patient must be anesthetized, or “put to sleep.” Adam’s physical body was asleep, and therefore was not aware of the operation that was being performed. Likewise, the majority of the spiritual body of Christ, the Church, is fast asleep today and is unaware of the signs of the end-times and that the marriage of the Lamb is soon to take place.

So, what happened that caused the Church to fall asleep? That body began on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out. About three thousand people were saved on that day, and Acts 2:47 proclaims that “...the Lord added to the church daily such as should be [were being] saved.”

The early church was very much awake and full of the Holy Ghost. But it was not long before they began to murmur among themselves, saying that not everyone was being treated equally (Acts 6:1). Does that sound familiar? Satan was actively sowing disagreement and discontent among the Church in an effort to stop it from growing.

Paul speaks sadly regarding one of his previous followers in II Tim. 4:10. “...Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world...” He warned Timothy in v.3 concerning the lukewarm, sleepy conditions that would soon invade the church:

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” This condition results when the love of the world is greater than our love for the Lord or for His Word.

Many religious organizations today have fallen asleep to the voice of God and no longer heed it or teach sound doctrine from the Bible. Instead, they have compromised with the world to please the people. Jesus Himself also warned of such conditions that would prevail in the end-time: “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Matt. 24:12

God does not cause these things to happen, but He does allow them to take place in order to fulfill His purposes, just like He allowed the church to fall asleep so that He may prepare a bride for Christ. He is calling out from among the sleeping Body of Christ a group of people whose love has not grown cold.

Paul admonished us I Thess. 5:1-8 to be awake and aware of the times and the seasons, because the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, and many will be asleep and not watching. He exhorts in v.4 that, “...ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief,” while V.5 states, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” He then warns us to be awake: “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” V.6

The apostle speaks here concerning two different groups of believers in the church: those who are asleep and those who are awake. This was true at that time and is true today. Which group do you choose to be in? Even three of Jesus’ closest disciples fell asleep instead of watching while He prayed and agonized in Gethsemane, so we must always be on our guard.

Yes, the Church is still very much alive. It has a pulse, and it is breathing, but the majority of it is in a spiritual deep sleep. It is time to wake up and listen to the Word of God. Paul warns the sleeping believers regarding this in Rom. 13:11: “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep...”

Listen closely. Can you hear the Holy Spirit calling your name? Do you wish to remain a part of the sleeping body of Christ, or do you choose to wake up and be a part of that small rib portion that is being called out and separated out from among

them to be fashioned into His bride?

Gen. 2:21b: "...and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof." I suppose you could call this surgery a "ribectomy". A surgical procedure not only requires anesthesia, but it also requires the right instruments and a skilled surgeon. God, the Great Physician, certainly qualifies to be the surgeon.

The instrument that is needed to remove a rib must be sharp enough to cut through bone. Heb. 4:12 describes an instrument which is capable of doing that: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow..." Marrow is in the center of bone, so this instrument is certainly sharp enough to cut through a rib and to dissect away the flesh and muscle around it in order to remove it.

16 The work of surgery is not done by the body or by the rib, but by the surgeon. God desires to do a work in us, to separate whosoever is willing out from among the sleeping Church, the Body of Christ, just as He did to Adam's rib while he slept. This is not by our own works. God will use the sharp two-edged scalpel of His Word to cut away our fleshly desires, and to prepare us to be a bride for Christ, if we are willing to let Him do it. Paul declares in Eph. 2:10 that "...we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..." "...unto good works,..." not "by good works." It is God working in us and through us that enables us to do good works which bring glory to His name. We are a "work in progress," but we must yield to the cutting of His Word if we want the work to progress.

The rib that was removed was still a part of the body of Adam, but God separated it out from the body for a specific purpose. Paul said in Eph. 5:25-26 that Christ "...loved the church [His body], and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." The word "sanctify" means "to separate out or to set apart for a specific purpose." Along with the sanctification, or separation, comes the cleansing. Note that Christ, Himself, does the work of separation and cleansing by using the Word of God. We cannot sanctify ourselves.

In the same manner in which God separated out the rib from Adam's body, He is separating out a spiritual rib from the sleeping Church, using the instrument of the Word, and cleansing

it, also with the Word, to prepare a bride for Christ.

