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## Looking Back, We Praise the Way

**I**t is fitting that the Lord's people should continually keep in mind the mercies and blessing they enjoy, otherwise "the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful" (Mark 4:19 NASB), which prevents the word from ministering continually to our joy and refreshment in the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, it is appropriate that we have a daily review of the blessings we enjoy — that every evening we reflect on the privileges enjoyed, the providences which have guided our way and the blessings, both earthly and spiritual, which have come to us; some of them common to all mankind and others of a special kind reserved for those who know the Shepherd and are known of Him.

It is also appropriate to take weekly reviews, looking at the same mercies and blessings from a broader perspective. This reminds us of the rest we have through faith in the precious blood, and also of the rest that remains for the people of God, which God has given us as assurance that on the first day of the week He raised up Jesus from the dead. "For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, 'AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST' — although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:3,9 NASB).

It is especially important that at the close of the year we take an even broader and more comprehensive view of our experiences, looking prudently at the way we have travelled and deeply consider which have been steps that hindered our progress, and which have been proper steps in the footprints of Jesus, bringing us nearer to the goal — the "mark" which we must attain to be counted worthy of a share in the promised Kingdom.

An advanced Christian looks back through the year and recalls life's storms as well as its sunshine, its sadness as well as its joy, its tears as well as its smiles,

and sorrows not as others who have no hope. Their troubles have been stripped of their fearful features and minimised by the spirit of a sound mind and instructions of God's Word. This assures us that the trials, difficulties and adversities of life, are accepted as lessons, blessings in disguise. "Therefore, we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:16-17 NASB).

They also regard their joys as being of a greater value than any they ever knew before they were begotten of the Holy Spirit. They have not been overcome with the bitterness of envy, malice and hatred and are unpolluted because they have not been rejoicing in iniquity but rejoicing in the truth. Their joys have been much more numerous than ever before; because they not only are able to have joy in the Lord, but also joy in His Word, in the Holy Spirit, in fellowship with brethren of like precious faith and by the grace of God they also rejoice in tribulation. Not because they love tribulation, but because they love the patience, experience and character, which God assures us are the fruits that all tribulations must produce under His providence; if we are rightly tested by them. As James

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wrote, “knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:3-4 NASB).

Of whom are all these things true? Not of everyone for we know many who have no such experience — the world that lies in darkness knows not God. Nor are these experiences true of all people of intelligence even those professing to be Christians. Comparatively few of those who profess the name of Christ enjoy these precious experiences or will be able to look back upon the year with satisfaction of this kind, realising that God has crowned the year with His goodness. This is because they have not taken the necessary step of full consecration to the Lord, to bring them under His protecting care and under the enlightening influence of His Word through His spirit. Some who take the step of consecration, fail to perform their vow of consecration, seeking to serve both God and Mammon, without pleasing either, without receiving satisfactory blessings from either.

The class which can and does look back through the year from the standpoint described and can see that God’s goodness has crowned every feature of life throughout the year, is the “little flock,” the true Church, whose names are written in heaven — the body of Christ, the Bride class. They are the true



The Apostle James

Zion, which shall shortly be set up, filled with divine glory, the joy of the whole earth and the divine channel of blessing to all the families of mankind; “For out of Zion shall go the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” These are of the elect Church, of which Christ is the Head, the faithful members who, now fulfilling their vows of sacrifice, are companions in the suffering of Christ, they shall become His companions also in the glory that shall be revealed (Romans 8:17, 18). They are God’s choice, or His “elect,” for, as the Apostle informs

us, God has predestined that this class whom He is selecting shall all be made copies of His Son (Romans 8:29). They shall dwell in His house—they will be members of the great Temple which the Lord God is building of spiritual stones, in and through which He will bless the world with a knowledge of Himself and His grace (1 Peter 2:4-8).

Is it any wonder that they can rejoice in spirit saying, “Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits?” “He hath put a new song into my mouth, even the loving kindness of our God.” Surely, when looking back on the year, they see what has blessed and rejoiced them in every sense of the word has been of divine goodness that God has crowned their whole year with His favour toward them through Christ Jesus, and as a result they appreciate it to the full.

## The Priesthood of All Believers

*“But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9 NASB).*

Peter reveals that we, as Christians, constitute a royal priesthood. He embellishes that description by identifying us in 1 Peter 1:5 as a “holy priesthood.” All believers constitute this priesthood—it is the Priesthood of All Believers. The function of our priesthood is to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. What a brilliant proposition. Our mission in life is clear. We, as a priesthood, are to proclaim the excellence, the beauty, and the glory of God to all. This should daily fill us with hope, joy, love, faith, and zeal.

Our priesthood is one of enlightenment. Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see

your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16 NASB).

Whatever relevance the concept of the priesthood of all believers may have to the modern world, it exercised an enormously potent power for change at the time of the Reformation. As a battle cry for the fathers of the Reformation, it played a key role in opening the door to the great liberties that we now enjoy. Perhaps we take these liberties for granted. A liberty so basic as the right to own a Bible did not exist in time past. Nor did the liberty to base Christian belief and practices solely on the Bible’s testimony. The privilege of exercising individual conscience toward God was denied.

The Christian world of five centuries ago was authoritarian and highly structured. It did not tolerate dissent. Nor did it recognise the conscience of the individual. This stands in marked contrast to the

Christian liberty that we enjoy today. We take for granted the rights of the individual, but the validity of that concept was not acknowledged prior to the Reformation.

## Losing the Vision, Falling Asleep

The understanding of personal responsibility with regard to the priesthood of all believers grew vague as the early Church settled into the passage of time. Spiritual slumber overtook many and they fell asleep with regard to their mission and position as members of the priesthood of all believers. From our modern perspective, it is easy to see how the personal rights of Christian believers were abrogated. With the passage of time, from the days of the founding of our faith, the zeal and conviction of believers was diluted. Christianity eventually became the official state religion of the Roman Empire. Everyone had to belong to the church; it was not open to personal choice. So, the watering down of faith occurred as multitudes joined the Christian church out of compulsion, not desire. Subsequently, many attached themselves to a Church that had no zeal and little or no real faith. These forced converts soon outnumbered the core of true believers. As such, these non-spiritual or immature Christians let the more advanced ones do their thinking, believing, and praying for them. A great divide slowly developed between the class of people who soon were marked with the label “laity” and their spiritual rulers — the “clergy.”

With this development, the artificial gap between God and man was enlarged. Access to God for the common man was made difficult. Soon the clergy became intermediaries between their flocks and God. The gap was widened still further by introducing the concept that saints of time past were needed as additional intermediaries. Personal access to God was now made to appear an impossibility. This was unfortunate. It needed to be corrected.

## The Rise of the Ruling Class

The more spiritually advanced believers ascended in influence and power as the ranks of congregants swelled. Their ascent fostered the nascent clergy class. The laity (the congregation) soon was relegated to being merely the “children” of the Church while the clergy considered themselves to BE the Church.

In the primitive Church, leaders (or bishops — *episkopos*, i.e. “overseers,” in the Greek) were elected on a regular basis; oft times annually. As these leaders gradually gained power, influence and control, the practice of annual elections gradually faded away. These leaders became bishops for life. This was a grave mistake because, with that development, the congregation’s sovereignty was lost. The clergy became ascendant and this had unfortunate results.

Edward Gibbon observed the history of this change in his classic work, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. “A regard for the public tran-



Edward Gibbon

quility, which would so frequently have been interrupted by annual or by occasional elections, induced the primitive Christians to constitute an honorable and perpetual magistracy, and to choose one of the wisest and most holy among their presbyters to execute, during his life, the duties of their ecclesiastical governor. It was under these cir-

cumstances that the lofty title of Bishop began to raise itself above the humble appellation of Presbyter and while the latter remained the most natural distinction for the members of every Christian senate, the former was appropriated to the dignity of its new president.”

Among these bishops there was vying for power. Who would be the greatest among them? This question was settled over centuries of Christian history. Eventually one bishop stood supreme above all others. An “uber” father, he would become the father of the Church. He would wield ultimate authority. Doubtless, pure motives, seeking the common good of the Church, were behind this rise to power. The frailty of humanity manifested itself. The corrupting influence of power facilitated the rise of human reasoning and traditions of men over the authority of Scripture and the rights of all believers.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ provides an interesting perspective on the rise of the clergy class. Two churches are contrasted in the second chapter, Ephesus and Pergamum. The Ephesian church was praised, “Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” The church at Pergamum was rebuked, “So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate” (Revelation 2:6,15 NASB). What was the doctrine of the Nicolaitans? Various opinions have been given, but it seems to us that the best explanation comes from the very name of the Nicolaitans. In the original Greek the name means “victory over the people.” The church at Ephesus resisted efforts to empower a superior spiritual ruling class, Pergamum succumbed. The principle that the power and authority reside with the church — the congregation — must be held with integrity.

## Power Struggles Versus Humility

The struggle for power is a story as old as the human family. The Bible tells us that it began when Satan deceived Eve. That old Serpent sought to usurp God’s earthly dominion to have it for his own. He would stop at nothing to get it. Through lies and murder he got what he wanted-albeit only temporarily. God would only permit him to have temporary success. Through the power of the cross of Christ the kingdom will be returned to the Heavenly Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).



Neither are noble men immune to the intoxicating lure of power. The Apostles enjoyed great intimacy with our Lord Jesus. Recall the scene in Mark's Gospel when Jesus went to Capernaum with his beloved disciples. As on previous occasions they had argued with one another as to which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. In this the weakness and frailty of their fallen humanity was made evident. They were trying to position themselves to take advantage of this fantastic new opportunity—a chief office in Jesus' administration. Imagine the power, prestige, and wealth that they soon would have as rulers sitting on twelve thrones!

Jesus gently corrected them, he showed them the flaw in their thinking. "They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, 'What were you discussing on the way?' But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, 'If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all'" (Mark 9:33-35 NASB). This lesson is still applicable today. Any who would serve the Lord's people effectively must hold tenaciously to this principle. Any who would be great in God's eyes must become a humble servant. "For, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5 NASB).

In his last night on earth, Jesus left us a precious legacy. On the solemn occasion of his last supper, he imparted a great lesson on humility. He, the one who had descended from heaven, stooped to wash the disciples' feet. "So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them'" (John 13:12-17 NASB).

It seems somewhat surprising that moments after this lesson, the same dispute arose amongst them. "And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant'" (Luke 22:24,25 NASB). We are comforted to know that Jesus is as patient with us as he was with them on that night.



Phillip Melancthon

## The Wake-up Call

After centuries of escalating corruptions, Reformers such as Hus, Wycliffe, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, and Calvin sounded an alarm in the Christian world. In essence they said, "Christians wake up! We have fallen asleep. We have lost sight of who we are in God's eyes. We are, all of us, all believers, a priesthood just as the Scriptures tell us." The impact of that concept was revolutionary. Christians did not need a priest to intervene for them. They themselves were priests! They did not need any earthly intermediary or any in heaven, save for Christ alone, to approach God for them. They were justified by faith and at peace with God! Sweet are the words of Apostle Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1,2 NASB).

John emphatically pointed out our relationship with God in 1 John 1:3,4 (NASB), "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." Our joy is made full by personal fellowship with our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

## Our Ministry

With the wonderful realization that we are a priesthood comes the sense of duty to fulfill that ministry. As noted earlier, our mission is to show forth God's praises. We have come to know of His great love. We are awed by His wisdom, justice, and power. By virtue of our intimacy with Him we know, more than any others in this world, of His mercy, loving-kindness, and patience. Who better than we to sing His praises? Paul provides direction in the performance of our priestly duties. He calls it "the Ministry of Reconciliation".

"Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 NASB The last verse of this section is muddled by the addition of the phrase "we beg you ... be reconciled to God." The word "you" does not occur in the original Greek manuscript. Verse 18 shows that we are already reconciled to God, so if we are not the ones who are being encouraged to reconcile with

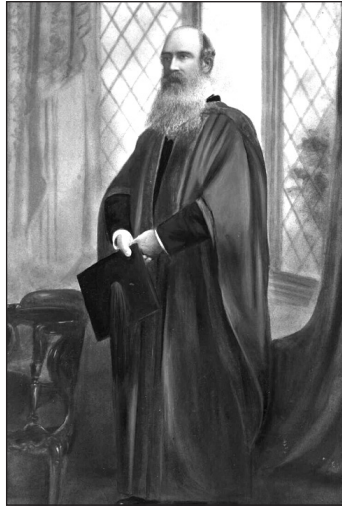
Him — who is? The answer is — all of mankind. We, as Christ's ambassadors, beseech mankind on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God.

The Weymouth New Testament makes the meaning of these verses beautifully clear. "And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and has appointed us to serve in the ministry of reconciliation. We are to tell how God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not charging men's transgressions to their account, and that He has entrusted to us the Message of this reconciliation. On Christ's behalf therefore we come as ambassadors, God, as it were, making entreaty through our lips: we, on Christ's behalf, beseech men to be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

Taking this perspective of our mission, as a priesthood of all believers, is very important and relevant to us. The world is increasingly secular, agnostic, or even atheistic. Many are turning their backs on God and Christianity because they have been taught erroneous ideas about them. They hear only of a wrathful, vindictive, vain, and unapproachable God. Also, the Christian faith has been politicised and viewed as narrow, bigoted, and judgmental. We know that these views are completely incorrect.

The world is hungry for hope. They need the qualities of mercy and love. We know that God excels in these characteristics above all others. God wants to reconcile with men. We have the right message and we have the mission. As a priesthood of all believers we can guide others toward peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ. We spread the Gospel news as ambassadors of Christ and The Kingdom proclaiming, "Be reconciled to God. He is far nobler and better than the best of men. He desires you to return to him and wishes to bless you."

