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SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

"We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ." (Ephesians 4:14-15 NASB)

The epistle to the Ephesians is perhaps the most profound of all the writings of the apostle Paul. The first three chapters describe in some detail the privileged present position of the Church, their predestination and redemption, their present inheritance and God's eternal purposes in and through them. The second group of three chapters deal with the appropriate behaviour and witness of each member of the Church, both within the congregation and in the world. Chapter four likens the individual Christian's experience as a walk and gives instructions as to the conduct along the way.

Verses one and two of the chapter set the keynote. The Christian is to walk in such a way as befits one who has been called to such a high vocation, as Paul has described in the previous chapters. Verses three to six urge each one to endeavour to maintain the unity of the Spirit, by which each true follower of Christ has been sealed in the bonds of peace, and sets out the unifying factors. Verses seven to thirteen describe the varying ministries of service within the Church, all designed for the building up of the Church, and includes the assurance that grace for useful service is given to "everyone of us".

Verses fourteen to sixteen deal with God's provision for the development of the "whole body" individually and collectively. These verses read; "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (Eph 4:14-16 NASB)

The epistle to the Ephesians is believed to have been written by Paul while in prison in Rome in about AD 60. The apostle's exhortation "speaking

the truth in love" is just as relevant today as it was in those very early days of the Christian Church.

The words may be considered in two contexts, first the literal speaking of truth in everyday life, and second in the presentation of the message of truth as we find it in the word of God. As Christians, we would probably be likely to take the first application for granted, but even among Christians it is possible for some slackness to creep in when we are off guard. The second is of greater concern to the Lord's people, but the first lesson is still most important. Lying is nowadays a way of life among many worldly people, often hidden under euphemisms such as salesmanship, public relations, politicians "core and non-core promises", "white lies" and so on.

For the Christian, there can be no compromise; let us not forget who "is the father of lies" in whatever colour or guise. "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25). Paul's words echo those of the prophet Zechariah who declared; 'These are the things which you should do: speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates. 'Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate,' declares the LORD." (Zechariah 8:16-17 NASB)

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Infections spread and multiply; lying or deception in any form is an infection. How circumspect we need to be both in word and in act.

For most, if not all of us, complete honesty and truth have always been set before us as the only Christian standard, and we have sought to abide by it. So, it is to the application of the apostle's instruction to the presentation of God's truth, as it has been revealed to us, that we turn our attention. Bible Students are lovers of the truth, the commendation given to the Bereans of old setting the standard, whether we use the name Berean or not. Luke tells us in Acts 17:11 that these noble brethren received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

These earnest ones believed it necessary to check even the words of the apostle Paul to verify that what he was preaching matched up with God's earlier revelations, through Moses and the Old Testament prophets and writers, as contained in their Hebrew scriptures. How necessary this is still for us, the same apostle in fact directly urges us to do likewise; "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We are to test all things, to try all things, to establish whether they are true and worthy of our acceptance, whether they are in accord with the character of God revealed in His word and more directly in His dear Son, whether they harmonise with His declared plans and purposes.

Immediately before his injunction to speak the truth in love, Paul has pointed out the dangers of failing to make use of all the means which our Heavenly Father has provided for growth in grace and knowledge, and thus for establishment firmly in the faith. "we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming", he declares. There are plenty of weird and wonderful winds of doctrine blowing about in this end time. How important, how blessed, it is to know the truth and to nurture those younger, either in years or in faith, in the understanding of the truth. There are quite a few examples of so called new light or new thoughts being expressed, these cause those new to the truth to doubt about what they have learnt. The apostle Peter's desire was that his hearers remember his words to them and be established "in the present truth" (2 Peter 1:12)

Bible Students often use "the truth", to describe the understanding of the Scriptures which has come down to us at this end of the age, and it is a very understandable usage, conveying a deep appreciation of the light of His word that we have received. We need at the same time to be careful, however, lest we start to think that we have all the truth, or that we alone as Bible Students have "the truth". Down the age the great truths of God's word have at times been lost or hidden, awaiting the time

for, as it were, their re-discovery. In the earlier Bible Student days, a text often quoted was "But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day." (Proverbs 4:18 NASB) Let us not have closed minds, but at the same time "prove all things".

Other Christian groups apart from Bible Students, incidentally, use the term "the truth" to define their understanding of God's character and purposes, the truth is not a creed or statement of beliefs but an

experience, an understanding, a personal encounter with the one who is Himself "the Truth". After we come to know Him, we need to learn of Him and, by the various means of grace available to better understand the Divine will for us. The importance and value of a clear grasp of the essential teachings of God's word "the doctrine" cannot be overstated. We all share responsibilities in this area towards our younger brethren either in age or experience.

The reference to Christ Himself as "the Truth" is, of course taken from His own words "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:3-6 NASB) Thomas is often called the Doubter, but he wanted an explanation that he could understand. How wonderfully Jesus gave him his answer. To Pilate's question, "What is truth?" Jesus answered not a word, but to Thomas, the genuine enquirer, He gave a grand revelation of Himself which comes down to us today to gladden our hearts also. Jesus truly is the living Word, the truth and revelation of God, and the only way to God.

John's beautiful words concerning our Saviour are recorded in John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." This message is also inherent in our Lord's reply to Philip as recorded in John 14: 8 & 9, 'Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"

Our trinitarian friends quote this in proving their doctrine that Jesus and God are one, but Jesus is clearly referring to His full revelation and the love and character of His Father. Earlier, he had said. "He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me." John 12:45 and John 1:18 we read, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him". Here we see that Christ is the living Word, the truth.