When a surgery is performed, it is usually done for a reason, to fulfill a certain need in the body. However, sometimes an organ, such as a kidney, is removed not because it is diseased, but because it is being donated to give life to another person. That organ then becomes a living part of another living person.

In this case, God removed a living, healthy rib from Adam in order to give life to Eve. Part of Adam's bone marrow, containing his own stem cells, was inside that rib. As a result, when God formed Eve to be his bride from that rib, she actually had Adam's very life inside of her, not just one of his bones.

If we desire to be a part of that separated group of believers who are being prepared by God to make up the bride of Christ, we must come to the place spiritually that we lay hold of the fact that we have the very life of Christ inside of us, which gives us new life and gives us hope. Paul refers to this in Col. 1:27, as "... Christ in you, the hope of glory." What is our "hope of glory?" That we may one day reign with Christ as His bride! That is also God's purpose and plan for our lives, so let us yield to the scalpel of God's Word and to the hands of the Great Surgeon.

17

(To Be Continued)

THINGS WE CANNOT AFFORD

We cannot afford to win the gain that means another's loss.

We cannot afford to miss the crown by stumbling at the cross.

We cannot afford the heedless jest that robs us of a friend.

We cannot afford the laugh that finds in bitter tears an end.

We cannot afford the feast today that brings tomorrow's fast.

We cannot afford the race that comes to tragedy at last.

We cannot afford to play with fire nor tempt a serpent bite.

We cannot afford to think that sin brings any true delight.

We cannot afford with serious heed to treat the cynic sneer.

We cannot afford to wise men's words to turn a careless ear.

We cannot afford for hate to give like hatred in return.

We cannot afford to feed a flame and make it fiercer burn.

We cannot afford to lose the soul for this world's fleeting breath.

We cannot afford to barter life in mad exchange for death.

But blind to good are we apart from Thee, all-seeing Lord.

Oh, grant us light that we know that, which we cannot afford.

REFLECTIONS

...From the Editor

“**T**hen said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: ...and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.... Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.”
John 8:25-28

Jesus plainly declared that He was taught of His Father, and thus sets the same pattern for all His followers. Paul likewise attests to his own experience from the time of his conversion on the road to Damascus when Jesus instructed “...rise, and stand... for I have appeared unto thee for...to make thee a minister ... of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in **the which I will appear unto thee;**” Acts 26:16

It has been grievous to hear of the horrendous teachings emanating from public schools today wherein children have become the targets. Sadly, some parents who have risen up in opposition to the “woke and critical race theory” agenda have been in some cases labeled terrorists and treated as such. God was very clear in proclaiming that parents are most assuredly responsible for teaching their children. “...take heed to thyself,...lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen,... but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;” Deut. 4:9

There are many throughout God’s Word who have followed the same pattern which Jesus demonstrated in being taught of God. David shouted, “O God, thou hast taught me from my youth:...Now also when I am old... forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation,...” Psa 71:17-18 Not only was the psalmist taught of God, he also had the great desire to impart those lessons to those who followed him.

Samuel is another who learned his lessons well as a young

child. He heard the voice of The Lord at a very tender age, but did not recognize it. Eli then instructed him, "...Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth..." I Sam. 3:9 Samuel did as Eli intructed and was then faithful to deliver the message to him, even though it was one of very painful judgment.

Moses also must have received godly teaching from a young age, for "...when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" Heb 11:24

Jesus plainly declared that "...my Father hath taught me..." All God's people must follow that same pattern, and the Voice of God today is His matchless Word. It is rather intriguing that Psalm 119, the longest psalm in scripture with 176 verses, basically refers to God's Word in every verse. David asserts the benefits of that message, declaring that "I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me." V. 102 He further testifies of a pleasant advantage, noting "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" V. 103 John had the same experience in Rev. 10:10.

19

Finally "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." V. 104 Real understanding comes only through God's Word and the result is that "...I hate every false way." Is this not the desired goal for God's people and their children at this present hour? It is imperative, therefore, that all believers have Jesus' testimony, "...that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."

GH

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Bible School Streaming at www.gracegod.com

All four classes, Doctrine, Exposition, Synthesis and Prophecy will be offered. Classes will begin at 7 P.M. CST.

The order will be as follows: Doctrine, Mon. Exposition, Tue. Synthesis, Thurs. Prophecy, Fri. Opening exercises will take place Sept. 11, 2022 at Gospel Fellowship. Classes will then begin Monday Eve. at 7 P.M.