Reconciliation implies peace. Being a peacemaker is a privilege that our Lord associated with a great reward. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9 NASB). Being a peacemaker is challenging, but it is also a powerful confirmation of our ministry. As a priesthood we must practice peace-making, even with our enemies. No — especially with our enemies. "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the



*Richard Francis Weymouth  
1822-1902*

same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:43-48 NASB).

If we desire to ultimately be sons of God, his priesthood throughout eternity, we must be peacemakers in the present. This is consistent with our profession that we have God's spirit or wisdom. "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:17,18 ESV). May we, by God's grace, sow seeds of peace that will yield the fruit of righteousness.

### **Further Evidence of Our Priestly Ministry**

Hypocrisy is a charge commonly leveled at Christians. In many cases the accusation is appropriate. Unfortunately, our accusers do not understand that we do not profess to be perfect; we claim only to be forgiven. We make foolish mistakes and find ourselves doing things that we don't intend. Paul confessed this frailty in the seventh chapter of Romans. Despite our weaknesses, we must walk discretely in the world. We must walk as Children of Light (Ephesians 5:8).

Selflessness is a characteristic of our priesthood. We must use the wisdom God has supplied that we may avert giving occasion to find fault with our ministry. "We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything" (2 Corinthians 6:3-10 NASB).

We claim no personal greatness. We recognize that God has primarily called those who are weak, foolish and base to be his people. Some of the strong, wise and noble are called, but not many. Thus, God has ensured that no human being may boast in his sight (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

In harmony with the humility of the priesthood of all believers, is their denial of self-sufficiency. "Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the

letter kills, but the Spirit gives life ... And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 3:5,6,18, 4:1,2 ESV). Denying self-sufficiency is looked upon as a weakness in this world, but we recognise it as a strength.

### Order Within the Priesthood of All Believers

Though all believers constitute a priesthood, it is not a democracy resulting in chaos at church meetings. "But all things should be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40 ESV). Guidelines were given to the early church to establish healthy order. These facilitate spiritual growth and cooperation among believers. Thus, some amongst the priesthood of all believers were selected by their various congregations to be overseers (bishops in the KJV).

The qualifications for such leaders were stringent but necessary for the integrity of the church. "This is a true saying, 'If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.' A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:2-7 KJV).

It is a matter of historical record that bishops were elected by the suffrage of the entire congregation

annually. Some Christian fellowships still follow this practice and find it a blessing.

### Priests of God

In his salutary introduction to the Revelation of Jesus Christ, note that John addresses the book to the seven churches in Asia, not to the elders or a class of clergy, but to the body of believers in the seven churches. Adding his personal greetings to the congregants of the churches, John also bids them greetings "from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:5,6 KJV).

The original Greek gives a slightly different thought than the King James Version. "He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father — to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:6 NASB). We read further in Revelation, "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth" (Revelation 5:10 NASB). The priesthood will reign upon earth for a thousand years! "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6 NASB).

There is to be a kingdom on earth. Jesus and his associated priesthood will reign over earth for a thousand years. Mankind will be blessed in a manner and to a degree that few could now imagine. That kingdom will be full of peace, enlightenment, love, joy, security, kindness, and justice. Its rulers will be Jesus and the Priesthood of All Believers. Their influence will be pervasive and persuasive. These, who humbled themselves and made service of others a lifelong commitment, will tenderly restore mankind to their Creator. This will be the pinnacle accomplishment of their ministry of reconciliation — the great work of the Priesthood of All Believers.

## Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible

One of the most valuable resources we have to assist us when studying the Bible is a concordance. The first concordance was completed for the Latin Vulgate in the year 1230 and was a basic alphabetical index. In 1535 the first English Concordance was published by Thomas Gybson, however it was only for the New Testament. Other concordances were published

in English since that time, however none more thorough or more well-known than *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible*, commonly known as *Strong's Concordance*.

James Strong was an American lay Methodist, of English and Dutch descent, born in New York City on August 14, 1822. He originally had a passion for medicine and set out to become a doctor. He studied



at Wesleyan University and graduated Valedictorian in 1844, however ill health that plagued him for much of his life meant he lacked the strength to work as a Doctor, so shortly after graduating he left the field of Medicine.

He worked in various roles after that including a teacher, a Major of Long Island, played various roles in the construction and management of the Flushing railroad, and studied biblical literature for which he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Wesleyan University and then became a college professor at New York's Troy University in 1858.

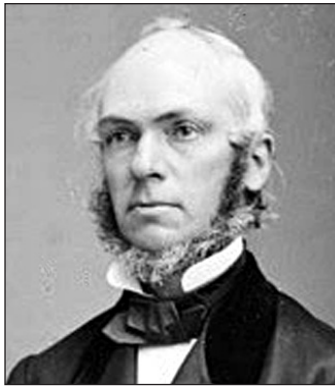
Strong was an advocate for the development of a school to formally train Methodist preachers in a time when many Methodists thought of such an institute as being blasphemous and many other Christian Organisations saw Methodist preachers as having little of value to contribute to theology. This led him to become the first full Professor of the Methodist Drew Theological Seminary in Madison New Jersey in 1868 where he remained working for around 25 years. The Seminary owes much of its success to him, as his publication with John McClintock, another Methodist who worked at Drew Theological Seminary, of *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, gained respect for the Methodist church and the seminary in the wider religious community.

It was during his period at the Seminary that he completed much of his work on the concordance at night in his library. Despite working late into the night every night he was still able to find the energy to captivate his students during his lectures, as he loved inspiring his students with his passion for and knowledge of the scriptures and was said to leave a lasting impression on everyone he taught.

Strong developed the idea of assigning a number to every single Hebrew and Greek word found in the King James version of the Bible no matter how small, rather than just alphabetizing the English words, and also gave the pronunciation and definition of these words. This involved 8674 Hebrew root words and 5523 Greek root words (although they are numbered 1-5624 because some numbers were never allocated a word).

Given this was unlike any concordance previously published, and because he felt it was important to go to the source rather than relying on the findings of others, this work was done without the use of any other concordance and was taken directly from the Bible. This was such an enormous task it is believed to have taken him and his staff 35 years to complete and was finally published in 1890.

Strong's goal was to create a Concordance that was so accurate and complete that it could be used by biblical scholars, yet so simple that it enabled everyone, no matter their level of education in



Professor James Strong

theology or lack thereof, for the first time to not only be able to find words in the Bible but also to compare them to other verses that the same root word appears in.

Over the years many have tried to criticise the concordance based on the fact that Strong was not a Hebrew or Greek scholar, however, despite their criticism, he was so thorough in his work that revisions of the concordance over the years have not been so much to correct it, but to adapt it to fit other translations of the Bible.

As well as the publication of the concordance and Cyclopedia he had many other minor publications and was also on the committee for the English Revised Standard version of the Bible and the American Standard Version which commenced in 1871 and was completed in 1901 after his death in Round Lake, New York, on August 7, 1894.

His concordance was an invaluable tool in aiding this translation work as it helped bring to light errors in the translation of the King James Version of the Bible that supported the beliefs of The Catholic and Anglican Churches including the Trinity and Hell, for example the KJV's use of the word "LORD" was replaced many times with "Jehovah" in the ASV, "Godhead" was changed to "Divinity," "Hell" and the "bottomless pit" were changed to "Hades" and "the Abyss," respectively. For this reason, Strong's concordance is still strongly opposed to this day by many Trinitarians.

Despite the fact that it was only published in English, Strong's use of a numbering system has also aided the development of Concordances in other languages, such as Russian, as well as concordances for other translations of the Bible. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible* continues to be relevant today as it has also been used as the framework for producing many of the current online Concordances, as well as continuing to be sold in printed form and available on electronic Bibles.



John McClintock, October 27, 1814 to March 4, 1870

His hard work and dedication in completing such a publication that enables all people to have a deep understanding of the meanings of the original words of the Holy Scriptures has no doubt played a role in shaping us as Bible Students.

# Cain and Abel

**T**he story of Cain and Abel marks the beginning of death amongst mankind. With the fall in Eden we encountered the sin of man against God. Cain and Abel present the sin of man against man and the sorrow and suffering which follows. The incident is so familiar and so simple that much of its real significance is not appreciated.

Cain was Eve's first child. Cain means "acquired". Eve considered him to be the acquired promised seed. The birth of the first human child is in Genesis 4:1 "I have gotten a man child from the LORD" (NASB), said Eve reverently. She must have been familiar with the process of birth among the animals. However, upon the birth of her child she immediately gave credit to the Lord. Despite the tragedy of the fall, and alienation from God which resulted, the first human pair had retained some reverence and loyalty toward God. Her first impulse was to acknowledge the hand of the Almighty in the event. God already promised Eve that her seed would become the means of undoing the damage done in Eden, that he would "bruise the serpent's head," which means overthrowing sin and restoring the sinless condition. She saw in the birth of this child the first step to the fulfillment of that promise.

Their hopes must have run high, as the lad grew to manhood, he was joined by his younger brother Abel and sisters. The elder devolved his skills as a farmer in cultivating the soil, the younger, as a shepherd, raising sheep and goats. Abel means nourishes or feeder. They waited for the next move in the Divine purpose having no indication of the tragedy to unfold.

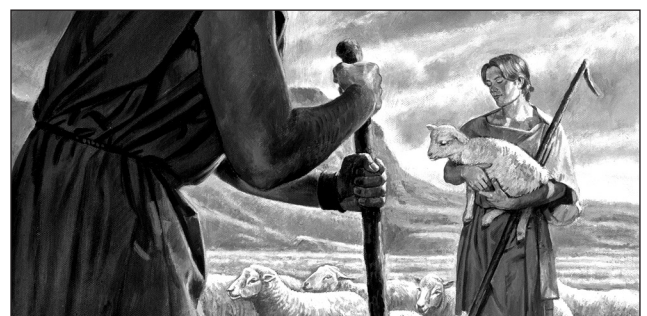
"In the course of time" indicates some time had elapsed after the fall, when Cain and Abel were grown men and on their own as adults. Genesis 4:3-5, "So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell."

Some suggest Abel offered slain lambs on the altar prefiguring the shed blood of Jesus Christ after the fashion of much later Levitical ceremonies. Therefore, Abel's offering was acceptable to God whereas Cain's offering of agricultural produce was not. This would suggest that Abel prophesied the death of Christ. However, on examining the facts, it is unlikely this is the reason for God not respecting Cain's sacrifice.

This is the first recorded instance where men brought an offering of the first fruits of their labour to God. To suggest that on such a significant occasion God should reject one and accept the other in the interests

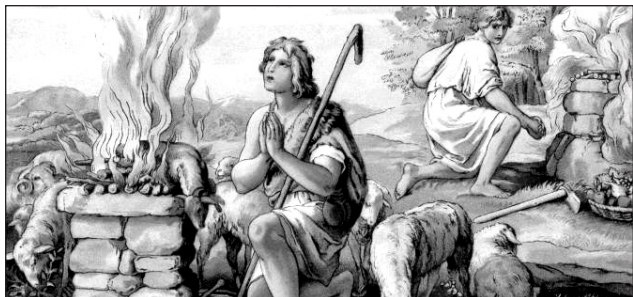
of an academic illustration of theological philosophy, which neither of these could have understood in the slightest degree, is unreasonable. There is an important element in the text which disallows the idea completely. Abel brought "firstlings" of his flock, the Hebrew text has the word *beko-o-raw* (Strong's 1062), meaning female firstborn, of either sheep or goats. But female lambs were not admissible as blood sacrifices prefiguring Christ in the ceremonies of Israel — in The Passover or Day of Atonement. The Passover lamb had to be a **male of the first year**. If Abel was Divinely led to enact a prefigure of the later rituals, he would have been told to bring a one-year old **male**, not a first-born **female**. There was a place for firstborn females later in Israel's ceremonies. They were specified, not for sacrifice, but included with the first fruits of the ground — fruit and crops — as thank offerings to the Lord. Deuteronomy 12:6, 14:23 and Nehemiah 10:36 are instances where the word *beko-o-raw*, female firstlings, was used. Leviticus 17:26, Numbers 3:41, 28:17, and Deuteronomy 15:19 mention *bek-ore* (Strong's 1060), chief, male firstlings, treated similarly. The thank offering had to be the firstborn, whether male or female, animal or vegetable. This principle meant the firstborn of anything is the Lord's and should be given to him (Leviticus 13:2).

A further examination of the Hebrew text explains why Cain's offering was rejected. Dr Young's translation says that Abel brought "the female firstling of his flock, and of the fat of their portions." In other words, Abel showed that God should have the first and best of his flock, he chose the fattest and best of the firstborns as his contribution. Why he chose a female instead of male, thousands of years before the Mosaic Law provided for female offerings, is a point of interest. Abel must have considered them more appropriate, in the sense a female then was better than the male. Perhaps in the first family the female was considered the channel of life that came from God. That would possibly explain Eve's crediting the coming of Cain to God rather than her husband. It is also significant in the Biblical account that Eve, not Adam, named Seth, Genesis 4:25.



Cain was angry against his brother (Matthew 5:22).





Abel offered his best.

Cain did not bring the best of his produce; this is clearly shown by the Hebrew words used in the verses. The “first fruits” in the sense of the earliest to ripen, earliest crop is *bik-kor* (Strong’s 1061). The first fruits in the sense of the best produce is *ray-sheeth* (Strong’s 7525) — meaning the best, chief, e.g. in Leviticus 2:12, 23:10, 2 Chronicles 31:5. Both are used in the Old Testament referring to the offerings of first fruits in Israel. The term for fruit in general is *peri* (Strong’s 6529). This is the term used in Genesis 4:3 for Cain’s sacrifice. Cain did not bring the first fruits or his very best as did Abel. Instead he brought the fruit of his labours, but not the very best or choicest or the earliest, that is why his offering was rejected. He was careless in selecting his sacrifice. That was why we are told in Hebrews 11:4, “By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain.” The Almighty can only accept our very best. Sadly, Cain failed to give his very best.