But the recorded word of God is also described as "the truth". The Psalmist tells us that "All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth To those who keep His covenant and His testimonies." (Psalm 25:10) and "Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom." (Psalms 51:6 NASB) In Psalm 19, David praises all the manifestations of God in creation and in all His instruction and provision for the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, our Lord plainly declares, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." (John 17:17 NASB)

As we come into relationship with God through His dear Son, then His word becomes the more precious, and the more we will seek to know Him who is the author of that word, which is "the truth". The message of our Lord at His first advent, and of the apostles, is indeed referred to as "the word of truth", and to understand fully the apostle's injunction to "speak the truth in love", we need to find out what influence and power over Christians the word has. In James 1:18 we read that "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures." In Romans 8, we learn that this begetting is a work of God's Holy Spirit in the heart and mind of the believer (verses 14 to 16).

It is the working of the Spirit that first opens our eyes to the truth as it is revealed in God's word, this brings us into relationship with God, through faith in His dear Son and His merit, making us sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty (2 Corinthians 6:18). Romans 10:10, 14 & 15 further explains the process for each one, "for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" (Romans 10:10-15 NASB)

"SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH; THY WORD IS TRUTH".

The thought of sanctifying leads our minds back to the sanctifying of the priests and vessels of the tabernacle in Old Testament times in Israel. These people and utensils were thereafter no longer profane, but set apart for the divine service, reckoned holy and dedicated to that purpose alone. Such, under the influence of the Holy Spirit pictured in the anointing oil, is the effect of the sanctifying word of truth on each receptive heart. It is the truth that sanctifies, and Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says, " God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." (2Thess 2:13 NASB)

Further. we read in John 8:31,32 & 36, "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If

you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free...So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

The truth is not only a begetting and sanctifying power, but a liberating power! The literal speaking of truth is itself a freeing power-the opposite inevitably leads on a downhill path (and. it is said, requires a phenomenal memory to avoid being caught out). But more importantly, for the Christian, it frees from the bondage of sin. Romans 6: 16 to 18 reads "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." (Romans 6:16-18 NASB)

THE EARLY CHURCH

In the early church the Judaisers that sought to reinstate the old law rituals and services into the congregation were causing trouble, and Paul had to protest quite sternly with some, calling on them to "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherein Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again, with the yoke of bondage for, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another, for all the law is fulfilled in one word, Love. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5: 1. 13 & 14). Here both bondage to the law and to the old fleshly ways are included. The liberty into which the lord's people have been called is precious; it is only the truth as it is in Christ, the living Word, and in the Scriptures, the written word, that fully frees the believer. Our only captivity is willing submission to our Lord and Saviour and to His service.

EXTENDING THE LIBERTY

Preserving our own liberty in Christ is important. but we sometimes fail to extend that liberty to others. We need not, we cannot, judge others and their liberty; "Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand." (Romans 14:4 NASB) Similarly, on points of Bible interpretations where there are differences, let us learn to extend the same freedom, and to do it as heartily to others as we expect to receive. We must realise, as did the apostle, despite the great light which has been shed on God's word, that we all "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." (1 Cor 13:12 NASB)

The truth should be a unifying force, and that is the point at which the apostle's injunction. "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called" (Ephesians 4:1 NASB). He follows these words with seven elements of truth which

should have that unifying influence. As we focus on these, we shall surely be drawn closer together. Then follow several ministries within the Church; not all are called to the same tasks, but from verse 7 we note that it is "unto every one of us" that grace is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Our Lord has a service for every single one of His people and, to a large degree, it is encompassed in the words "speaking the truth in love".

ASPECTS OF SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

There are also two aspects to this speaking of the truth in love, the first among the Lord's people, the second to those around us. Opportunities for the second do not often occur for most of us, though some seem skilled in the impromptu word for the Master. The promise is that in time of trouble, our Father will provide both "a mouth and wisdom", so we may trust Him also for the right word of truth when the occasion does arise. All of us, however, are to be "always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."(1 Peter 3:15 NASB)

How blessed we are to have such a reason, to have a message of truth that can be given in love. The gospel which is the heart of that message is by definition 'good news', something positive for heart and mind. What a privilege we have of recognising our Saviour and recognition of His lovingkindness and tender mercy as shown in the Divine plan of salvation, but the history of the Church has shown that bitterness can creep in. The great opponent of truth is ever ready to sow seeds of strife among brethren. Two of seven things which the wise man says God hates is "A false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers." (Proverbs 6:19 NASB)

On the other hand, the psalmist declares, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity!" (Psalms 133:1 NASB) Paul counsels the Hebrews, "Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1). The bonds of truth, and love for the truth, surely have that sweet influence at all times.

Paul cautions "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear". (Ephesians 4:29 NASB) "So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another". (Romans 14:19 NASB) These list the positives of truth-speaking out of love.

IS SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE ENOUGH?

James counsels "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was." (James 1:22-

24 NASB) Likewise, our speaking out the word of truth will be of no value if we do not live out that truth to the limit of our ability, with the strength our Father will supply. "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:18 NASB)

Paul, in his letters to the churches, often links the witness of the word and the testimony of the conduct of himself and his co-workers. The word and the walk must go together; we are not only to speak forth the truth, but also manifest it in our lives. What a powerful witness the apostle's own life presented, what trials he endured for speaking out the truth! Most of these trials we are not likely to be called upon to endure, though we live in an uncertain world, but the evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, through unfeigned love for the brethren and for all mankind, should be reflected in our faithful presentation of the truth in love and in the living out, by God's grace, of that truth.