Fruit-Bearing

Mary M. Bodie

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” Jn. 15:1-2

20 Jesus is here continuing His talk with His Apostles which He had commenced in Ch. 13. They have left the Upper-room, the supper-room and are now on their way to the battle-room. The Apostles are quiet as the Lord gives them this heart-to-heart talk. He so speaks in view of His death and resurrection. As received back from the grave He becomes the True Vine. There are inestimable treasures in this portion. Multitudes have drunk from this crystal Spring and multitudes will still come partaking. These words have no reference to salvation, nor service, but to fruit-bearing, which speaks of CHARACTER. “...love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,...” expresses it --- 3x3 lobes to the fruit. Gal. 5:22,23

Fruit is a spontaneous growth on the tree or vine not the result of force or coercion. We here see there are degrees of fruitfulness “fruit,” then “more fruit,” finally “much fruit;” thirty-fold, sixty-fold, a hundred-fold. Remember Jesus is here staying by His subject which is, — fruit bearing, and teaching some fundamental facts regarding it. He is positively stating that our only hope of being a fruitful branch is to be joined to the Vine, in other words to be joined to Him. Only a new divine life is capable of fruit bearing. This life signifies a death to the life of our fallen nature. The Apostles did not enter into much of the meaning of His words at that time, but after the Holy Spirit came they were lead into the Truth herein stated.

“Abiding in Christ” signifies a fruitful life without any endeavor whatever. Take the natural vine as the example, even as Jesus suggests. It makes no effort to be a branch or bear fruit. It is a part of the vine. It cannot help bearing fruit. It cannot be severed from the vine except by the hand of the husbandman, because of lack of fruitfulness, or cast forth as a branch because

it is withered or lifeless. The Father, the Vine-Dresser may see fit to take away some fruitless branches that He may perfect a sturdy branch and bring its fruit to full development, or He may cut off some useless appendages from the Vine because they have no life. These represent two classes that appear to be part of the True Vine, which is Christ. One is fruitless, the other lifeless. The fruitless class represents a true believer, but not a profitable one. Remember though that he is in the Vine, a part of that perfect Holy Man, Christ Jesus, whose fruit cheers both God and Man. The second class, the withered appendages, hanging on the Vine, represent professors of religion who have no divine life but claim such. The Husbandman casts them forth as branches. Observe that is not said of fruitless branches. They do not lack the spiritual sap, the life of the Vine, but do not yield to it by faith and become fruit-bearing.

The life of Christ within is the sap of the Vine. Who can help bearing fruit in such a case. It is the limitless life, more abundant, exceeding, running over the wall (Gen. 49:22) allowing nothing to stop its onward sweep except the will of the Husbandman. That is possible as we depend upon Christ, by faith yielding up to Him, that His life and power may be manifested all through our being. But this will never be a reality until we are crippled in all our natural capacity. How painful and long the process. And the stronger we are in the natural, the more difficult it is to let go and let Christ's life move in us and through us to bring fruit to perfection. We seek to be fruitful by our own efforts until we learn by repeated failure that no fruit, but that of the Spirit refreshes and satisfies the Husbandman. 21

Furthermore there is another marvelous thought. The union of every branch abiding in the vine is a union of absolute surrender on both sides — the branch to the vine and the vine to the branch. The vine is dependent upon the branches for fruit, even as the branches are dependent upon the vine for life. Therefore to follow the analogy we must recognize the fact that the disciples of Christ are in the world to manifest His fruit. They are to show Him off in the world. There is no limit to this life as we abide in the Vine. It is then that we have the consciousness

of the double abiding life — “I IN YOU AND YOU IN ME.” Thus we are developed and bear fruit without strain or stress in the matter. It is to cease from all self-effort and enter into rest, quietly waiting the Husbandman’s working, not complaining when He uses the pruning knife, opening our hearts to all the moisture, heat and light that is afforded us; fully absorbed in the Lord and ignoring ourselves. In a word, it is to take no thought of one’s life or fruitfulness, but to expect everything from the great Husbandman. He is responsible to make fruitful every branch that abides in the True Vine. It cannot be otherwise. Such a branch cannot fail in bearing fruit in some measure, FRUIT, MORE FRUIT, MUCH FRUIT. Fruit, not works, a growth, not manufactured or put on fruit; the bud the blossom and finally the fruit, makes its appearance — the result of the graft into Christ. Every stage of its development is perfect; every grace in embryo, but it is the bringing forth of the fruit in perfection that glorifies the Husbandman. He wants perfection and as we so desire and ask for it, we will receive, as He says, “You have not chosen me, but

22 I have chosen you and ordained you, that you shall go and bring forth fruit and that whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name, He may give it to you.”