Genesis 4:6 shows Cain lacked reverence for God and had a quick temper, “‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen’ the Almighty asked. ‘If you do well’ He said ‘will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you not do well’” — here came the warning “sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it” Genesis 4:7. Here is the first intimation that man has a responsibility to strive against sin. Sin desired to have Cain, but Cain was to master the sin; he was to resist temptation and not give in to it. “But each one is tempted, when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death” (James 1:14,15). It is interesting that God gave Cain advice about his heart condition and told him he was in serious jeopardy. His very future depended on how he would act subsequently. God was stopping Cain and in a merciful way trying to expose his fault, giving him opportunity for repentance and reformation. Sin was an active reality, waiting to ensnare men; it was imperative to give heed and not be entrapped. God passed over Cain’s failure to offer his very best and stressed that of greater consequence was his unjustified wrath which could easily — and quickly did — lead to jealousy, violence and finally murder. The Lord exhorted Cain to take stock of his position and fight the dark thoughts that crowded into his mind and judgement before it was too late. Cain did not heed the warning.

Tragedy followed swiftly. In the ASV Genesis 4:8, Cain invited his brother into the “field,” the Hebrew word denoting cultivated, or irrigated land not pasture or wild land. It appears Abel was enticed away from their home into Cain’s area of labour as he did not want to be seen by other family members, he was sneaky. There in the field, Cain slew his brother. It may have been a premeditated act; or a sudden uncontrollable upsurge of jealousy. The two of them grew up together in the wonder of a world revealing ever new and exciting discoveries. It is unlikely Cain intended the death of his brother, but in the intensity of his resentment he struck a blow which proved fatal. The sequel of his animosity proved the reality of the Lord’s warning. Sin was already crouching at the door; he could overcome it if he would, but he must exert his will to do so, Cain, like his mother Eve, failed to do so.

His immediate reaction was fear. In Genesis 4:9, “Where is Abel thy brother?”, God’s question gave Cain a chance to confess. But Cain lied, showing no reverence at all. “I do not know” came the reply “Am I my brother’s keeper?” then the fearful condemnation; “What have you done? the voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground... when you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you, you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth”. The “ground” and “earth” from which Cain was to be a fugitive and vagabond is *erets*, meaning the earth as we use the term, the whole world, the earth as a planet. Cain was to be exiled from his home, family, and land, doomed to wander — as a “fugitive” fleeing as from an enemy or justice; as a ‘vagabond’ a wanderer, having no home — an exile.

Verse 13 reads, “My punishment is too great to bear!” The revised marginal alternative is “mine iniquity is greater than it may be forgiven” as a possible reconstruction of the Hebrew. From these words it appears Cain was hit hard in a sensitive spot. He was a tiller of the ground and was told now the ground would not respond. He had to leave his farm, his earthly possessions and home. As a vagabond, he lost the fellowship of his father and mother, brothers and sisters leaving him isolated. This was the second expulsion in human history, following Adam and Eve’s expulsion in the Garden of Eden. There is no indication in the account that Cain felt remorse or repentance. His concern appears to be only the consequence upon himself. He was to be cast out into the desolate earth, hidden from the presence of God, in danger of death at the hands of fellow men. In verse 14 “Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground,” he cried “and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth; and whosoever finds me will kill me.” Banishment from God’s presence implied withdrawal of Divine protection, from his family, leaving him with no shield against possible avengers.

Fear of the consequence of sin is no basis for acceptance with God. An upright life gains no credits in the book of the Almighty, if it is dictated only by

fear of the alternative. The one who gains his place in the Divine scheme of creation will gain it because they have completely given themselves in willing conformity to the Divine way, not because they fear what God will do to them if they do otherwise. They recognise they owe their life, and all that life means, to their Creator and want nothing better than to place themselves in that Creator's hands to be used as He wills.

The LORD said to Cain, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him." From Genesis 4:15 it appears vengeance belonged to God, Cain was to feel the results of the punishment and, hopefully, redeem his character.

Others could look at Cain with disdain but could not kill him, killing him would bring death to the slayer and trouble to the slayer's progeny. The lesson is that sin is contagious. Giving support to those not in the Lord's favour incurs responsibility.

Cain who had shown himself capable of destroying one life, might well do the same thing again. Therefore, God stepped in with his prohibition. In verse 15 the word "mark" in Hebrew *oth*, means a sign, set upon Cain. Not necessarily a physical disfigurement, but an indication of some kind that he must not be interfered with but left to go his way. Possibly the mark was visible, on his forehead, something that would be easily spotted by all.

In Genesis 4:16 we are told, Cain went out from the presence of the LORD. He departed taking his wife, "and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden." Hebrew *Nod* is the Sumerian land of *Nadu*, on the eastern side of the Persian Gulf (modern Iran). In Genesis 4:16, the footnote in the RSV says Nod means "wandering"; that is, Cain went into a territory where he wandered like a fugitive and a Bedouin.

Had Cain admitted his crime, given evidence of sincere contrition and placed himself in God's hands for judgement, the outcome would have been different. Sadly, he did not do so and went out into the wilderness unrepentant and resentful.

We know Seth was the third son of Adam and Eve because Eve spoke of another seed being appointed instead of Abel (Genesis 4:25). In Genesis 5:3 we are told Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born. The lineage through Seth appears in chapter 5 of Genesis. The Enoch of Cain's lineage is not the faithful Enoch of Jude 14, who came from Seth's line (Genesis 5:19-24).

When Adam was expelled with Eve from the Garden of Eden he went out into the unfinished earth. He planted a garden, grew crops and lived there with Eve in a specific place. The settled condition or area is likened to "the presence of the LORD." Cain went out from that "presence of the LORD," or from a more settled area where his parents resided. His leaving

was like being alienated from God. First, Adam was put out of the garden of Eden; now Cain was put out from a "conditional garden," as it were. When Adam and Eve were expelled, they were sent East. When Cain was forced to leave, he went even farther East. It appears eastward movement was figurative of losing more and more of the Lord's favour.

In Genesis 4:17 it appears that Cain already had a wife before his expulsion, as who would have married a disgraced murder? But there were no children at the time as he did not "know" his wife until he had gone out from the presence of the Lord. Cain did not have children until he dwelt in the land of Nod. His wife would have been one of Adam's daughters. Cain, Abel, and Seth are the only sons named, but Adam "begat [other] sons and daughters" we are told in (Genesis 5:3,4). So, daughters were born before Seth, for Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born.

It appears Cain and his wife were a mirror reflection of the Adam and Eve picture. Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, Cain and his wife were expelled from the presence of the Lord. In both cases the husband-wife relationship existed prior to the expulsion, the children existed afterwards in the imperfect or less perfect state.

Genesis 4:17 tells us Cain built a "city" and called it Enoch, named after his son, not himself. Although Cain was an outcast, he wanted the memory of his posterity to be established, and the possibility for his posterity to have a fresh start. His descendants to the eighth generation are recorded in verse 18, then there is total silence — he disappears. The man who was first born of the first family, the first link leading to the promised seed through whom all the families of the earth would be blessed.

He was the first fruit of the procreative power of God, implanted in those to whom He had entrusted the populating of and dominion and enjoyment of earth. But he failed to appreciate the goodness of God when he came to make the acknowledgement. He only brought the second best of his produce. Because of God's inevitable rejection of the second best he allowed resentment, jealousy, hatred to take possession of his soul and drive him to sin. A sin which was never repented of, so he was alienated from God and lost the honoured future he could have had. The lesson of Cain's tragedy is to place God first in life, giving of one's self unreservedly to Him for His purposes, and the very best of our abilities, talents and achievements to His service, is a sure defence against the "wiles of the devil." Satan cannot gain entry where God already reigns. Sin is crouching at the door, ready to spring — but in the power of God we gain the mastery. Micah knew the secret. "he has told you, O man, what is good, And what does the LORD require of you, But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

## The Old Book

# Autobiography of the Bible

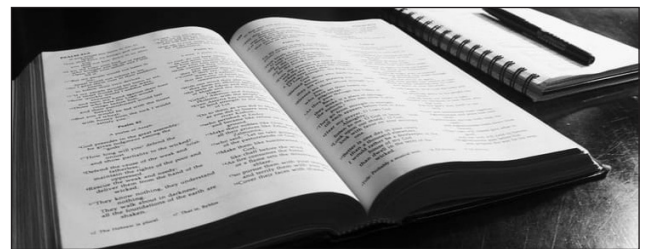
I am the oldest book in existence, having outlived the storms of thirty centuries. Men have endeavoured to banish me from the face of the earth; they have hidden, torn, and burnt me, and have done to death tens of thousands of my faithful witnesses. No other book has been more bitterly hated; no other book has been so dearly cherished; no other book has been so misrepresented and misunderstood; but to-day, while so many of my foes slumber in death, I still live on.

It is not for me to speak of the conflicting creeds laid to my charge, but on behalf of the one true purpose of my revered Author, I appeal to reason. Look at the stately trees of the forest; the living green of the meadows bespangled by a thousand lovely flowers; the singing birds that delight themselves amid the beauties of nature; the blue dome of heaven illuminated by the sun, moon, and stars that space out a universe too immense for man to fathom; and know that the Creator of these things has a wise and loving purpose equally great and beautiful on behalf of man (Isaiah 55:6).

There is revealed within my covers a plan so broad and a design so deep as to be beyond the power of human origin. My story centres around the Redeemer, who by the grace of God tasted death for everyone.

Based upon this atoning sacrifice all the dead will be raised, and the whole earth made glorious with life and happiness everywhere, without a trace of sorrow, pain, or death (Isaiah 11:9, 60:13, Revelation 21:1-7).

My message has blessed every follower of Jesus. It has inspired them to learn about God, encouraged them to zeal, comforted them in sorrow, and strengthened them in faith, till they have laid down their all in death, awaiting their grand reward. Like the crystal springs from the mountainside which flow on and on to refresh the luxuriant greenery on the plains below, so in the glad day now at hand the waters of truth will impart their life-giving blessing to the willing and obedient of mankind, who will forever, with one sweet accord, praise, love, and adore my beloved Author (Revelation 5:8,13).



*The Best Book Ever to Read*

## *The Pruning Process*

“I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. He takes away every branch in me which has no fruit, and every branch which has fruit he makes clean, so that it may have more fruit” (John 15:1-2 BBE).

The whole pruning process is the Heavenly Father’s way of separating us from the thoughts and things in our life that we have become too attached to, that are really getting in our way. By removing the parts that are hindering our journey on the narrow way it assists us in our spiritual growth. The result is spoken of by Christ, “Here is my Father’s glory, in that you give much fruit and so are my true disciples” (John 15:8 BBE).

### **“I AM THE VINE, YE ARE THE BRANCHES”**

It is the branch that bears the fruit,  
That feels the knife.  
To prune it for a larger growth,  
A fuller life.

Though every budding twig be lopped,  
And every grace  
Of swaying tendril, springing leaf,  
Be lost a space.

O thou whose life of joy seems reft,  
Of beauty shorn;  
Whose aspirations lie in dust,  
All bruised and torn,

Rejoice, though each desire, each dream,  
Each hope of thine  
Shall fall and fade; it is the hand  
Of love Divine



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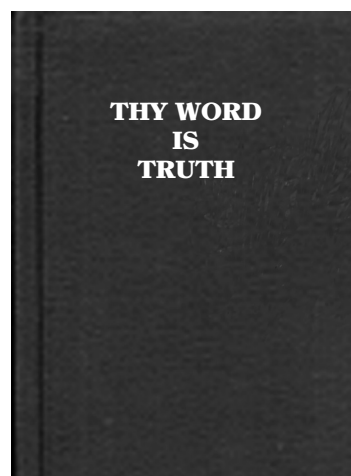
## The Bible Teachings

On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering and Atonement.

This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute during the 1970's and set out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the next part of this 274-page book. For Brethren who would like to read more of the content it is available through the Berean Bible Institute's official webpage.

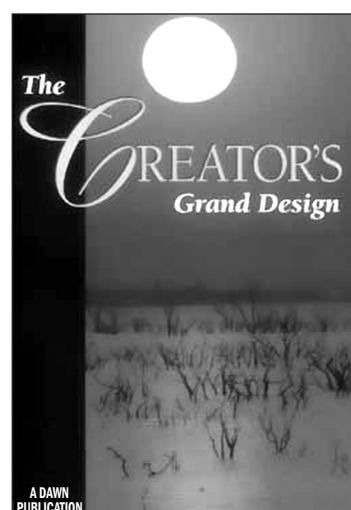
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### The Creator's Grand Design

An easy to read presentation of the Bible's teachings concerning God's design for man, including the hope of future life.

An excellent book to give to friends and neighbours who ask about God's plan.

## The Date of Memorial

**Tuesday 7th April 2020 (14 Nisan) after 6 pm**

For details on locations where the memorial will be held in Australia, email [enquirybbi@gmail.com](mailto:enquirybbi@gmail.com)

**For Isolated Brethren** — If you are isolated or unable to attend, please contact the Berean Bible Institute for a Memorial Kit, provided at no charge.