We have seen, then, how precious is the truth, how we need to cherish it, to seek to know it more and better, and through the Holy Spirit's guidance to know and love its author more dearly. Paul commends the Thessalonians "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."(1 Thess 2:13 NASB)

The truth is itself a message of God's love, His such great love, not only to a few now but to all in due course. It would be expected that those who believe that they have found the truth would want to speak it in love, in a spirit of kindness and goodwill towards all. In Paul's day, he had to complain that some were preaching Christ out of contention, not sincerely. Fortunately, others were preaching Christ through love. Our presentation of Christ in our words and in our lives is to be an exhibition of the love, which we ourselves have experienced. Without love, our testimony will be lifeless. Paul says, without love it is merely an empty sound.

Two lovely and well-known verses in Malachi read - 'Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. "They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.'" (Malachi 3:16-17 NASB)

What do these verses conjure up in your mind? Hopefully a lovely picture of brethren in sweet communion and with the smile of God upon them. May this be shown when meeting with others who love the truth. "Let us exhort one another daily, while it is called today"... in unity, steadfast to the end"■

THE BALM OF GILEAD

People today are interested in finding natural and herbal remedies for their many ailments, rather than relying on modern medicine. One source that people are turning to is the Bible for information regarding these old remedies.

One of these treatments is the "Balm of Gilead" also called "Mecca Balsam" and are mentioned in the Old Testament. The word "balm" occurs 6 times, the word "Gilead" appears 99 times, while the term "Balm of Gilead" occurs twice.

GILEAD'S LOCATION

Gilead is in a mountainous region east of the Jordan River with an elevation of 915 metres above sea level. The area extends 97 kilometres from the southern end of the sea of Galilee to the northern tip of the dead sea. Gilead is 32 kilometres wide. The western boundary is the Jordan River, the south boundary is the land of Moab, the northern boundary is the Yarmuk river, the east by the desert. The Jabbok River divides the area into northern and southern Gilead.

The name Gilead, as is usual in Palestine, describes the physical aspect of the country: it signifies "a hard-rocky region" The name Gilead is sometimes used to denote the whole country east of the Jordan (Genesis 37:25; Joshua 22:9; 2Samuel 2:9.) The King's Highway, a main trading route went from the Gulf of Aqaba to Damascus, passing through the area of Gilead. This area was noted for its spices and myrrh as well as balm.

THE BALM OF GILEAD TREE

The genuine balm tree of Gilead stood 3-4 metres tall with a wand-like spread of branches. The trunk was 23 centimeters in diameter. The outer bark is a rich brown colour, the inner bark is green and very aromatic. The leaves are small and white while the flowers are small and reddish in colour. The seeds that the tree grows from are solitary, yellow and grooved on one side. The fruit is reddish grey and about the size of a small pea with an agreeable aromatic taste. Dioscorides (c40-c90) and Galen (131-200 A.D) were both Greek surgeons working for the Roman army and the Balm of Gilead is recorded in their writing.

There is some mystery to where the trees originated. Josephus states that the trees originally were a gift from the Queen of Sheba, taken from Arabia and given as a gift to King Solomon (1Kings 10:10). (Ant. 8:6 section 6) Other historians claim it was first planted in Judea and only allowed in the king's garden. However, from its name Balm of Gilead, it appears that the most successful area for planting was in Gilead.

THE BALM OF GILEAD

The "Balm of Gilead" had long been famous in antiquity for its nearly miraculous properties for

healing wounds. It was used to cleanse sores, to heal deep wounds, as an eye salve, as an antidote for bites of poisonous serpents and breaking down of calcium deposits in the body. In fact, it was commonly held by the Israelites to be beneficial in healing of all manner of disease.

The resin or gum of the balsam tree was also used as a scent in oils and perfumes. The products are named balasan in Arabic, which it appears to be derived from the Hebrew baal shemen, meaning "lord or chief of oils" giving us the word balsam.

The trees exude the juice during the heat of the summer, in resinous drops. The process being helped by incisions in the bark. The amount of liquid balm obtained from a tree is about 3 drops a day. The balm was so scarce, that the Jericho gardens yielding only six or seven gallons yearly, because of this the balm was worth twice its weight in silver.

Recent excavation of an ancient city, within the area of Gilead, unearthed the remains of a fortress like building used for the manufacture of balsam oil. In fact, the balsam of Gilead was so famous that the conquering Roman emperor Titus (70AD). After conquering the area of Gilead, displayed branches from Gilead's balsam trees in his triumphal march through Rome.

This extremely valuable oil was used for barter in the ancient world. Archaeological findings, in Gilead, prove that the secret of manufacturing and distilling was such a closely guarded secret in the community, that Archaeologist remarked "This place was built like Fort Knox". The villagers were sworn to secrecy. An inscription carved into the mosaic floor of a local synagogue reads: "Whoever reveals the secret of the village to the Gentiles, the one whose eyes roam over the entire earth and sees what is concealed will uproot this person and his seed from under the sun". (Biblical Archeology Review, Sep/Oct 1996).