(Reprint 1948)

Dwell Deep

Dwell deep. When doubts assail and stealthy shadows creep
Across your sky and fill you with a sense of doom;
And thunders roar, and lightnings frighten with their glare,
And old foundations seem to crumble ‘neath your feet —
Dwell deep, and rest your soul amid eternal things.
Upon the surface, storms may rage and billows break
On every beach of life, and fling disaster
Far and wide. But, if your soul is dwelling quiet
In the depths, naught can harm you evermore
Therefore,

Dwell deep, and rest your head upon the heart of God.

Should Christians Keep The Sabbath?

Harold T. Gruver

This is a question which causes much perplexity and darkness. Let us look into it.

I. FACTS CONCERNING THE SABBATH.

1. **First mention of the Sabbath.** "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all his work which God created and made." Gen. 2:1-3. It is here said that God rested on the seventh day, and that He blessed and sanctified it ; but it is not said that it was given to man to keep, neither is there any intimation whatever that man was expected to observe it. Further, there is no intimation in any of God's dealings with mankind up to the time of Moses that man was expected to observe a Sabbath. There is no record that the patriarchs observed the Sabbath. The Sabbath was not mentioned again till Moses' time.

2. **The Sabbath made known to Israel.** "And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a sabbath unto the Lord: today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in

his place : let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day." Ex. 16:22-30

3. **The Sabbath placed in the midst of the Ten Commandments.** "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work : but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it." Ex. 20:8-11

24 4. **The Sabbath made a sign between Jehovah and Israel.** "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you. Everyone that defileth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord; whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, **he shall surely be put to death.** Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. **It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever:** for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." Ex. 31:12-17 Notice that this was specifically addressed to Israel ("Speak thou also unto the children of Israel"—V. 13), not to the church. It is Israel who was commanded to keep the Sabbath, not the Church. Notice that it was specifically said to be a sign between Jehovah and **Israel** ("It is a sign between me and the **children of Israel,**" (V. 17) not the church.

5. **The Sabbath was the seventh day,** now called Saturday. The Jews did not name the days as we do, but numbered them (First day, second day, etc.). The seventh day only was named, being called the Sabbath. "The seventh day is the Sabbath." Ex.

20:10 and 31:15.

II. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SABBATH.

1. **Christians are not under the Law**, therefore not bound to **any** legal observances. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. 6:14 "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." Rom. 10:4 "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." Gal. 3:13.

2. **Saints under the new covenant are nowhere commanded to observe the sabbath**, or any other day. The oft-quoted phrase in Heb. 10:25, "As ye see the day approaching," does not mean a weekly sabbath, or a weekly meeting day, but the day of the Lord's return. The expression "**the Lord's day**," in Rev. 1:10 (the only place where this expression is found) does not mean an ordinary day of twenty-four hours, but what is elsewhere called "**the day of the Lord**," meaning the thousand-year day of the reign of Christ over the earth, commonly called the "Millennium." See for example the following Scriptures with their contexts. "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. But **the day of the Lord** will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." II Pet. 3:8, 10 "For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night." I Thess. 5:2 "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and the terrible **day of the Lord** come." Joel 2:31 "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for **the day of the Lord** is near in the valley of decision." Joel 3:14

In fact, saints are rather warned against observing of "days and months and times and years." Gal. 4:9-11 It is called bondage to "weak and beggarly elements." It is intimated that those who "esteem one day above another" are "weak in the faith," instead of being especially strong and holy, as they usually consider themselves. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully

persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." Rom. 14:1,5,6 "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Col. 2:16,17 We are free from all such things through the death of Christ. We have the real substance, Christ, of whom the sabbath, as well as all the other Old Testament ordinances (Col. 2:14), were but shadows. Why grasp, then, at the shadow by trying to enforce an observance of the sabbath?