## Conventions

### Australian General Convention

Organised by the Berean Bible Institute  
January 24-27, 2020

### Sydney Bible Students Convention

May 8-10, 2020

#### For more information:

Email: [australianbiblestudents@gmail.com](mailto:australianbiblestudents@gmail.com)

## In Memory

### Sr. Annie Dorothy Marlor

Sr. Annie attended the Bible Student Class in Adelaide with husband Br. Harry (deceased) for many years before moving to Brisbane and joining the brethren in Queensland.  
22 July 1924 to 21 October 2019

# The Bible Teachings (Part Five)

*On the Covenants — Mediator — Ransom — Sin Offering — Atonement*

*Berean Series of Bible Studies • Berean Bible Institute • PO Box 402, Rosanna, Australia 3094*

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## Jewish Nation Held Together by God's Promise

*"In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."*

This promise held that nation together for all the centuries down to Christ — yea, it still holds them together as a peculiar people, separate from all the other nations of the world. St. Paul and the other Apostles refer to this repeatedly. St. Paul says, Our twelve tribes instantly (incessantly) serving God, hope to come to the fulfilment of this Abrahamic promise — the blessing of all the families of the earth through them (Acts 26:7).

### Law Covenant Did Not Disannul Abrahamic Promise

As St. Paul points out, the Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant so far as the nation of Israel was concerned to continue until the promised Seed should come. He is particular to add that the Law Covenant itself did not disannul or make invalid the original Covenant, which was of Grace and not of Law (Galatians 3:17). He was particular also that we should see that the law Covenant "made nothing perfect" — it accomplished no real reformation or restitution. It did, however, set forth in types and allegories some wonderful lessons illustrative of great Divine principles of truth and righteousness — lessons which were beneficial to the Jewish nation, natural Israel, and also to the Gospel Church, which constitutes spiritual Israel.

### A Remnant Blessed Between Jacob and Christ

During the period from the death of Jacob to Christ, while the law made nothing perfect, a few of that nation, exercising faith above and beyond the Law Covenant, were blessed by the underlying Abrahamic Covenant. These the Apostle enumerates in Hebrews 11. They had this testimony, that they died in faith, and that thus "they pleased God," although they did not by obedience to the Law Covenant secure the blessing which it proposed. Those faithful ones will get through Christ what the Law Covenant could not give them, for, because of inherited weaknesses, they were unable to fulfil the requirements of the Law Covenant.

### Impossible for Imperfect Man to Keep God's Perfect Law

Let us keep in mind that the Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant because of transgression — to show to the Israelites and to all the impossibility of an imperfect man keeping the Divine Law, and also to manifest in due time our Lord Jesus, who, born under the Law Covenant, kept its provisions faithfully.

By so doing, says the Apostle, Christ "magnified the Law Covenant and made it honourable." Previously it might have been claimed that the Divine Law was too rigorous and that nobody could possibly keep it; that it would be impossible for a man to love God with all his heart, all his mind, all his being, all his strength, and his neighbour as himself. But when Jesus did this, and did more in sacrificing Himself, the just for the unjust, it demonstrated the fact that God had not given an impossible Law; it demonstrated that the fault lay with mankind; that they had lost the original perfection with which the Creator had endowed them.

### Why Jesus Was Born Under Law Covenant

We read that our Lord was born under the Law Covenant "that He might redeem those who were under the Law" Covenant. So far as other peoples were concerned, He might have been of any other nation and redeemed Adam and the remainder of the world, but in order to preserve equitably to Israel the special blessing of God's Covenant with Abraham it was necessary that Christ should be of that nation, "born under the Law, that He might redeem those who were under the Law." That nation had been separated from the other nations of the world for the very purpose of giving the illustrations already referred to, and God would see to it that they should not be disadvantaged by reason of His having used them thus. The blessed opportunities offered them under the Law Covenant through the typical sacrifices, etc., lifted them above the other nations and gave them, as it were, a second trial for eternal life. In common with the remainder of mankind as children of Adam they had one trial and one condemnation through him; and then, under the Law Covenant arrangement and its mediator, Moses, another trial for eternal life was granted to that nation; but it was lost because none of them did keep or could fulfil the requirements of that Law Covenant. The day was saved for that nation as respects that Law Covenant, by which they were bound, by the fact that Christ became a Jew and by obedience to the law Covenant gained all of the rights which it held out.

### Blessing of World Necessitated Jesus Giving Up Earthly Rights Secured Under the Law

The rights gained were earthly rights — human perfection, an Eden home, fellowship with God and the dominion of earth; as recited by the Prophet, "Dominion over the beasts of the field, the fishes of

the sea, and the fowls of the air.” Had Christ kept these rights, which were properly His through obedience to the Law, He could indeed have brought a great blessing to the Jews, instructing them along the lines of health and morale; and through Israel these blessings and instructions might have been imparted to all other nations. But as the race was under Divine sentence to death, it would not have been possible for Jesus to give mankind perfection of mind or body. The blessings of the Seed of Abraham in that event would have been very limited indeed and then only to such as would exercise faith and obedience similar to the faith and obedience which Abraham exercised.

### **Jesus’ Reward for His Obedience**

Instead of keeping the earthly rights which His special birth and obedience to the Law made possible to Him, Jesus, in harmony with the Father’s program, sacrificed these earthly rights at once — as soon as He reached manhood’s estate, 30 years. He gave up all earthly rights and interests and privileges. His consecration was complete; He symbolised it by a water immersion at Jordan. The Father accepted it, and forthwith gave Him the begetting of the holy spirit to a new nature. For the three — and one-half years of His earthly ministry our Lord persistently sacrificed His earthly life and every earthly interest, finishing the sacrifice at Calvary when He cried, “It is finished.” On the third day there after the Father raised Him from the dead to a newness of life — again on the spirit plane of being. This was the reward for His obedience to the Father’s will in the sacrificing of His earthly rights and privileges as the perfect man.

### **Messiah Holds Earthly Rights as an Asset**

So, then, as the glorified one in His resurrection, Messiah was a spirit being, “partaker of the Divine nature,” on high and had at His command all those earthly rights and privileges which He had sacrificed, which He laid down in death in obedience to the Father’s will. He had these now as a possession, as an asset which He might dispense, which He might give to others.

### **Urged Not to forget that the Law Covenant Promised Only Earthly Life, Blessings and Dominion**

Let us not lose the thread of the thought: The Law Covenant promised earthly life and earthly blessings and earthly dominion — those which Adam had lost. Whoever would keep the Law should have these. Christ Jesus, as the keeper of the Law, had the right to these and laid them down. And now, being exalted, it is these earthly blessings and earthly rights which He has to dispense — to the Jew, or to all mankind, or to such an elect or select number of mankind as He may please, and as will be in accord with the Father’s program outlined in the scroll sealed with seven seals.

### **Why Antitypical Melchisedec Was Promised**

When the Israelites, found that Moses could not give them eternal life, and that even under David and

Solomon they did not reach the pinnacle of power and influence in the world to bless mankind, they might well have been discouraged. Hence God, through the prophets, sent them further enlightenment to the effect that they could never accomplish the Divine purpose of blessing the world except as He would send them a Messiah, an Anointed One, a King and Priest after the order of Melchizedek. When Messiah should come as the great Priest, and the great King, He would be able to do for them under a New (Law) Covenant what Moses and Aaron had not been able to do for them under the old law Covenant.

### **God’s Law Covenant to be Replaced**

It was in connection with this promise of Messiah that God told His covenanted people that He would replace the Law Covenant under Messiah, the antitype of Moses. He said: “It shall come to pass, saith the Lord, after those days, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the (Law) Covenant which I made with them when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, but I will make a New Covenant with them, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh and I will write my Law in their inward parts” (Jeremiah 31:31- 33).

### **Israel Looking for the Glorious Messiah**

Israel was looking for this glorious Messiah greater than Moses, who would introduce to them and put them under a better, a New (law) Covenant, and under more favourable conditions by which they would more fully accomplish the Divine purposes in their own hearts, and be prepared, qualified, to introduce those blessings to all the families of the earth, as they had been expecting to do from the beginning.

### **Why Jews were permitted to Crucify Jesus**

We can see a reason why the Lord kept secret from the Jews in general His identity; for, as the Apostle Peter says, “had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” They did it in ignorance (Acts 3:17). We can see it was necessary that Christ should die; that He should lay down His earthly rights and earthly life and receive of the Father the higher life, and a spiritual realm, in order that He might have the earthly blessings to give, to dispense to Israel and to the world. We can see that otherwise no blessings of a permanent and eternal, character would have been possible; hence our Lord explained to the disciples after His resurrection, “It was necessary that Christ should suffer and (then) enter into His glory.”

### **Jesus’ First Work Not with the Jews**

Now the question arises, what disposition will the risen and glorified Jesus make of these earthly rights which in His death He had secured by His sacrifice of them? The most reasonable, the most natural thought to us would be: Surely having consecrated the earthly rights He will confer these upon Natural Israel: He



will at once become King and Priest to that nation, and in harmony with their hopes cherished for more than sixteen centuries He will exalt Israel as a nation. He will open their eyes. As the prophets have declared, “They shall see out of obscurity”; and “They also that pierced Him shall mourn,” and He will “pour upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication” (Zechariah 12:10).

### **Jesus Cast Off Jews Instead of blessing Them with the New Covenant**

But Jesus did nothing of the kind. Instead of so doing, He cast off the nation of Israel, saying, “Your house is Left unto you desolate.” He did not establish for them the New Covenant; He did not bless them at all. They have been the most outcast nation of the world for the nearly nineteen centuries since they crucified Him. No wonder the Apostle asks, “Has God cast away His people whom He foreknew?” — the people to whom He made the promises and covenants? — the people whom He encouraged in every way to believe that they were His special people and would be specially used by Him in carrying the blessings of the Divine law and instruction to all nations? Has God set aside all His promises?

### **The “Mystery” to be revealed — God Has Not Abandoned Original Plan**

We shall see presently that God has not in any degree abandoned His original program as respects the nation of Israel — “the seed of Abraham” according to the flesh and according to the Law Covenant. Here comes in “a mystery,” as St. Paul explains. This Mystery he declares was hidden from previous ages and dispensations, and is now made manifest only to the saints, the holy ones taught of God. It is still a Mystery to Israel after the flesh. It is still a Mystery to the world of mankind in general; for the world knoweth us not, even as it knew not the Master. The world does not perceive that God is selecting a “Little Flock” to be with Christ, members of His mystical Body — members of the spiritual Seed of Abraham.

### **The Mystery Shall Be Finished**

In His last symbolic message to the Church, the lion of Judah, who received the scroll of the Divine purpose, informs the saints, to whom it is “given to know the Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven,” that the Mystery shall be finished; but not until the days of the voice or sounding of the seventh trumpet — in the end or close of this Gospel Age and the dawn of the Millennial Age. Whoever is interested may profitably search the Word respecting this Mystery class, its calling, its selection, its testing, its completion, its glorification; but only those who are begotten of the holy spirit will be able to understand in the sense of fully appreciating these “deep things of God” which “God has revealed unto us (the Mystery class) by His spirit, for the spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10).

### **The “Mystery” Class**

This Mystery class is composed of such as have the faith of Abraham and the obedience of Abraham — beginning with our lord and continuing from Pentecost down to the close of this Gospel Age. It is upon these that Christ’s blessing of forgiveness, reconciliation, and earthly favours lost by Adam and redeemed by Himself were conferred.

### **Christ Has Something to Give Away**

Call to mind that He has something to give away — earthly rights and privileges which were His by virtue of His keeping the law Covenant. Those were not spiritual rights and privileges which He secured through keeping the law, but earthly ones only. He got His spiritual and higher privileges and honours as a reward for the sacrifice of Himself. What He has to give to us therefore is not spiritual life and honours and dominion, but the earthly. These come to us in the nature of a bequest. The earthly life and the earthly rights which Jesus sacrificed are willed or bequeathed to all those of the faith and obedience of Abraham. But here comes another feature of this Mystery. It is not enough that we have the faith of Abraham and his loyalty to righteousness; an additional matter is necessary. All who would become sharers of this gift of Christ must now, in addition to faith and obedience to righteousness, take up their cross and follow Christ as the Captain of their salvation; they must walk in His footsteps in the narrow way of self-sacrifice, even unto death. Any who do not thus will and thus covenant cannot be His disciples now, whatever blessing they may obtain by His grace later on. He is now, during this Gospel Age, making a special selection of a special class, “elect, precious.” These He styles His Bride, members of His Body, the Royal Priesthood, His Jewels. These various names indicate His high appreciation of this specially called class.

### **Through the Spiritual to the Natural**

Let us keep in memory the Apostle’s words that “God hath not cast off natural Israel whom He foreknew” and to whom pertained the promises, the giving of the law, etc.; He has merely turned them aside temporarily during this Gospel Age, that in the interim He may develop a spiritual Israel, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a Peculiar People, to be the Bride of Messiah, or otherwise His “Members.” This “Mystery” is working no disadvantage to the Jew, but really is a further step in the Divine program in fullest accord with the original Covenant made with Abraham. The Seed of Abraham was to be of two parts: (1) As the stars of heaven, and (2) As the sands of the seashore.

The Mystery class developed during this Gospel Age are the Spiritual Seed, symbolically pictured as the stars of heaven, while the natural seed of Abraham is yet to become as the sand of the seashore. The Apostle refers to both of these seeds (Romans 4:16) — “Not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which

is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.” The old Law Covenant brought not forth the seed of Abraham, but the New (Law) Covenant will bring forth many children — as the sands of the seashore. The only children of Abraham thus far developed are those who are the Seed of Abraham according to faith

### **All of Christ’s Blessing Goes to the “Mystery” Class**

As we have already seen, all of Christ’s blessing goes to this faith class, the “mystery” class, according to a program which the world does not understand, but with certain conditions attached which obligate all who receive this blessing to become dead to earthly aims and hopes and ambitions, and thus as members of the Body of Christ to have fellowship in His sacrifice of the earthly things that they may have fellowship and share with Him in the heavenly part of the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. “If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him.” “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne” (2 Timothy 2:11, Revelation 3:21).