When Joseph was being sold by his brothers to a caravan of Ishmaelites, it is interesting to read "And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt." (Genesis 37:25 ASV)

This shows that the extract of oils was a well-established industry before the trees were brought to Israel and thousands of years before Christ walked on the earth. Today, a related strain of the balsam tree is cultivated in the southern Arabian Peninsula and as and Somalia, and the oil is processed for use, as in Biblical times. The oil is mainly used for healing and as an antidote for snake bites and scorpion stings.■

THEY WOULD NOT BE HEALED

Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? (Jeremiah 8:22 ASV)

Jeremiah's name means of "whom Jehovah has appointed". He was the son of Hilkiyah from the town of Anathoth, 4.5 kilometers north-east of Jerusalem in the land of Benjamin. Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office when he was still young in the thirteenth year of Josiah (628 B.C.). He greatly assisted Josiah in his work of reformation (2 Kings 23:1-25). The death of this pious king was lamented by the prophet as a national calamity (2Ch 35:25).

The call of Jeremiah is interesting, reading "Now the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child. But Jehovah said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah." (Jeremiah 1:4-8 ASV) Although Jeremiah was young and the task ahead of uttering Jehovah's judgements seemed extremely difficult and dangerous, Jeremiah was given the following assurance "For, behold, I have made thee this day a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to deliver thee." (Jeremiah 1:18-19 ASV)

To understand the significance of Jeremiah's three questions it is necessary to gain an understanding of what led to this situation as described in the first eight chapters. The warnings start with "Then Jehovah said unto me, Out of the north evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith Jehovah; and they shall come, and they shall set everyone his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah." (Jeremiah 1:14-15 ASV)

The second chapter speaks of Jehovah and reminds Israel of the passion they once had for Him. *"The honeymoon is over. God reminds rebellious Israel of the fervor and the warmth and the purity of the love streams in the early days. She was desperately in love with her Lover and the tender love made life full of music and joy and hope. She was pure and clean and holy. No disloyalty or unclean thought marred the beauty of her devotion. But now the picture is heart-rending. God's heart is crushed with grief and disappointment. Israel now is living in open sin. She is unfaithful to the covenant*

vows. Other gods have stolen her affection. She has ceased to love Yahweh and her conduct is shameful in the extreme." Kyle M. Yates

In Chapter three the people are reminded of their renunciation of Jehovah. However, there are gracious invitations and encouragements for them to return and repent, showing the mercy of God and that although sin abounded grace did much more abound. Judah did not heed the warning when they saw Jehovah's judgement on Israel, instead they persisted in their sin. Jehovah pleads with them "Return, O backsliding children, saith Jehovah; for I am a husband unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jeremiah 3:14-15 ASV)

Chapter four continues the plea, first for the ten tribes that form Israel to return to the Lord with their hearts and to turn from their abominations, with the promise of rest and safety under Jehovah. He then pleaded to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem to repent or they would be consumed with the fire of divine wrath. Jeremiah is to warn them of the destruction of the land and the city. Jeremiah speaks of his anguish saying "My anguish, my anguish! I am pained at my very heart; my heart is disquieted in me; I cannot hold my peace; because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that gaspeth for breath, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul fainteth before the murderers." (Jeremiah 4:19,31 ASV)

In chapter Five Jeremiah sees that the profession of religion by the majority of the people is false and hypocritical, although Jehovah had stricken them, they have not grieved of their sinful condition, they refused correction and made their faces harder than rock (Jer 5:3). Even those whose circumstances and rank in life gave them opportunities to gain information, that others did not have, showed no restraint, acting above the law and trampling all moral obligations under their feet. "For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith Jehovah. They have denied Jehovah, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine: and the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them: thus shall it be done unto them." (Jer. 5:11-13 ASV)

The last verse of the chapter is especially condemning "the prophets prophesy falsely, and

the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah 5:31 ASV) With the priests failing in their duties to lead the people, Jehovah sent prophets, some of whom prophesied falsely, giving the people the words they wanted to hear, not the words from Jehovah.

In Chapter six Jeremiah again warns of the invading of the land of Judah and the besieging of Jerusalem by the Chaldean army. Jehovah warns the people that even the remnant of Israel who sought refuge in Jerusalem would be taken them if they do not hearken to His words stating, "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul be alienated from thee; lest I make thee a desolation, a land not inhabited." (Jeremiah 6:8 ASV) An account is given of the sins of Judah and Jerusalem which provoked God to bring this desolating judgment upon them. Their contempt of the word of God, their worldliness, the treachery of their prophets, their insolence in sin and their stubbornness against the rebukes, which made their sacrifices unacceptable to him, resulted in Him giving them up to ruin. Jehovah had commanded Jeremiah to give them good counsel during all this, but they ignored the counsel. (Jer 6:8, Jer 6:16, Jer 6:17).