3. Why do we worship on Sunday? Because Jesus first appeared to His disciples after His resurrection on the first day of the week. Mk. 16:9, Jn. 20:19 We commemorate His resurrection. Because the Holy Spirit descended on the first day of the week, just fifty days later. Compare Lev. 23:15,16, with Acts 2:1-4. Because the early disciples met together on the first day of the week. "Upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." Acts 20:7 See 1 Cor. 16:2. The Catholic Church did not "change the day," as some folks contend the followers of Christ met on the first day of the week for worship (not as a legal Sabbath observance) for several centuries before there was a Catholic Church. The apostles went into the synagogues on the Sabbath day, but that was because they wanted to preach to the Jews, who assembled on that day. See Acts 13:14,42; 17:1,2; and 18:4.

III. REAL MEANING, OR PURPOSE, OF THE SABBATH.

1. A type of God's rest in a finished creation. "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." Ex. 31:17. See also Gen. 2:1-3 and Ex. 20:11.

2. Type of Christ's rest in a finished redemption. "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." Heb. 10:12,13

3. A type of the Millenium, or reign of Christ over the earth, when God shall rest in a finished New Creation, the fruits

of Christ's finished redemption; when Satan shall be chained and the earth shall rest and rejoice.

4. **A type of our rest in Christ.** The word "Sabbath" means rest. Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28 The shadowy one-day-a-week physical rest, (Col. 2:17) has given way to the real, continual, spiritual rest we have in Christ. We rest every day in His perfect, complete and eternal salvation. "We which have believed do enter into (Sabbath) rest." Heb. 4:3. "There remaineth therefore a rest (Sabbath) to the people of God. For he that is entered into his (Sabbath) rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us labour (give diligence) therefore to enter into that (Sabbath) rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Heb. 4:9-11 Instead of laboring to obtain salvation, or to keep it, and being heavy laden with legal observances (which the Jews were not able to bear (Acts 15:10), we enter into His rest and cease from our struggles.

(Reprint 1938)

27

WHAT THE CHRISTIAN IS:

- A dead man—Col. 3:3.
- A buried man—Rom. 6:3,4.
- A risen man—Col. 3:1.
- A new man—Col. 3:9, 10.
- A justified man—Rom. 5:1.
- A spiritual man—Rom. 8:9.
- A sanctified man—Heb. 10:10.

- * Many Christians do not need more power. They rather need to use the power they have.
- * If I really live for Christ, I need not worry over what my fellow men think of me.
- * The Word of the Lord is on trial in your life. What will the verdict be?

GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

“...to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” Isa 66:2

This chapter begins with these words which were quoted by Stephen in his arraignment of the rulers of his day. He declares that Jehovah has the infinite heavens above for His throne. The earth is but a footstool for His feet. Does anyone imagine that He needs anything upon this earth? His Hand and power has created all these things. There is not one physical thing existing that does not owe its being to Him.

But notwithstanding the infinity of His being, His limitless majesty, His glorious splendor, His resistless power, there is ONE dwelling that He will not despise, one object that will arrest His eye. It is not found among the mighty principalities and angelic hierarchy of heaven. Neither Michael nor Gabriel stop the search of His eye. He passes over all the great and mighty people to rest upon One that is not distinguished by anything that men esteem as valuable. There are three marks that He approves. Notice the above verse, referring to the person of whom He approves.

28 FIRST—he is poor. This has no reference to financial poverty, though it could include that; but the word goes deeper. It speaks of that one who has no high thought of self. The man who stood in the temple with bowed head and cried, "God, be merciful to me the sinner" was poor indeed, and God looked upon him. Even to this very day it is with such only that the Almighty God deigns to dwell.

SECOND—The result of his poverty—"He is of contrite spirit." The best illustration of that contrition is the thief on the cross who hung by the side of the Lord and cried to his fellow, "Do you not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation, and we indeed justly?" That is the contrite spirit. His mouth is stopped from all excuses. His self-esteem is gone, and pride abased. His spirit is awake to the voice of Jehovah in His Word and this is the next mark.