### **The Death of the Testator**

The Apostle explains that no will or testament or bequest is of validity so long as the testator liveth. Whatever covenant or agreement may be had, it awaits a final sealing or completion by the death of the testator. The Apostle applies this to Christ. By His death Jesus passed on to us, the Church, the benefit of His merit; namely, the earthly rights or “justification” to all that was lost in Adam and redeemed by the precious merit of Christ’s sacrifice finished at Calvary. In accepting these earthly blessings, we, as His members, agreed to the terms: namely, that we also surrender our rights to these as servants of “ministers of the New (law) Covenant” — that these earthly blessings secured by our lord’s obedience and death should thus pass through us and still be the Redeemer’s asset to be given to Israel, under Israel’s New (law) Covenant.

### **Israel Still Outcast, Evidence Body of Christ Not Complete**

The fact that Israel is still outcast from God’s favour is merely an evidence that the Body of Christ is not yet completely sacrificed, for bear in mind that the Covenant is of no validity until the death of the testator. The lord Jesus, the primary testator, has accepted believers, as “members of His Body,” and He is working in them by His holy spirit, to will and to do

the Father’s good pleasure — that they may lay down their lives in sacrifice, filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Messiah. As soon as the last member of the Church shall have died as a member of His Body, the New (law) Covenant with Israel will be sealed — sealed with the blood of the testator, the death of the testator, the death of the Christ, Head and Members.

### **The Mystic Class on Plane of Spiritual Glory**

Meantime the resurrection change of the Church as the Body of Christ will have brought the Testator as a whole to the plane of glory, honour and immortality. On this plane the Christ, Jesus the Head, and the Church, His mystic Body, will be in antitype the great Prophet, the great Priest, the great King, the great Judge, the great Mediator between God and mankind in general. Then will come the time promised in the Scriptures when this Great One, this Glorified One, the Seed of Abraham on the spiritual plane, will begin the work of blessing all the families of the earth, under the conditions of the New (law) Covenant, to be made with Israel first.

### **Why Christ Passed His “Cup” Along**

Our lord when discussing His sacrificial sufferings, referred to them as His “Cup.” In the last Supper, the memorial of His death, referring to this Cup symbolically, He said. “This is the blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins: drink ye all of it” (Matthew 26:27, 28). That Cup, which symbolised our lord’s death, our lord’s sacrifice of His earthly rights, was sufficient of itself to have sealed the New Covenant. He needed not to ask the Apostles, or us, or anybody, to become His disciples and to share His sufferings, to share His Cup, and to share the rewards of these — His glory, honour and immortality.

But He passed the Cup along, passed the merit to us; or, rather, passed the merit of His sacrifice through us, His disciples, His followers. He did this because it was a part of the Divine program; for, as St. Peter declares, “The God and Father. of our lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us.” He who foreknew Jesus foreknew us also by Jesus. This was no change of the Divine program. It was surprising to us merely because it was a Mystery not previously made known — that we should be made fellow heirs with Christ in the sufferings of this present time and in the glory that shall follow.



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## The Glad Resurrection Day

*"Weeping may tarry for the night, But joy cometh in the morning" (Psalms 30:5).*

Referring to the words of Jesus on the night immediately prior to his great sacrifice on behalf, of us all, he said, "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1 ASV). Within a few hours of uttering these words Jesus was to suffer and die on the cross. How could those disciples believe in him? On the third day they were to learn that Christ had risen from the dead. He was a living Saviour! This he had also predicted on the night prior to his death when he said, "And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you" (John 16:22 ASV).

Did Jesus see those disciples again? He certainly did! Appearing approximately ten times at different locations. The disciples in Jesus' day were weak and timid while he was still with them, but after his resurrection appearances to them, and especially after Pentecost, they became strong, confident and full of faith in him. The same has happened to us, since we have learnt to know and love the Lord and to trust in him.

After Jesus' resurrection those disciples at his first advent understood what his death and resurrection would mean for them, and for all mankind, in due time. So, do we when we grasp the wonderful truth -- that Jesus Christ by the grace of God "should taste of death for every man" who has ever lived. Those are the words of the Apostle Paul and he knew the truth which had been revealed to him. He said again "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22 ASV).

Then the Apostle Peter declared that "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18 ASV). But Jesus has not brought all mankind to God in the present life. Yet another scripture declares, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their

trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19 ASV).

How many of the world have already been reconciled to God? Very few, we will admit. Christ tasted death for everyone — in every city and country in the world! The majority of mankind are yet to benefit from Christ's sacrifice for them. The words of our risen Lord, through the Apostle John, help us in this matter when he said [I am] "the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Revelation 1:18 ASV).

What did Jesus mean by having the keys of hell? The Bible hell is the condition of death. Jesus went to the Bible hell for all mankind. We call to mind the Scripture in Psalms 16:10, quoted by Peter in Acts 2:31, after Jesus' resurrection—"that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. "which was fulfilled in our Lord's resurrection. "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32 ASV).

The words of the Psalmist help us further in Psalms 102:19,20, "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; From heaven did Jehovah behold the earth; To hear the sighing of the prisoner; To loose those that are appointed to death" (ASV).

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What a scene the Almighty beholds on earth today with man's inhumanity to man. Death taking away the human family one by one throughout the world. But God is going to loose the prisoners that are appointed to death, those in the prison-house of death. It is lovely to know that the Psalmist was given that information, by inspiration of God, so long ago, and it's absolutely true.

To illustrate the wonderful resurrection day, when all mankind shall be awakened from the death condition, we have an account given in John's Gospel respecting the resurrection of Lazarus, a dear brother who had passed away while Jesus was absent from the locality where he lived. When Jesus returned, he performed such a marvelous miracle that brought joy and rejoicing to the hearts of the two sorrowing sisters in particular, and also brings hope and encouragement to our hearts, as we accept by faith the lesson God would wish us to take from this lovely incident. We refer to John 11 where the death and resurrection of Lazarus is recorded. When Lazarus became sick the sisters sent a message to Jesus "He whom thou lovest is sick"-hoping, and expecting perhaps, that Jesus would return quickly and cure the sickness. They had become acquainted with the Lord curing people, bringing them back to health and strength. But Jesus did not return, and Lazarus died. Then Jesus said to his disciples with him, "We'll go back and awake Lazarus out of sleep." The disciples replied that if he sleeps, he would do well. Then Jesus said plainly, "Lazarus is dead."

When our Lord returned, he was met by Martha who said-"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus said unto her "Thy brother shall rise again." To which Martha replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," Martha had learned that truth from Jesus, no doubt. Then Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead [though he dies] yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth [then] and believeth in me shall never die." The miracle that followed was intended to illustrate just what Jesus had said in respect of all mankind.

When Mary met Jesus, she expressed the same thought as Martha, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." We note the emphasis was on Jesus curing their brother while he still lived; they had not expected their brother to be restored to life, for he had been dead four days. When our Lord asked where they had laid their brother and approached the grave, asking that the stone be taken from the entrance, Martha was apprehensive, saying, "Lord, by this time he corrupteth: for he hath been dead four days." After praying to the Heavenly Father, acknowledging that it was the Father's power that would perform the miracle and that he knew it was God's will that it be carried out, we read that Jesus



*The Resurrection of Lazarus*

"Cried with a loud voice. Lazarus come forth; and he that was dead came forth." We read "Then many of the Jews which came to Mary and had seen the things which Jesus did believed in him." Can we wonder that they believed on him after such a miracle?

Could there be anything more wonderful than to realise what the fulfillment of that miracle will mean in the Kingdom of Christ, that all mankind shall be awakened from the sleep of death. Lazarus, of course, died again, but we note clearly that he was asleep in death for four days; he had not gone to heaven. Four days, four years, four hundred years, or four thousand years make no difference to the Lord when the time comes to bring mankind back from the prison-house of death, to enjoy lasting life on the restored earth, by obedience to the laws of Christ's Kingdom.

How thankful we are to know of this glorious salvation provided by God, through the sacrifice of His dear Son who "tasted death for every man." From the Apostle Paul we read again in the words of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, "I would not have you to be ignorant brethren concerning them which are asleep. that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." When we have hope in Christ, we know of a surety that our departed loved ones are in his keeping; they are "asleep in Jesus." Paul continues, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." This is a sure promise that God will bring back from the death condition all mankind at our Lord's second advent, that all may learn to know the Lord from the least to the greatest and accept him also as their Saviour, gaining lasting life on the restored earth.

What a comfort is this gracious plan of salvation God has promised for His human family, through the gift of Jesus to be our Saviour. We do well to remember also that we were all under the sentence of death, but through faith in Christ, we have a certificate for life. Those who, in this life, do not gain a certificate for life will have a full opportunity of obtaining that in the resurrection day. In explanation, previously mention was made of the text by the Apostle Paul, "God was in

Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” But God has reconciled only a comparatively few of mankind unto Himself during the Gospel Age. These, on proving faithful unto death in the steps of the Master, are promised a place in the heavenly kingdom, to reign with Christ, to assist in the restoring to life and blessing of the remainder of mankind who obey the laws of the earthly kingdom. This will be easier to do at that time with Satan bound and the glory of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Then will be fulfilled the words of Revelation 22:17,

“And the spirit and the bride say, Come.” There will be a Bride, for then the Church will be with Christ for this great restoration work of a thousand years on behalf of all the willing and obedient resurrected humanity. “And let him that heareth say, Come, And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Then shall also come to pass the fulfillment of Matthew 25:34, “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand. Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

## Honoring Memorial Principles

*“This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).*

When we come together to observe the Memorial of our Lord’s death it gives us an opportunity as a group of believers to express our deep appreciation for his loving sacrifice. Doing this as a body emphasizes the great things we have in common. It takes us back to the roots of our faith and the great truth of why and how we can stand before God as fully justified sons and daughters. As we remember him, we are also remembering the principles which drove him to offer such a sweet sacrifice.

Proverbs 8:31 provides the sentiments of our Lord in his pre-human experience. He said, “My delight was with the sons of men.” He loved mankind right from the beginning. When the heavenly Father asked him to become the Savior of our race, he undoubtedly accepted without reservation. And so, when we remember him, we remember the great principle of love that motivated him.

But there was also the love for his Father. In Proverbs 8, he also said, “Then I was the craftsman at His side. I was filled with delight day after day”

(verse 30 NIV). In this bond between Father and son there was a closeness and intimacy that brought each of them great joy as they worked together to bring God’s creative plans to life.

After the physical work of creation was finished there was another work to be accomplished. The greater work of educating an intelligent creation in the knowledge of good and evil was, in many ways, a more difficult and complex part of creation. The process began with the first test. “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it” (Genesis 2:17). Failure to obey this simple command began the greatest learning experience the universe will likely ever see. It was love that moved our Lord to become the sacrificial Lamb of God. It was a principle ingrained in everything he did.

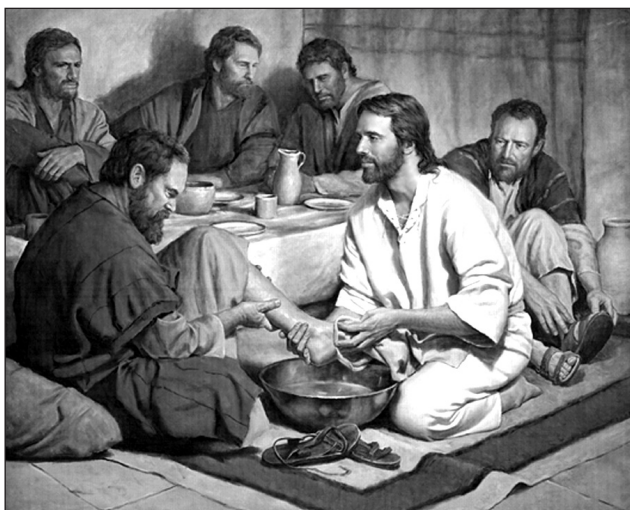
In remembering Jesus, we also honor the principles of righteousness and justice. He came to live a righteous life for two reasons. First, his personal righteousness was required to qualify his life as the ransom price. Second, his virtue established a standard of true godlike morality.

By remembering him we memorialize these good and noble principles. Our yearly gatherings on one night of the year are important. However, a more meaningful memorial of that precious life occurs when our lives are profoundly changed. The way we live the rest of the year proclaims that this special night is not just a formality, but that Jesus has taken deep root in our hearts.

It is most appropriate, then, that our lives become a living memorial to him, that our actions and attitudes imitate him and that when others look at us they see a reflection of him. In that way, we can be a daily memorial of his great life and death.

### New Beginnings

God’s instructions for keeping the Passover began with a simple command: “This month shall be unto



*Jesus at the Last Supper*

you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Exodus 12:2). Prior to the institution of the Passover the Jewish year began in the fall, around September. With the first Passover, God instructed that the year would begin in the spring. The Passover was to mark a new beginning. It is a wonderfully appropriate change. By offering himself as the ransom sacrifice Jesus guaranteed that mankind would have a new beginning, that the first beginning in Eden was not our last hope.

The new beginning for the consecrated of this age started when we came under the blood and became part of the first-born class. Then the springtime of new growth began. We can now look back to our prior experiences and remember that we were once in bondage to sin and death. But the anti-typical Passover Lamb has set us free from these things just as Israel was set free from the slavery of making mud bricks in Egypt. We have been "passed over" (Exodus 12:27) and are now free from condemnation. The New Creature can grow and prosper as the new flowers and green grass of spring exhibit new life. Our new beginning brings rich spiritual growth.