Jeremiah is now instructed to change his location "The word that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, stand in the gate of Jehovah's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of Jehovah, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship Jehovah." (Jeremiah 7:1-2 ASV) They were to stop putting their trust in the lying words of the priests and false prophets. The fact that they had the temple in Jerusalem was not a reason to have confidence that they were safe, as without amending their ways their faith was in vain. Jehovah bids them to take warning of what happened to their Brethren, the Israelites who were taken captive without any regard to their sacred place in Shiloh. The Jews provoked Jehovah with their idolatrous practices, and the sacrifices that they presented at the temple were not accompanied with obedience to moral law so were of no benefit. Jeremiah is then told "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee." (Jeremiah 7:16 ASV)

The devastation which is to be brought upon Judea is graphically described in chapter eight when the Jews are told that even the graves of the kings, princes, priests, prophets and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be desecrated by the Babylonians (the graves would be disturbed as they hunted for ornaments and treasure often buried with the

dead). The conditions will be so bad that Jehovah warns "And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue that remain of this evil family" (Jeremiah 8:3 ASV). Jeremiah proceeds to reprove them for their persistence in transgression; and for their thoughtless stupidity, when even the brute creation, by instinct, obey God's laws, which is shown in stark contrast to the actions of the Jews who have shown disdain for God's laws. As a result, even the fortified cities will offer no protection against the invaders.

Jeremiah Grieves for His People

"Oh that I could comfort myself against sorrow! my heart is faint within me. Behold, the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people from a land that is very far off: is not Jehovah in Zion? is not her King in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with foreign vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt: I mourn; dismay hath taken hold on me." (Jeremiah 8:18-21 ASV)

The hopelessness of the condition of the people now overwhelms Jeremiah, crushing him down. He realizes that he will hear the mournful cry of his people being lead away into captivity. Jeremiah understood that once they are in captivity in Babylon that they would then question why Jehovah was not in Zion, as their King, why had He not rescued them. "The siege of Jerusalem lasted two years; for Nebuchadnezzar came against it in the ninth year of Zedekiah, and

the city was taken in the eleventh month (2Kings 25:1-3). This seems to be a proverb 'We expected deliverance the first year - none came. We hoped for it the second year - we are disappointed; we are not saved - no deliverance is come.'" Adam Clarke

Jeremiah's questions

Jeremiah then cries out "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jeremiah 8:22 ASV)

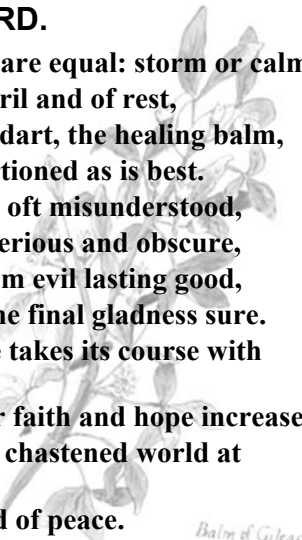
No Balm in Gilead

Gilead was close to Jerusalem and was renowned for its balm. Little is recorded about how the balm was used in Biblical times, although in modern times it is used to treat bruising, swelling and minor skin irritations. Mixed with other herbs it becomes an analgesic to relieve fevers, muscle aches and arthritic pain. There are two other accounts that speak about using the balm of Gilead to heal the pain and suffering of the people.

◆ "Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin daughter of Egypt: in vain dost thou use

AFTERWARD.
GOD'S ways are equal: storm or calm,
Seasons of peril and of rest,
The hurtling dart, the healing balm,
Are all apportioned as is best.
In judgments oft misunderstood,
In ways mysterious and obscure,
He brings from evil lasting good,
And makes the final gladness sure.
While Justice takes its course with strength,
Love bids our faith and hope increase:
He'll give the chastened world at length
His afterward of peace.

Poems of the Dawn <https://dwellingintheword.wordpress.com>



many medicines; there is no healing for thee.” (Jeremiah 46:11 ASV)

- ◆ “Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: wail for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.” (Jeremiah 51:8 ASV)

There is a lesson in the account of Egypt. Egypt was a strong and powerful nation but was put on notice that it would be brought low, never to recover to its former glory. The wise men of the country were renowned for the healing properties of all the medicines they could prescribe to heal the hurt from the injuries that would be suffered in her defeat and yet Jehovah tells them that all the treatments would be in vain. The medicine that they needed was only to be found in Gilead.

The second example is that of another mighty nation Babylon, described as “a golden cup in Jehovah’s hand”. It had been used to punish the Israelites when they disobeyed God’s laws, but Babylon’s rulers went beyond what was required and their rulers were found wanting. Nebuchadnezzar had been given a lesson by the most high God when he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the wild beasts and he dwelt amongst them. His son Belshazzar did not learn from this example. He did not humble his heart before the most high God and in Daniel chapter five this proclamation is made “God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it, you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient, your kingdom has been divided.” His rejection of the Almighty meant there was no balm to heal the people.

No Physician there:

There was a physician available, Jehovah the almighty God, the creator. This is brought out by the words in Jeremiah “For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith Jehovah; because they have called thee an outcast, saying, It is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.” (Jeremiah 30:17 ASV) Jehovah was always ready to heal the people or nations that came to Him. There is a wonderful promise of this in Jeremiah 33 “Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them; and I will reveal unto them abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me.” (Jeremiah 33:6-8 ASV) The problem was that the people did not call for the physician.

The answer to the first two questions was simple, Jehovah was able to help and heal them. He had in His power all that was required to redress all their pain and suffering. The third question is more complicated as it required those needing to be healed to have a change of heart. This is understandable with the children of Israel as they

were Jehovah’s chosen people. Egypt and Babylon although not Jehovah’s chosen people, were used by Jehovah to both save and punish His people.

Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

David gives the simple answer “O Jehovah my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.” (Psalms 30:2 ASV) David knew that the Great Physician was always available, but that he had to ask for the help.