THIRD—"He trembles at His Word.." Alas, there are few of such character, but yet it remains the most outstanding miracle in the world. It unfolds eternal issues involving another creation than this with divine marks of majesty, profundity, simplicity, unity and unfathomable wisdom, with the tender loving kindness in His plan of eternal salvation to guilty man and makes us to not only tremble at its marvels, but to revere its precepts. Moses trembled before Mt. Sinai with its fire, tempest and gloom, and Paul trembled at Corinth, lest he should not speak as he ought to speak, lest he should fail to speak the Truth.

(Reprint 1952)

Hosea Ch. 8

“**R**ejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor.” V. 1

This chapter begins as noted in Chapter 8 with this rather firm exhortation, “Rejoice not,...” the reason being that they steadfastly continue in idolatry. It also seems that she was convinced that all was well, because “...thou has loved a reward upon every cornfloor.” She wrongfully assumed that her prosperity was a reward from God, indicating nothing amiss. Paul likewise warned Timothy against those who supposed that “...gain is godliness:...” He further instructed his young son in the faith; “...from such withdraw thyself.” I Tim. 6:5 Hosea is also very adamant that such prosperity is deceptive and thus, “The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her.” V. 2 One of the first signs of God’s displeasure with the unbelief and rebellion of men is that natural resources begin to fail. Next, as noted for Israel, “They shall not dwell in the LORD’S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.” V. 3 Famine was certainly a problem for Israel, but expulsion from the land is even worse. God had separated these ten tribes from Judah, but heretofore they had remained “in the land.” That would soon change, for “...Ephraim shall return to Egypt...” This cannot mean that they literally went into the land of Egypt, for these ten tribes were actually taken captive by Assyria, indicated by that fact that “...they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.” The reference to Egypt testifies of bondage, and now they are very much bound and controlled by Assyria as they are even forced to “...eat unclean things...” contrary to the strict diet maintained in their homeland.

Though this nation might try to make a pretense of serving the Lord even though they continue in unbelief, God warns that “They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD.” V. 4 Simply stated, this means that God has rejected Ephraim. Any offerings they might try to offer would be summarily refused. Furthermore, the question is asked, “What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD?” V. 5 This

means that even if they tried to observe the feast days which God had ordained, those gifts to the Lord would not be accepted, “For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles.” V. 6 The conclusion here is that offerings Israel intended for The LORD would be claimed by someone else.

30 This is the only time “Memphis” is mentioned in scripture. However, it is associated in this text with Egypt, and the history according to Daniel 11 associates it with Antiochus Epiphanes whom most scholars agree is the man of Daniel 8 who is responsible for polluting the altar in Jerusalem and taking away the daily sacrifice. “And out of one of them came forth a little horn, ...And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven;... Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.” Dan. 8:9-11 This prophecy will not be fulfilled in its entirety until the false prophet appears in the end time, persuading Israel to take away the daily sacrifice. Daniel does not name this ungodly man, but history does declare that Antiochus Epiphanes did pollute the altar in Jerusalem by sacrificing a pig upon it somewhere around 16 B. C. Because of that event, some teach that this prophecy declaring the temple to be trodden under foot has already been fulfilled. Such a presumption cannot be so, for Daniel clearly reveals that 2300 days AFTER the daily sacrifice is taken away the polluted sanctuary will be restored. “Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said... How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Dan. 8:13-14 There is no historical account of the temple in Jerusalem being restored 2300 days after it was polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes, but these days are an intricate part of end time prophecy.

It seems without doubt, however, that Antiochus is the man of the hour in Daniel chapters 8 & 11. He, in accordance here with Hosea’s prophecy, “...shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the **fattest places of the province;...**” (Egypt) Dan. 11:23-24 History declares that this latter phrase

is a reference to “Memphis and other prosperous places of the Egyptian Colonies.” Thus, Hosea records the local fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy as he reveals the role of Memphis in this narrative. “...Memphis shall bury them: (the aforementioned offerings of the LORD) the pleasant places for their silver,...” Antiochus not only desecrated the altar, he took all the bounty of Israel’s feasts unto himself and buried them in Memphis.