### Roasted in Fire

The Passover lamb was to be roasted in fire. This powerful picture depicted the intensity of Jesus' experience on earth. Fully aware of this, the Apostle Paul said, "If you would escape becoming weary and faint-hearted, compare your own sufferings with those of him who endured such hostility directed against him by sinners" (Hebrews 12:3, Weymouth). Jesus endured great hostility.

As intense as the physical abuses were, his sufferings were not limited to the mistreatment before the Sanhedrin or even the scourging and crucifixion. He also endured emotional suffering when, for a time, the Father turned His face away. His heart suffered when he saw unbelief in so many. He was saddened when a man's wealth meant more to him than becoming a disciple of the Savior. Seeing the greed and jealousy of the Jewish leadership created great conflict with them. These were all painful experiences for our Lord. Even the disciples could not relieve his anguish in Gethsemane. Betrayal by a friend was another burning flame that licked at Jesus' heart. These were all part of our Lord's cup of suffering. Being roasted with fire was an appropriate description of his experiences.

### He Set His Face Like a Flint

"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah 50:6).

It is difficult to think that one who deserved so much praise would be spit in the face and have his beard pulled out. Such unjust behavior was meant to demean and ridicule him. But in the next few verses of Isaiah 50 we see how Jesus dealt with such terrible



*"I gave my back to the smiters."*

mistreatment. He leaves a marked legacy of how to deal with unfair abuse.

"For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore, shall I not be confounded; therefore, have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifies me; who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?" (Isaiah 50:7-8).

Throughout his mistreatment Jesus turned his thoughts to God. Setting his face like a flint means he would not allow his resolute feelings to be swayed by his abusers. He thought, "I will not be shamed by these attempts to humiliate me." When God judged his life, he knew the outcome would be vastly different than his experience before these fallen men. His confidence in God helped Jesus endure such tremendous opposition. He understood that in the end he would be vindicated and honored by the righteous judge.

### Psalm 22

This Psalm was on Jesus' mind when he quoted verse one from the cross. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" It is interesting to note that the Psalm ends with a phrase similar to his final words when he said, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

"A seed shall serve him ... They shall come and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that, He hath done this" (Psalms 22:30, 31). The Companion Bible suggests that the phrase "He hath done this" is equivalent to "It is finished." He now prophetically looks ahead and sees the saints declaring his righteousness to future generations and that he finished the sacrifice so needful for our redemption.

It is likely that Jesus may have been reciting the entire Psalm as he hung from the cross. Filling his mind with prophetic words of his own experience would have been helpful in dealing with the raging pain of being on the cross for six hours. As we read portions of the Psalm, we imagine the demands of his body for prolonged pauses and moments of rest. Only selected verses are cited below.



“My God, my God, why hath thou forsaken me? ... O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not ... But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praise of Israel. Our fathers trusted thee: they trusted and thou didst deliver them ... But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people ... Be not far from me; for trouble is near and there is none to help ... I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

“For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet ... I may count all my bones; they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture ... O my Strength, haste thee to help me ... I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee, Praise Him, all you descendants of Israel ... For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him he heard ...

“All the ends of the world will remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord’s: and he rules over the nations. All the rich of the earth will feast and worship. All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be counted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come and declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this” (Psalms 22:1-4,6,11,14,16-19,22-24,27-31).

These words reveal not only great suffering, but amid the suffering the strength of faith is evident. Jesus took great comfort that even unborn generations would hear of God’s righteousness. In this amazing prophetic Psalm Jesus left a legacy of how faith deals with adversity. In his own great struggle, he went to the Father. He asked for help and claimed the promises. He drew courage in knowing of the coming kingdom and that there would be a seed to proclaim God’s name. His prime concern was that God should be honored. With that perspective, he was focused on higher and nobler principles, well worth the physical sufferings he endured.

As this Psalm reveals some of his thoughts on the cross, the possibility also exists that he continued to Psalm 23, some of the most meaningful words ever written. How precious to think that our Lord likely took comfort in these words:

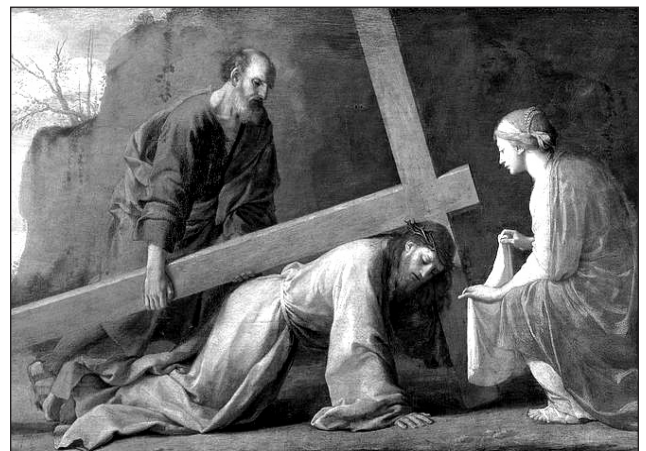
“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

As Jesus struggled to breathe with his back lacerated and hands and feet tearing at the nails, he could still say with confidence, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” And, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.” His faith is truly inspiring as we contemplate these prophetic words.

## Not a Bone Broken

An intriguing aspect of the Passover is the fact that not a bone of the sacrificial lamb was to be broken (Exodus 12:46). This was fulfilled in John 19:33, 36. “But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs ... For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken.’ “



*Though much abused, not a bone was broken.*

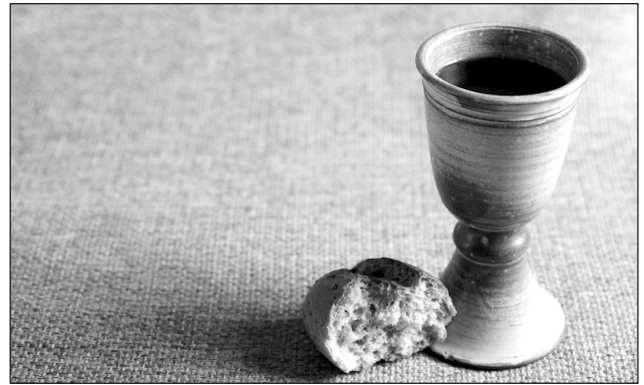
Why was it so important that none of Jesus’ bones should be broken? The answer is found in the 34th Psalm. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken” (Psalms 34:19,20, English Standard Version).

The Psalmist reveals that unbroken bones represent the hope of deliverance. Jesus’ hope of deliverance became a reality when he was raised from the dead. His hope of providing the ransom price was not in vain. When providence entered and his legs remained unbroken God provided an indication that his hope was genuine and could not be destroyed by his enemies.

We, too, have unbroken bones. We are given great hope through our understanding of how the atonement process works. What a privilege to know these things. The Apostle describes the stability that hope provides when he said hope is an anchor of the soul rooted in heaven. It is “both sure and steadfast” (Hebrews 6:19).

## This Do in Remembrance

As we remember our Lord's sacrifice, we honor the principles he stood for. His sacrifice was a great expression of love. His perfection brought a righteous offering to God and set an example of perfect obedience. While enduring the flames of oppression he turned to God for help and would not be moved. He understood the tremendous benefit that would result from his sacrifice and how the Father would be honored. For these reasons, we are privileged to remember him.



## Five Smooth Stones

*1 Samuel Chapter 17*

**T**he story of David's victory over Goliath is a very famous one. David was a humble lad and the youngest among eight brothers. Historically the Philistines had always been a thorn in the side of Israel and were an ominous foe. It took the strongest and bravest to stand against such an enemy.

It is worthy to note that the terror which the Philistines were able to inflict was due to their use of the giant named Goliath from Gath, who appeared every evening and morning for forty days. This individual was just under eight-foot-tall (240 cm), he was broad and powerful in proportion and his armour weighed five thousand shekels = 157 lb (or 71 kg). During the forty days Goliath had challenged Saul's army to produce a man to meet him in single combat. The losing side was to submit to the other, without any further fighting. The more the Israelites looked at the Philistine champion on display every day, the less this challenge appealed to them. 1 Samuel 17:8-11. They were in a complete state of panic over the issue.

David enquired, "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?" (verse 26). David's words must have raised an eyebrow or two of the soldiers. It had been a long time since they had heard the praises of God on their lips and a faith that would give them the victory. Saul heard of this and gave orders for David to be brought before him.

Saul said "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth" (1 Samuel 17:33). It appears that Saul, king of Israel, was afraid. His was an understandable concern, but David was undaunted. From his previous experiences he had learned how strong and dependable was the Lord's protecting care. Although David was unskilled in military warfare, he had dexterity and physical capabilities.

When Saul questioned David's ability to fight Goliath, David replied "Your servant was tending his

father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God." 1 Samuel 17:34-36. David was not about to be discouraged, his faith was in Jehovah God and that his God would take care of Goliath.

Apparently, David spoke with such confidence that Saul made a sudden decision and authorized him to go against Goliath. "Go and may the Lord be with you" (1 Samuel 17:37). The challenge was a serious one, for if the Israelites lost, they would become servants of the Philistines. The very fact David was brought to the king's attention indicated that the people were awed by his spirit.

Next, Saul took off his own armour, that was a replica of that used by the Philistines and fitted it on David with the heavy bronze helmet. David girded his sword over his armour and tried to walk. But he found that his movement was greatly impeded by the unfamiliar apparel. He looked at the sword in his hand and threw it on the ground. He took off the armour piece by piece and threw them down also. "I cannot go with these" he said "for I have not tried them" (1 Samuel 17:39). "The Lord has no need of such weapons," he remarked. He was not accustomed to them. Instead he chose to rely on his proven familiar implements and his faith in God. Most likely the soldiers and King looked at this shepherd lad with increasing interest as he made his way down the hill side. They saw him pause and stoop as he crossed the brook at the bottom of the hill.

It is worthy to note that David specifically "chose five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand" (1 Samuel 17:40). David

did not just pick up any stones from the ground. He chose them very carefully as he knew they would have to fly through the air towards the giant. If the stones were flat, they would resist the wind and might deviate not striking the target at all. These stones were taken from the brook, they had been smoothed over time and were aerodynamically sound because the water was constantly moving over them.

David went onto the field of battle with only the tools of his shepherd's trade: his staff, sling and shepherd's bag. The shepherd's staff was an aid for the sheep, but in close quarters and in the hands of a skilled shepherd it could be easily used as both a defensive and offensive device. Nevertheless, this was the mark of his trade and he would not go into battle without it. The small bag usually draped over a shoulder carried daily provisions and probably his sling. He had not been equipped with anything else when he defended his flock against a lion and a bear (verse 34). That is why he carried only these into the battle.

The Philistine warriors looked on attentively as David crossed the intervening space, uncertain what the shepherd lad was doing between the armies. It was a little while before they realised that the lad was there to challenge their champion.

## Encounter with Goliath

As the Philistine champion approached, preceded by his shield bearer, he looked about for his adversary and then he saw David as only a small, ruddy lad. "He disdained him, for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance" (1 Samuel 17:42). Some challenge, he thought! A total mismatch from Goliath's viewpoint, it seemed so pitiful as to insult his dignity. "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods (1 Samuel 17:43). The rhetorical question of Goliath was, "Am I a dog?" This wording does assist the identification of the symbols, for dogs are elsewhere used to represent Gentiles, and Goliath represents the Gentile kingdoms (Matthew 15:26, Luke 16:21, Philippians 3:2, Revelation 22:15).



David and Goliath

When he approached within voice distance, Goliath mocked David "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field." (verse. 44). It is worthy to note that David did not immediately launch his stone at his foe, but first he delivered a message and then the stone (verses 44-49). The first part of the message stated his confidence in the God of the armies of Israel and a stronger weapon than that of any sword and spear.

David then delivered a prophecy that Goliath would be slain that very day and that his carcass would be given to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the earth. Finally, he declared this would be so that the nations may learn that God does not suffer Himself to be mocked but will take up the cause of his covenant people. "The battle is the Lord's and He will deliver you into our hands." After the message, David drew out only one of the smooth stones.

A sling and stone in the hands of a skilful shepherd is truly a lethal weapon. Many in the tribe of Benjamin could throw such sling stones to a hair's breadth we are told in (Judges 20:16). This stone hit its mark and Goliath reeled back and slowly collapsed in a heap. David's slung stone had struck him squarely above the eyes on the only unprotected part of his body. Since David did not have a sword he ran to the Philistine, drew Goliath's own sword and severed his head from his body. The Philistines were shocked at the sudden and unexpected fate of their champion. They took one look and ran in panic.

Goliath's taunts of 40 days had finally come to an end (1 Samuel 17:16). So often in Scripture a period of 40 represents a time of testing and trial. So here the 40 days of taunting may refer to the Gospel Age, during which the Gentile powers have proudly presented themselves as powerful defenders of the present order of Satan who is the prince of the world presently.

## Why Five Stones?

A question comes to mind if the selected five smooth stones have any significance? As if it is just incidental, then why record it so precisely in Scripture? After all, one stone completed the mission, so what then were the other four stones for? There are maybe two possibilities. The first is that they may represent the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch). Today these are known as the Torah. In David's time they were the bread of life and the word of God.

Certainly, David delivered his message with the confidence based on the records of these five books. Some notable examples and promises where God gave deliverance to his people are: Genesis 14:20, Exodus 14:14, Exodus 23:27, Deuteronomy 1:30, Deuteronomy 3:22. So it is a stone (a word) from the brook (of truth) that can smite the enemies of the Lord. While we are armed with the whole counsel of God, the right message at the right time will silence the oppressor.



## Goliath's Four Brothers

The second suggestion is that Goliath had four brothers. According to Israel's laws, blood vengeance was allowed by the family of the murdered. This is mentioned in several places in the Scriptures and detailed in Numbers 35:9-34. The act of revenge was most likely practiced also by the Philistines. So, if Goliath's brothers were to descend on David following Goliath's death, he had a single stone for each one of them also.