The reason why their health was not recovered was not due to Jehovah, but to themselves. Both the balm and the physician were available for the people, but they would not submit to Jehovah or seek his advice. They were not willing to submit to the methods that would cure them. Many times, they are referred to as a stiff-necked people “But they hearkened not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, and might not receive instruction.” (Jer. 17:23 ASV)

Christ, just before His death, lamented over Jerusalem “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (Matthew 23:37-39 ASV) Jehovah had sent His own and they even rejected Him.

However, there will come a time when the whole nation of Israel accept Christ. “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.” (Zechariah 12:10 ASV)

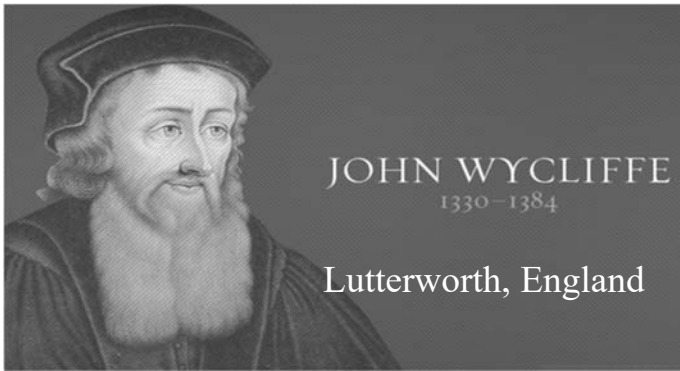
Then all the nations will be healed as promised in Revelations “And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” (Revelation 22:1-2 ASV)■



NEW WEBSITE

The Berean Bible Institute Inc
has a new website.

australianbiblestudents.org
Includes our history, publications, events,
children’s page, links to resources and
archives of Australian Publications from 1918



John Wycliffe (Wicliffe) was born in the year 1324*, in the County of North Riding, Yorkshire. His ancestors had lived here since the time of the Norman conquest and, as the custom was at this time, they took their Surname from the place of their birth/residence. So, the parish he was born in was The Parish Of Wicliffe. (*some sources say that he was born nearer to 1330).

Nothing of his early years is recorded, a few sentences will suffice to trace the various stages of Wycliffe's academic career. At the age of Sixteen he was sent to Oxford, where he became a scholar and a Fellow of Merton College, he turned twenty while he was here... In 1360 he was appointed to the mastership of Balliol College. During his time there he became more profoundly versed in the knowledge of divine things, unknowingly to him he was being prepared for his great work of starting the great Reformation against the False Church.

In 1365 he was appointed Head of Canterbury Hall, it was during this time that Wycliffe challenged the authority of the pope, Urban V, who was claiming to be the only vicar of Christ. The pope also claimed this meant he was Superior to all Monarchs and was in fact their Feudal Master, therefore all Kings owed him obedience and Tribute, especially the English Monarch. Wycliffe took on this false claim; acting, as he claimed, as "the Kings (England) Peculiar clerk". The whole world was watching this battle between the British Crown (Edward the III) and the Holy Roman Empire (Urban V). Britain defied the 'Vicar of Christ', and for his part in the revolt Wycliffe was banished by the Pope from his Post at Canterbury College. This was the real start of the battle between Wycliffe and the False Church (Babylon the great).

He next took on the corruption of Monks, Friars and other Monastic Orders, the battle continued up to the time of his death. This Controversy involved great Principles and had a marked influence on the mind of Wycliffe in the way he developed his views of the Papacy. His views, we know, came from his ever-increasing new light, that was revealed to him from his study of God's word (Psalm 119:105). These monks and friars were involved in giving absolution to the Population for any crimes or sins they had committed, and the money (ALMS) they

collected was making them rich and immoral at the people's expense. The Question Wycliffe was asking was "Is it from the Friars or from Jesus Christ that we are to obtain forgiveness of our sins?" The more Wycliffe looked into the holy word, the more it revealed to him how far the church of Rome had departed from the gospel of Christ, and the gulf that separated salvation by the blood of the Lamb from salvation by the pardons of the pope.

It was now that Wycliffe grew up into the Reformer of England- The great pioneer and founder of the Reformation of Christendom! He went on to say on this subject "May God of his endless Mercy destroy the pride, covetousness, hypocrisy and heresy of this feigned pardoning, and make men busy to keep his commandments, and to set fully their trust in Jesus Christ. I confess that the Indulgences of the pope, if they are what they are said to be, are a manifest Blasphemy."

Wycliffe, the man who was the mainspring of this movement, so formidable to the Papacy, had to be struck down. His writings were examined. It was no difficult matter to extract from his works doctrines that spoke out against the power and wealth of Rome. These teachings foretold a terrible disaster for Rome, unless stopped. For too Long his teachings had been neglected, he must be immediately dealt with. Pope Gregory XI sent five copies of a Papal Bull against Wycliffe to England on 22nd May 1377. The King of England, Edward III, died on 21st June 1377 but this Papal Bull did not arrive in England until December.



As long as Wycliffe only attacked the riches and abuse of Power by the Church he was still protected by some members of the clergy and aristocracy, but once he started dismissing the traditional doctrine of Transubstantiation this support dried up. Even his most powerful supporter, John of Gaunt First Duke of Lancaster, (son of Edward III), deserted him. Although deserted by many he was still held in regard by the Court and Parliament which prevented him from being excommunicated or deprived of his living.