The prophet then continues his assault against Israel, declaring emphatically that, “The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.” V. 7 The “...visitation...” to which Hosea alludes is that of God’s judgment, and the reasons for it are listed as Israel’s repeated rejection of His warnings. They considered His prophet to be “...a fool...” while the “...the spiritual man is mad...” or “insane.” The nation is also driven by hatred, undoubtedly an expression of their attitude toward God’s chosen vessels, who were often killed. These same ministers of God’s righteousness are now identified in V. 8 as “The watchman of Ephraim...” God was Faithful to warn this nation again and again as His messenger “... was with my God:....” or in complete harmony with Him. However, the rest of this verse explains that, those things which should have been for their benefit have now turned into a trap for “...the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God.” This agrees with the assessment for those who reject Christ and His plan of redemption. “Let their table become a snare before them: and **that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.**” Psa. 69:22

“They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore, he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.” Hos. 9:9 God continues to indict Ephraim for their idolatry and insists that their plight is self-inflicted, for “The have deeply corrupted themselves....” He then calls to remembrance “...the days of Gibeah...” This is undoubtedly a reference to Judges 19, wherein a civil war is recorded between Benjamin and the children of Israel due to the rape and murder of a man’s concubine. The narrative seems to follow the same pattern as Hosea’s experience, whereby his wife Gomer departed from him and Hosea pursued her. (Ch. 3:1-3)

“And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that...a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim,...took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah. And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house... and was there four whole months. And her husband arose, and went after her, ... to bring her again,... and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him.” Jg 19:1-3 The desired restoration has apparently been achieved at this point; however, “...when the man rose up to depart,... the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all night:...But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem;...And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites,...And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger,...we will pass over to Gibeah.... which belongeth to Benjamin.” Vs. 9-14 This company was not received in Gibeah until “... there came an old man from his work out of the field...which was also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place were Benjamites.... And the old man said, Peace be with thee;...let all thy wants lie upon me; only lodge not in the street.” V. 16-20 Though this man was very hospitable to the group, such peace is short lived because this scene turned like unto that experienced by Lot in Gen. 19 when the angels came to visit him in the days of Abraham. “Now as they were making their hearts merry,...the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about,...and spake to the master of the house, ...saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him....And the man,...said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly;...here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, ...humble ye them,...do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing. But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night... Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house...And her lord rose up in the morning,...and went out to go

his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house,... And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered.... Then the man took her up upon an ass,...and gat him unto his place. And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel.” Jud. 19: 22-29

This latter act of the Levite simply demonstrates the fact that all Israel must hold Benjamin to account for this horrendous act and thus came the civil war recorded in the 20th chapter of Judges. Hosea’s reference to this atrocity in Gibeah simply sets forth the parallel between Benjamin’s conduct and Israel’s transgression against God. Just as the Benjamites violated the Levite and his concubine, so have leaders of Israel, like unto Jeroboam and others after him, transgressed against God by forcing the entire nation into idolatry. Thus, verse 9 here in Hosea concludes, “...therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.” The civil war of Judges 20 exacted a tremendous toll on all parties, and God insists here that Israel shall likewise pay the price for their iniquity and idolatry. Not only so, but He recounts the fact that Israel has a long history of idolatry, reaching back to their days in the wilderness.

“I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.” V. 10 Isaiah preached this same message likening Israel to grapes, declaring “Now will I sing...a song of my beloved touching **his vineyard**. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: (Jerusalem) ... he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and **it brought forth wild grapes**. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth **wild grapes?**” Isa 5:1-4 God’s purpose was to bring forth the choicest of grapes from this nation, and though these verses from Isaiah testify to the fact that this vineyard centers around Jerusalem,

Hosea clearly demonstrates the fact that God's purpose for such a vineyard began while they were yet in Egypt, when, "... I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time:..." Israel's transgression in the wilderness is then explained as "... they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved." Israel's idolatrous acts at Baalpeor took place during their sojourn in the wilderness. "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto **Baalpeor**: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel." Num. 25:1-3 Balaam is the culprit here, for it is later stated that "...these caused the children of Israel, **through the counsel of Balaam**, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor,..." Num. 31:16 Balaam had heretofore unsuccessfully tried to curse Israel at the behest of Balak, king of Moab, for a promised reward. He could not relinquish such bounty and therefore seduced Israel through the doctrine of Balaam, which is fornication. Rev. 2:14 Though this atrocity happened many years earlier in the wilderness, the trend of idolatry still prevails during the time of Hosea, and Ephraim is informed that "...their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the **birth**, and from the **womb**, and from the **conception**." V. 11 The specificity here in regard to the glory which God had planned for them is interesting, for it means that He had a great purpose for them even before they were "conceived" as a nation in the land of Egypt. Due to their idolatry, that glory is now in jeopardy and may soon "... fly away..."