To determine that there were four next-of-kin involves a detailed examination of two scriptures. The first is 2 Samuel 21:15-22. The second is 1 Chronicles 20:4-8. In the 2 Samuel account there are four individuals listed as "born to the giant of Gath." We can deduce that this was Goliath's father, for one of them is assumed to be the brother of Goliath. The persons listed are: (1) Ishbibenob, (2) Saph, (3) "the brother of" (is supplied) Goliath, and (4) another unnamed son who had six fingers and toes on each extremity.

But there appears to be a copyist problem in verse 19. For if it is read that Elhanan slew Goliath the Gittite, then that would imply there were two giants named Goliath, or a mistake in saying he was slain by Elhanan instead of David. To reconcile this with 1 Chronicles we note that the translators supplied the added words: "the brother of Goliath."

As 1 Chronicles 20:5 clearly states that Elhanan "slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite." The brother's name is given in this verse. We also have on record the death of another unnamed giant with the six fingers and toes, apparently the same one that is recorded in 2 Samuel. So, we have three of the four brother's names. One of them is Lahmi, who is clearly identified as a brother of Goliath. Goliath whom David slew must have been the fifth brother, but having died first he was not listed among the four who were slain later.

Therefore, it is a reasonable assumption that David picked up just five smooth stones to account for Goliath and each of his four brothers should they seek to revenge. The beauty of such a proposition is that by faith David did not overstock his arsenal. He had but one stone for each of the enemies of God. He knew that each stone would be guided to its mark if necessary. However, in the record of 1 Samuel 17:49-50 we find that by just the first stone the enemies of God were scattered, and the Israelites prevailed.

The first lesson is that David drew stones of truth from the five books of the word of God to face his enemy. The second lesson is that David's faith was sufficient that each stone would be directed by God. So, we see in David a picture of the antitypical David, Christ at his second advent.

The word of truth is the weapon of our returned Lord. Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and

piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

## Goliath's Threat

Goliath's threat to David was, "I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field." David replied: And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD's" (1 Samuel 17:44-47). This wording is very suggestive of Revelation 19:17-21.

"Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid heaven, Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.

"And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

This last phrase of Revelation is precisely what David prophesied of Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:46. So we see in David the vindication and victory over the godless forces of our day that Christ brings to Israel, both natural and spiritual. There appears to be something prophetic regarding of the end of the age, in the account of David and Goliath.



*John on the isle of Patmos*

# We Will All Fall Asleep

*“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall all fall asleep, but we shall not all be changed, in a moment”  
(1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 RVIC).*

This is a familiar text, but the rendering above is a surprising one — surprising, in that it differs notably from the common version rendering. However, as the RVIC footnotes show, this reading is well attested.

Upon close inspection, it seems vital. The common version says “we shall not all sleep.” However, the Greek word for “sleep” here, *koiuethesometha*, means not a state of repose, as in sleep, but the act of falling into sleep — “fall asleep.” It is Strong’s word number, 2838, another form of the word *ekoimethe*, Strong’s number 2837, which was used to describe the death of Stephen in Acts 7:60, “he fell asleep.” This describes not the state of death, but the act of dying, falling into the sleep of death.

Thus, with the word “not” in the 1 Corinthians 15:51 phrase, before “all fall asleep,” Paul would be saying that not all the saints would die. That would fit nicely with the mistaken view of the rapture, and perhaps that is the reason the text was changed at some time, away from the original intent of Paul.

With the word “not” omitted in this phrase, Paul’s words affirm that all of the saints must die in the flesh in order to be raised to life in the spirit. A little reflection indicates that this text, in the original, before becoming corrupted, is unique. It is the only text in the New Testament that declaratively affirms that all of those called to a heavenly reward must die in the flesh, in order to receive their life in the spirit.

The word “not” does appear in the text, but not in the phrase discussed above. The word “not,” in the better manuscripts, appears in the next phrase: “we shall **not** all be changed in a moment.” Those who die after the return of Christ are changed “in the twinkling of an eye” when they die. But those who died long ago, before the return of Christ, required to rest in the sleep of death, awaiting the end of the age.

In 1 Corinthians 15:52, Paul used the word “raised” for those who died earlier and slept, awaiting the resurrection. He uses the word “changed” for those who remain until the return of Christ, and thereafter complete their course. “For the trumpet shall sound, and the **dead** shall be **raised** incorruptible, and **we** [the living who continue into the presence of Christ] shall be **changed**” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

That all the saints complete their course in death is consistent with Jesus’ promise in Revelation 2:10, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

## Augustine of Hippo

Of interest to us here is that this same understanding is reflected in one of the revered figures of Christian history, Augustine of Hippo. He was born on November 13, 354, and died on August 28, 430. He is the well known author of a Christian classic, *The City of God*. The Church had already slipped in doctrine by his day. But on this point, Augustine affirms the proper view.

This has been brought out in recent years by some studies by Br. Robert Virgil, of the San Francisco ecclesia. Following is an engaging piece from personal correspondence from Br. Virgil, above three years ago.

“Concerning Augustine’s view that it is necessary for all saints to die, even if they survive into the time of the Lord’s presence, see *The City of God*, Book XX, section 20. This reference system should work regardless of which edition you use.

“Augustine also uses the manuscript variation of 1 Corinthians 15:51 — “we shall all sleep” — and says, ‘not even the saints shall be quickened to immortality unless they first die, however briefly; and consequently they shall not be exempt from resurrection which is preceded by sleep, however brief.’

“On another subject, he has something to say about what you have been studying from the books of Samuel. In the same source, Book XVII, Sections 4 and 5, he comments that the deaths of Eli and his sons, and their replacement by Samuel, pictured the change in the priesthood from the Aaronic line to that of Christ. He even explains that the reason why Samuel was merely a Levite, but functioned as a priest (contrary to the Law) was to show the typical nature of the account. The real priest would be Christ Jesus.

“Augustine’s work is certainly a mixed bag. He is responsible for a false conception of individual predestination which was later picked up by Calvin. But, he also worked to develop the doctrine of “original sin,” which, if we do not use the term, is a vital part of present truth and helps us to explain the ransom.

“Brethren would do well to consider that truth can be gleaned, not just from the old Protestant commentators, but even from some Catholic sources. God was at work in the wheat field, even if it had been overgrown with tares.”



Augustine of Hippo



# Berean Bible Institute Inc.

*"They searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so"*

## Report of Activities 2018-2019

Once again, with the support of our Members, our Heavenly Father has blessed us by the continuance of the activities of the Berean Bible Institute Inc (BBI) to serve the Lord's people and to use any opportunities for public witness. The Institute maintains contact with Members, Brethren and the general public by means of the Peoples Paper and the provision of other Bible Student literature and the website [australianbiblestudents.org](http://australianbiblestudents.org)

The committee also moved to create an attractive new website. This also will be under the review of the editorial committee. The website was expanded to include the history of the Bible Student Movement worldwide, and the history of setting up the BBI in Australia, continuing the work begun by Br. C. T. Russell. One of the features included harkens back to the days of Br. Russell himself, namely: "To us the scriptures clearly teach." It will be familiar to brethren in many lands.

### Distribution of Printed Material and DVD

These items are distributed in response to requests to advertisements in the print media. It has been a busy year with requests coming from many countries of the world and most states in Australia. Several requests were received from people in New Zealand. Other countries include Papua New Guinea, Canada, England, United States of America, Portugal, Philippines and Nigeria. Those who request follow up booklets or information have their details passed on to the local ecclesia's.

We send a couple of booklets with the requests and wait for the person to respond. On several occasions we have then been able to provide a PDF so that a group could print the booklet locally. With modern technology many of the younger people prefer this as they can have the booklet on their phone to read. A total of 494 booklets were distributed during the year, 455 booklets in English, 37 in Chinese and 2 in Spanish. 4 set of *Studies in the Scriptures* were set out. 38 DVD's were sent out from requests including 16 sets of "Photodrama of Creation"

### Printing

Owing to the high cost of postage from the USA, it was decided to print some of the booklets locally. A new booklet, *Before Herzl There was Pastor Russell: A Neglected Chapter of Zionism*, was printed with permission of the author. This booklet was sent to

several Jewish Congregations together with a new booklet entitled "Israel's Prophetic Destiny"

### Website "[australianbiblestudents.org](http://australianbiblestudents.org)"

It was noted that the new website has generated increased interests for literature. It was noted that the searches from overseas include Canada, United Kingdom, France, New Zealand, Poland, Germany and USA. The good news is that people are spending time viewing the different pages. The average monthly views were 500.

## Financial Statement 1/10/2018-30/09/2019

### Income Categories

Convention .....	10,802.00
Donations .....	3,075.97
Interest .....	69.28
Investment Income Ing .....	4,508.73
Accrued Income Ing .....	4,535.35
Subscriptions .....	60.00
Total Income .....	<b>23,051.33</b>

### Expense Categories

Advertising .....	\$ 2,296.00
Book Purchases .....	0.00
Convention Expenses .....	12,038.50
Office Expenses .....	284.85
Post Box .....	135.00
Postage .....	3,537.57
Printing .....	1,494.99
Public Liability Insurance .....	1,370.34
Total Expense .....	<b>21,157.25</b>
Surplus / Loss .....	<b>\$ 1,894.08</b>

## Overseas Activities

The BBI acts as agents for the Dawn Bible Association, Pastoral Bible Institute, and the Bible Students Fellowship in England. Where needed the committee members aided these groups as well as for the Bible Resources (Chicago) in the distribution of *How to Study the Bible*. Literature was also provided to newly interested people in Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Philippines, Korea, and China.



## A New Service

A new service was offered to brethren that are spread throughout Australia and around the globe. It is an opportunity for brethren to join four online studies during the week (Friday Night, Saturday Morning and two studies on a Sunday). Five different Brethren take turns in leading the studies. The purpose is not to replace regular class meetings but to provide a

service to isolated brethren and small classes which use this service to supplement their meetings.

We give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the privilege of serving the brethren and the opportunity to bring glory to His name. We ask an interest in your prayers for the continuing work of the Institute.

*Berean Bible Institute Inc. Committee*

## Is Patience Your Friend And Constant Companion?

*“Faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13).*

**P**atience is one facet of love and an important one at that. When patience and love are combined it makes a powerful and beautiful combination.

Psalms 37:7 tells us, Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him. Verse nine of the same Psalm says, Those who wait on the Lord shall inherit the earth. This is indeed a wonderful promise. Will this be our future?

Being patient is not always easy. At times it can be hard, as it may apply toward others, but also even if nobody is around to see our actions and behavior. This may be even more difficult if one is in a hurry and little things are not going as we want or need them to go. As noted in 1 Peter 2:20, if ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

Are our actions acceptable to God?

When we are being tried and the trial includes a test of patience, do we thank God for the trial and ask Him to help us to be patient? If He does help us, do we rejoice and thank Him for His help?

The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 2:7 for those seeking to be with Christ in glory should observe and note that they who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor, and immortality, [shall receive] eternal life.

Thus, if we add patience to our lives, we will be more acceptable to others and to ourselves, as well as to God and Jesus. May the Lord guide us, and may He help add patience with persistence under his direction and care to His GLORY. Amen!

## “Oh, Who Shall Roll the Stone Away?”

A nameless chill pervaded all the air,  
On that gray morn, long centuries ago,  
As through the city's narrow streets there crept  
Two women on their way to Calvary.

The fragrant odors of sweet spices told  
Of their sad errand to the tomb of Him  
They loved. And as they neared the garden where  
Their blessed Lord was laid, a sudden fear  
Took hold upon their eager, loving hearts —  
The sepulchre was hewn from solid rock,  
A great stone had been rolled before the door,  
And sealed with Pilate's royal signature —  
They felt their weakness, and in anguish cried,  
“Oh, who shall roll for us the stone away?”

But faith grew bold, they urged their faltering steps —  
When lo! they found an Angel from the Lord  
*Had rolled away the stone, and sat thereon!*

Thus often, when with loving zeal we seek  
To serve the Lord, a great fear chills our hearts,  
The *door* of opportunity *seems closed*,  
And in our weakness and distress we cry,  
“Oh, who shall roll for us the stone away?”  
But when with faith and courage we press on

*We find the Angel of the Lord hath gone  
Before, and lo! the stone is rolled away!*

POW91

## Contacts

### **Berean Bible Institute, Inc.**

is the contact for the following organizations:

### **Dawn Bible Students Association**

Publisher of "The Dawn" Magazine  
[dawnbible.com/content.htm](http://dawnbible.com/content.htm)

### **Pastoral Bible Institute**

Publisher of "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom"  
[herald-magazine.com/](http://herald-magazine.com/)

### **Bible Fellowship Union**

Publisher of the "Bible Study Monthly"  
[www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk](http://www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk)

## **Peoples Paper and Herald of Christ's Kingdom**

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### **Editorial Committee**

Ray Charlton, Adam Kopczyk, Richard Tazzyman

*While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the discourses reported.*

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PO Box 402, Rosanna 3084

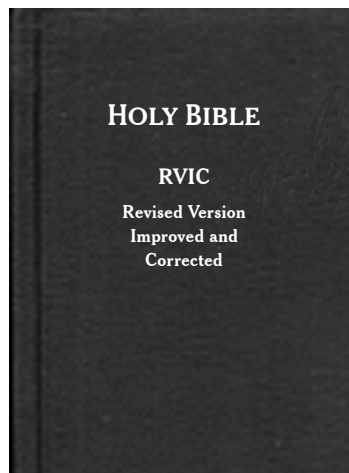
## **The Bible Teachings**

On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering and Atonement.