During the 1380s He spent much time in Translating the Bible into the English Language, with his friend Nicholas of Hereford. The whole work was revised by Wycliffe's Younger Contemporary John Purvey in 1388. There are still 2 manuscripts that exist of this revision, which may imply how widely circulated it was by the 15th Century, and for this reason the followers of Wycliffe were called "Bible Men" by their opponents. While saying mass at the Parish Church in Lutterworth on 28th December 1384 he suffered a stroke and died as the year ended. He was 60 years old. Thus, died the Morning star, the father of the Reformation. ■



Shirley Bruce passed away on Sunday May 6.

Shirley was born on October 12, 1922, in Chicago to Hulda and Irving Foss. She grew up in Chicago, and enjoyed an active life of skating, riding bikes, baseball games, singing in the school choir, Bible meetings and family gatherings.

In 1941, her family drove to Los Angeles for the 4th of July Convention, she fell in love with California. Shirley, her mom and dad moved to Pasadena in 1943. In 1945 she went to the Dawn in New Jersey to work for a couple of months. One day a group went to the train station and, in her words, "a good-looking soldier boy came running in.... this was when I met my dear David." They corresponded almost daily and were married in Chicago in December 1945. They moved to Los Angeles, where David began to work with Russell Pollock and Burton Brown, living in a home they built in Pasadena.

Shirley's life was an absolute example of faith, family and friends. David retired from the Pollock office in 1967 to devote more time to the Lord. He and Shirley travelled the world meeting with Bible Student groups and isolated brethren. David wrote to Shirley, "I think we make a good team. I give talks, but you talk with people. A gift I don't have."

In 1978 David and Shirley moved to Seattle where they felt they could be an asset to the small Seattle class. During this time David split his time between Seattle and managing the development and construction of the Bible Students Retirement Center in Oregon, they also continued to travel the world doing their pilgrim work. In 2000 Shirley and David moved into BSRC. Later David became more infirm and Shirley was his full-time caregiver. David passed in 2013.

David and Shirley travelled to Australia several times. David was stationed by the army in Australia during the war and would visit with Br Ern Martin, President of the Berean Bible Institute (1929 to 1988) at the office at Ermington Place. ■

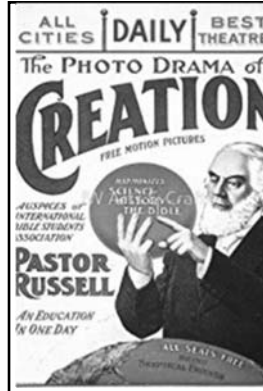
Convention Announcements

Queensland Convention 5th to 7th Oct 2018

Location: Alexandra Park Conference Centre
13 Mari St, Alexandra Headland QLD 4572
Email: darryngreenhalgh@hotmail.com
Phone: Darryn +617 5483 1946

Berean Bible Students Convention 25th to 28th January 2018

Location: Camp Wilkin
57 Noble Street, Anglesea Victoria
Email Enquirybbi@gmail.com
Phone Richard +614 6603 8225



The Photo-Drama of Creation, was a four-part, eight hour Christian film produced by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania under the direction of Charles Taze Russell, the founder of the Bible Student movement. The film presents God's plan from the creation of the earth through to the end of the 1,000 years reign of Christ.

Production began in 1912, being completed in 1914. It was the first major screenplay to incorporate synchronized sound, moving film, and colour slides. It is about 8 hours in length and was presented in four parts. This presentation took the audience from the time of creation to the end of the Millennium. Russell published an accompanying book, *Scenario of the Photo-Drama of Creation*, in various languages.

The presentation premiered in January 1914 in New York, and in the summer of 1914 in Germany. Over 9,000,000 people in North America, Europe, New Zealand and Australia saw either the full Photo-Drama or an abbreviated version "Eureka-Drama".

Shows that combined magic lantern slides and films were common at the time, but the addition of recorded speech was remarkable as it was years before this was common amongst movie produces. The magnitude of its distribution for a single religious production was particularly notable. At the time, the project's full cost was estimated at about \$300,000 (current value \$7,330,000). Admission was free, and no collections were taken. ■

FREE OFFER A completely new HD version of the Photo Drama of Creation is now available. Thousands of hours went into scanning, retouching and enhancing original material. What you will see is as close to 100% of the original quality that can be done with today's technology. The Berean Bible Institute is pleased to offer a FREE copy to the AUSTRALIAN readers. Email: enquirybbi@gmail or call +61 466 038 225

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DAILY SERVICE

THE Lord's business is His people's vocation. "Vocation" is the term that describes the special business of any person, while the word "avocation" describes an occasional business. The Apostle Paul's vocation was that of a minister of the truth, while his avocation or occasional employment, when necessary to provide things honest and decent in the sight of God and men, was tentmaking.

Similarly, all the Lord's people should consider that their vocation or calling is of God, and relates to the special or spiritual ministry in which He privileges us to engage, as fellow-servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to provide the necessities of life it is necessary that we should also have some earthly employment; but this we should always regard, not as our vocation, not as our chief business in life, but merely as our avocation or temporary engagement, incidentally necessary to our chief or principal business.

The question should now properly be in the minds of all who realise themselves as consecrated to the Lord, members of the Royal Priesthood: To what extent am I fulfilling my present priestly office and performing daily as I have opportunity my appointed work of sacrifice?