(To Be Continued)

"I have now disposed of all my property to my family. There is one thing more I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian religion. If they had that, and I had not given them one shilling, they would have been rich, and if they had not that, and I had given them all the world, they would be poor."

—Patrick Henry



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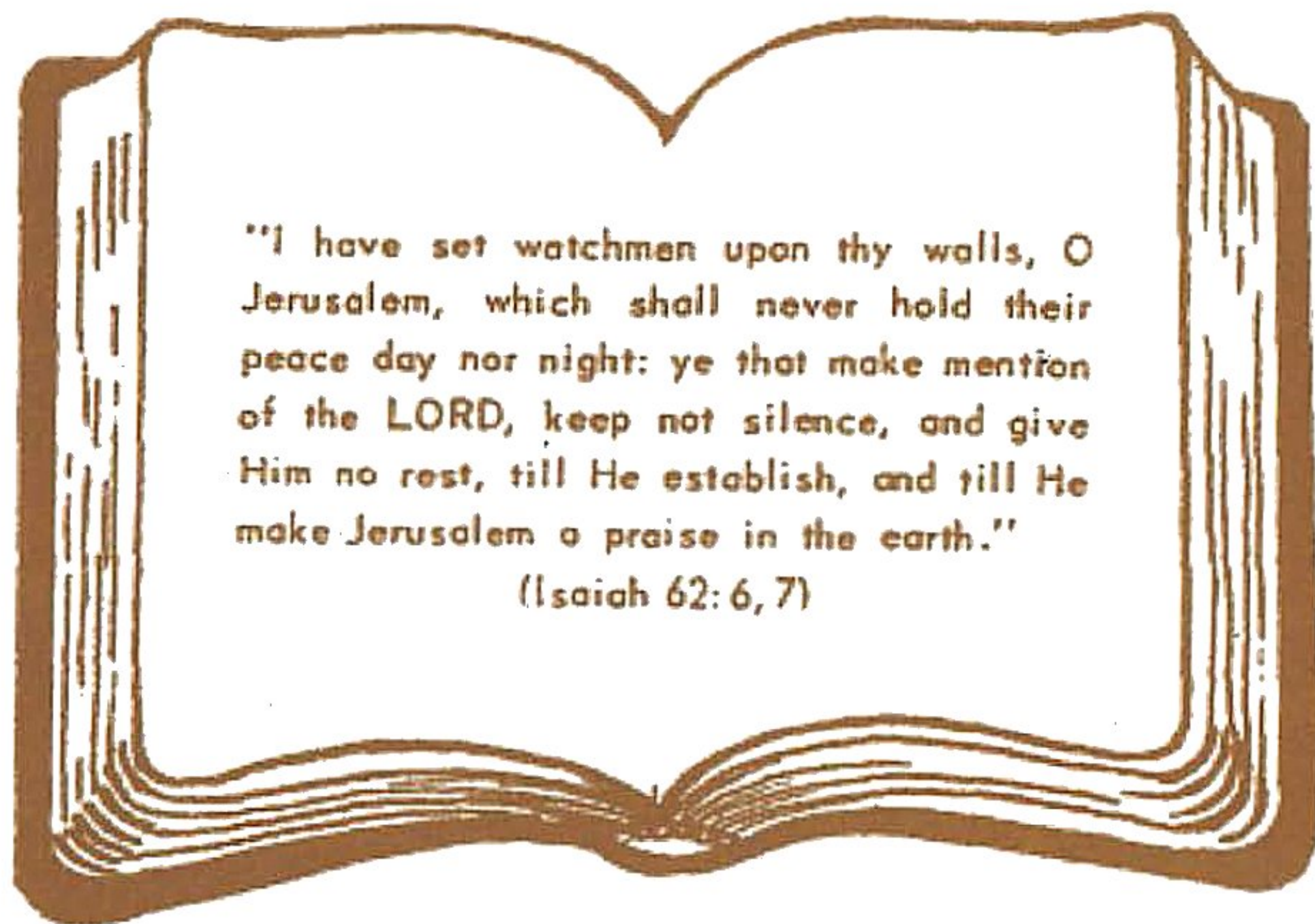
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"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

(Isaiah 62: 6, 7)