Too many, under the false teachings of Babylon, both in word and custom, have come to consider that worldly gain, honour, ease and general self-preservation constitute the reasonable service of the Lord's people. The churches that are experiencing the largest growth of members now are the Prosperity Churches. The religious belief among their members hold that financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for them, and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's material wealth. Prosperity theology views the Bible as a contract between God and humans: if humans have faith in God, he will deliver security and prosperity.

Often those of the little flock are looked upon as deluded fanatics, especially in proportion as the sacrificing is done for the truth's sake, in the interest of spiritual things. We are, however, not to be taught of the world, nor should we be persuaded by the teachings of the Churches. We are to hearken to the voice of the good Shepherd, to hear His Word and learn of Him, if we would be prepared by Him, in the school of Christ, for the glorious things promised us as His joint-heirs in the future. "Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we endure, we shall also reign with him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us: (2 Timothy 2:11-12 ASV)

We can see how the Apostle, even though finding

it necessary at times to engage in the business of tentmaking, might be considered as a priest, whose time, energy and talents were all sacrificed to the Lord, and given freely in serving His people, in doing good unto all men as he had opportunity, especially unto the household of faith; but how can others who have not the opportunity, not the talents, nor the open door for such special service as his, be sacrificing priests, when as a matter of necessity nearly all of their time must be given to their various employments, which providence seems to have opened before them as their avocations? When it is necessary to spend nearly all of eight to twelve hours per day in the service of our avocations, how can such consider or serve the interests of their vocation, the priesthood?

The Lord has very graciously made arrangements for this very condition. He assures us in His Word that it is not the amount we shall accomplish in His cause, but the spirit, the desire and the effort which is manifested, that in His estimation would indicate the degree of self-sacrifice. He graciously declares that if our hearts be given to Him, whatsoever we may have need to do, may be done as unto the Lord, and will be accepted by Him. From this standpoint we can see that the work, which the Apostle Paul did in his avocation, passed to his credit as a part of his vocation, just as much as the other part of his time which he spent in more congenial methods of proclaiming the Gospel.

Similarly, we can see that those working at their different occupations, if at heart fully consecrated, would be seeking to do their work as unto the Lord. If they are careful to use all other opportunities for proclaiming the truth, for serving the Brethren, for doing good unto all men, the improvement of the few opportunities coming to them and their willingness to sacrifice personal taste and conveniences for the service of the truth and for the Brethren, would be counted by the Lord as a full sacrifice, because such a disposition in respect of little things would imply an equal faithfulness in the presence of larger opportunities.

"BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS"

If you were toiling up a weary hill,
Bearing a load beyond your strength to bear
Straining each nerve untiringly and still
Stumbling and loosing foothold here and there
And each one passing by would do so much
As give one upward lift and go his way,
Would not the slight reiterated touch
Of help and kindness lighten all the day?

Poems of the Way

PREACH THE WORD-LONGSUFFERING

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2)

Paul had instructed a young Timothy to reprove, rebuke and exhort the Ephesians that had “gone after their own lusts” but then added a very important statement about the way he was to approach “preaching the word” so that he would achieve the best result for the brethren involved.

Earlier in the letter Paul cautions Timothy “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.” (2 Tim 2:24-26 NASB)

Longsuffering according to Thayer comes from the Greek word μακροθυμία makrothumia G3115

Definition:

- 1) patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance
- 2) patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs

The word is used 14 times in the KJV either as longsuffering or patience.

Vines states “Longsuffering”, It is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy, and is used as an attribute of God.

Longsuffering by the prophets of old

There is a wonderful example of the longsuffering that God showed to his chosen people, Israel, after they had made the Golden Calf. Moses returns, sees what they had done, and in anger destroys the tablets on which God had written His Law. It reads “And the Lord passed by before his face, and proclaimed, The Lord God, pitiful and merciful, **longsuffering** and very compassionate, and true,” Exo 34:6* Moses bowed low and worshipped God asking that he pardon the iniquity and sin of His own possession and that the covenant was renewed. Peter wrote of the longsuffering shown by God, waiting while Noah constructed the ark so that Noah and his family could be brought safely through the flood. (1Peter 3:20) (*Septuagint)

Patience is the quality that does not surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial; it is the opposite of despondency and is associated with hope. James instructs the brethren to be patient until the coming day of the Lord, using as examples the suffering and patience of the prophets of old. James uses Job as an example of one enduring afflictions and yet he waited patiently

for God to reveal His purpose. “We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.” (James 5:11 NASB)

The Longsuffering towards the New Creature

Paul sets out a picture of God as a potter with total control over the clay. He gives a beautiful statement about God’s longsuffering and its purpose. “What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,” (Romans 9:22-23 NASB)

Paul states “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.” (1 Timothy 1:15-16 NASB) Paul saw himself as the chief of sinners because of how he was persecuting the Church. He speaks that Jesus Christ had exhibited his abundant longsuffering, exercised towards his elect for their salvation.

Longsuffering of the Brethren

Paul in four of his letters sets out the importance of longsuffering so that the brethren could realise the importance that this plays in their attitude to other Brethren. In 2 Corinthians 6:3 he shows the importance of longsuffering to the Brethren “so that the ministry will not be discredited.” He goes on to list the many things that may be endured, but as servants of God we must show purity, knowledge, patience (longsuffering) with genuine love towards the brethren and also the world. In Galatians 5:22 Paul instructs them to walk by the spirit instructing “**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**”[■]

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM

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