This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute during the 1970's and set out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the next part of this 274-page book. For Brethren who would like to read more of the content it is available through the Berean Bible Institute's official webpage.

[www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf](http://www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf)

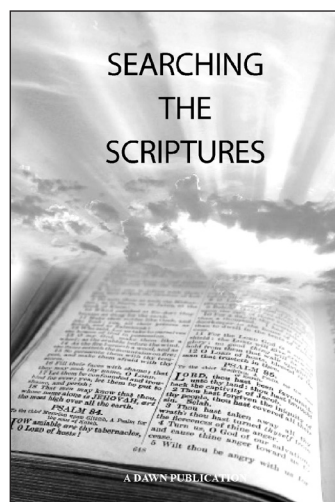
## New Bible Available



### **Revised Version Improved and Corrected**

Why another Bible? The ideal translation of the Bible should accurately preserve the words and thoughts expressed in the original language; it should also be understandable and in as familiar

wording as accuracy allows. This Bible has many footnotes explaining why the translators have made changes to the text which makes it an excellent study Bible. The Bible has been sent to the printer and should be available in May 2020. If you interested in more information, contact the BBI Inc.



## **Free Book Offer**

### **Searching the Scriptures**

This 350-page book examines the power of the scriptures in bringing forth God's wonderful plan of the ages in simplicity and in truth.

## The Date of Memorial

**Tuesday 7th April 2020 (14 Nisan) after 6 pm**

For details on locations where the memorial will be held in Australia, email [enquirybbi@gmail.com](mailto:enquirybbi@gmail.com)

If you are isolated or unable to attend in person, you can contact the Berean Bible Institute for a Memorial Kit that will be provided free of charge.



## Conventions

### **Sydney Bible Students Convention**

May 8-10, 2020

For more information, Email —  
[australianbiblestudents@gmail.com](mailto:australianbiblestudents@gmail.com)

### **Alexandra Headlands Convention**

September 25-27, 2020

For more information  
Email: [darryngreenhalgh@hotmail.com](mailto:darryngreenhalgh@hotmail.com)

# The Bible Teachings (Part Six)

*On the Covenants — Mediator — Ransom — Sin Offering — Atonement*

*Berean Series of Bible Studies • Berean Bible Institute • PO Box 402, Rosanna, Australia 3094*

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## **Scriptures Leave No Doubt About Church Sharing Jesus' "Cup"**

However, some may oppose this and claim that we do not drink, do not partake of the sufferings of Christ, the Scriptures leave no doubt about the matter. They declare of the symbolic Cup that Jesus, after He had supped, gave it to His disciples, saying, "Drink ye all of it" — not only must all partake of my Cup who would be my disciples, but drink all of it, leave none of it. The drinking of the Lord's cup, the sharing of His sacrifice, must all be accomplished during this Gospel Age; none of it is to be left for the future. There will be no sufferings of Christ during the Millennium; there will be no drinking of this Cup. By that time "the glory to follow" will have been ushered in, and under the reign of righteousness thus instituted there will be no sufferings for righteousness' sake, but only for evil doing, because the reign of righteousness will have commenced.

## **Sharing Christ's Glory Depends Upon Sharing His "Cup"**

Let us remember, moreover, the Lord's words to the other disciples who made special request that they might sit with Him on His throne, the one on His right hand and the other on His left. He said, "Ye know not what ye ask; can ye drink of the Cup that I drink of?" Only those who drink of His Cup may sit with Him in His throne; only those who share in the sufferings of Christ will share in His glory, honour and immortality; only those who are thus partakers with Him are members of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, through which the blessings will pass to the Natural Seed in due time, and through them to all the families of the earth. "If we be Christ's (His disciples indeed), then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs according to the promise" — according to the highest feature of that promise, the spiritual feature (Galatians 3:29).

## **"Mercy Through Your Mercy"**

We have already shown from the Scriptures that it is part of the Divine program that the natural seed of Abraham shall receive its blessings through the Spiritual Seed — Messiah, the Head and Church His Body. We have already shown that this Great One is to be the Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant, which will bring to Israel actually the blessings hoped for under the old law Covenant, of which Moses was the mediator. We have seen how and why this Spiritual Messiah, Head and Body, will be able to do for Israel and all who come under that New (Law) Covenant far better things than Moses, mediator of the old

law Covenant could do. We have seen that the New Mediator has something to present to Justice on behalf of Israel — something to give to Israel; namely, earthly blessings, earthly rights, earthly restitution to all that was lost in Adam. We see that these were secured by Jesus through keeping the law; that He surrendered them, or sacrificed them in His obedient death, and that He gave them to the household of faith during this Gospel Age on condition that these earthly blessings should not be retained but sacrificed by all whom He would accept as members. How we see that it is these same earthly blessings that are to be dispensed during the Millennial Age, first to Israel and, secondly, to all people under the New (Law) Covenant.

## **All Israel Shall Be Saved**

Notice how the Apostle Paul states this matter clearly, and concisely in few words in Romans 11:25-36. There he tells us that we should think not of Israel as being cast off forever, but merely disfavoured of God for a limited period — during the time of the calling, approving and acceptance of the elect number of spiritual Israel, whose first members were gathered from the Jewish nation and whose completeness is to be made up from amongst the Gentiles. He tells us that when this elect number of Spiritual Israel is complete, God's favour will return to Natural Israel, "Jacob," and then "All Israel shall be saved" — recovered from the blindness and stumbling which came upon them when God thrust them aside until first Spiritual Israel should be gathered. The Apostle explains that then God will fulfil His promise to Israel: "For this is my Covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Thus, the Apostle shows that the New (Law) Covenant promised to Israel, in which their sins will be cancelled and remembered no more, comes at the close of the Gospel Age and not at its beginning.

## **The Deliverer Must Be Born**

The Apostle explains (verse 26) that before the New (Law) Covenant with Israel could become effective the Deliverer must come out of Zion; for it will be He that shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Zion is another name for the New Jerusalem, of which the Apostle says, she is the mother of us all. Zion was typically represented in Sarah, Abraham's wife, who was the mother of Isaac. Isaac was a type of Christ — of Jesus the Head and the Church His Body; as the Apostle declared, "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise" — the Seed of Abraham (Galatians 4:28). Zion was again typified by Rachel, Jacob's wife, and the two classes of the Church were represented in her two sons, the first of whom, Joseph, was a child



of promise, the second the child of tribulation—Benjamin. Joseph, who came to the throne of Egypt through much tribulation, typified the Christ, Head and Body. Benjamin, his brother, born of the same mother, the same Covenant, did not reach the throne, but typified the “great company” class, who will have a special relationship and nearness to the Deliverer. Benjamin’s name, “Son of my pain” (Benoni), shows his identity with the “great company”; his mother died in the travail of his birth.

This is again expressed by the prophecy which says, “Before she (Zion) travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? 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. Shall I bring to birth (the Head) and not cause to bring forth? (the Body)” (Isaiah 66:7-9).

### **Entire Gospel Age Required for Birth of Great Deliverer**

Zion brought forth the Lord, the Head of the Church, the Head of the Great Deliverer, eighteen centuries ago. Very shortly all the members of His Body will come forth, similarly born from the dead in the “first resurrection.” “Thus shall a nation be born at once to the spirit plane, “a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a Peculiar People” distinctly separate from all others of God’s creatures, partakers of the divine nature, higher than angels and men. Then in a great time of trouble the “Great Company” will be born to the spirit plane, though not to the throne and not to the divine nature. Thus, the spiritual children of Zion will be complete, and the blessing will turn to natural Israel.

### **Israel to be Blessed by Deliverer With Great Company as Servants**

The Deliverer born out of Zion, the Christ with the “Great Company” as servants or ministers of the great God, shall begin the work of blessing “Jacob” — natural Israel.

Discerning these things, it is for all who have named the name of Christ, for all who have been accepted as members of His Body and inducted into this “mystery,” to be earnest, to be zealous, in making their calling and election sure, that they may not only come into the Body of Christ, but by obedience to the instructions of the Head they may abide in Him and grow in grace and in His character likeness, and be prepared for birth to the plane of glory, that they may have a share in the work of the Kingdom, making effective to Israel and to the world the New (Law) Covenant for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

### **They Are Not All Israelites**

The blessings of the New (Law) Covenant are distinctly shown to be Israelitish. But this will not hinder these blessings from extending to all nations and peoples and kindreds and tongues. By circumcision of the heart, all who will may come into the Holy Nation which Israel will then be. Thus, it is

written in the prophets, “The law shall go forth of Zion (the heavenly Kingdom), and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (the earthly phase of the Kingdom). “And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths” (Micah 4:2). Thus, all through the Millennial Age Abraham’s Seed will be increasing, in harmony with the prophecy, “I have constituted thee a father of many nations.”

### **Faith Necessary for Blessing Under New Covenant**

But it would be a mistake for us to suppose that God’s blessing under the New (Law) Covenant will come to the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, merely along fleshly lines. On the contrary, we are to suppose that the blessing of the New Covenant will apply first to Abraham and his natural seed who had his characteristics of faith and obedience, and who were developed or proved in the past. St. Paul refers to these, saying, “These all died in faith, without having received the things promised them, God having provided some better thing for us (the Church, Spiritual Israel), that they without us should not be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:40).

### **Blessings of New Covenant to Ancient Worthies First**

“They shall obtain mercy through your mercy,” as the Apostle explains (Romans 11:31). It will, of course, be God’s mercy, but through Jesus Christ, and it will of course be of Christ Jesus, but through the Church—“your mercy.” Thus, will the blessings of God be passed on. The blessings coming to the Ancient Worthies will not be for themselves alone but be passed on by them in turn to all who will come to the faith and obedience of Abraham. Undoubtedly at first this class of faithful ones will consist chiefly of the natural Israelites, but later, as we have shown, it will consist of many people, of many tongues, and of many nationalities. All of these, enlightened by the great Son of righteousness, will be brought to know the great Messiah, and to understand the principles of righteousness involved in the laws of the great Jehovah. These the new Mediator will most clearly set forth to all, until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess and “the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the water covers the great deep, and until there shall be no need for any to say to the neighbour or to the brother, Know thou the Lord, because all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.”

### **The Necessity for the New Covenant**

If the Abrahamic Covenant was all-comprehensive, and included all the blessings which God intended, why was it necessary or expedient to add either the old law Covenant or the New (Law) Covenant? We have already considered the value of the old law Covenant as an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant, hence now we confine ourselves to the consideration of the advantage gained by the addition of the New (Law) Covenant.

## **Faith Like Abraham's Is necessary**

When we read that "Without faith it is impossible to please God," and that Abraham pleased God by reason of his faith, we may know assuredly that none could be acceptable to God as Abraham's seed except such as had similar faith to his. Additionally, as God tested Abraham's faith, and obliged him to prove it by works of obedience, so we may be sure it would be with all who ever will be acceptable to God — that as Abraham's seed they also should have faith attested by works.

## **A Little Flock**

The comparatively few who exercised faith, and wrought righteousness in harmony therewith, up to the time of Christ, are reviewed by the Apostle in Hebrews 11. These were few indeed as compared with the millions of their time. These alone, therefore, could be counted as participants in God's favour because of Abrahamic faith and obedience. During the Gospel Age a similarly small class has been gathered out of every nation, people, kindred and tongue — called by the Gospel message, and tried and proved by the narrowness of the way of obedience. These consecrated ones, and no others, of this age could be acceptable to God for His blessing of eternal life, because these alone manifested the faith and the obedience exemplified in Abraham.

## **Result If Christ's Work Had Been Limited to Gospel Age**

So, then, we see that if Christ, after redeeming the world, had merely sought out of it such as could exercise Abrahamic faith and obedience, and had blessed these with eternal life, the sum total of His work would have been comparatively small. He would have been on the spiritual plane and the others would have received from Him the blessing of restitution, and nothing more.

## **Length and Breadth**

But note the breadth and length and height and depth of the Divine Wisdom and Grace, which provided a more stupendous plan. Under its provision the "Little Flock" becomes joint heirs with Christ in the heavenly Kingdom as the Royal Priesthood, and the "Great Company" become the spiritual assistants of that Priesthood — the antitypical Levites. And, additionally, by the New Covenant arrangement the great Prophet, Priest, King, Judge, becomes the Mediator between God and the world of mankind in general. He will not deal with them merely on the basis of faith, because in their fallen condition few indeed could be benefited thereby, because few could exercise the necessary faith and obedience. Indeed, as we have seen, the majority of those capable of exercising faith and obedience have already been found. The New Covenant takes over Israel through the Ancient Worthies and incidentally all of that nation and all of every nation willing, under the enlightening influences of the Millennial Kingdom, to come into accord with the Mediator and to be taught

of Him. He will enforce obedience, to the intent that the fallen and degraded members of the race may learn what righteousness is and what justice and love are. He will exemplify to them the rewards of obedience and the penalties of disobedience, that they may learn the benefit of righteousness— and all come to a knowledge of God, not by faith merely, but by demonstrations. It will be after the Millennial Kingdom shall have lifted mankind out of degradation and sin, out of imperfection of mind and morals, that their final testing will come.

## **God's Law Will Stand Forever**

God's law will stand forever. Only the willing and obedient will be partakers of the grace of life eternal; all others will die the "Second Death." But we have every reason to believe that as a result of the Millennial Kingdom, the reign of righteousness, the restitution work, the enlightenment of mankind, the bringing of all to a knowledge of the Truth, many will learn righteousness and become servants thereof, and in full accord with the Divine Law; come to love God with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their being, with all their strength, and their neighbour as themselves.

## **Value of the New Covenant**

Thus, we see how much more can be accomplished by the Seed of Abraham, the Christ, Head and Body, through the method adopted by the dealing of the New (Law) Covenant, and the establishment of the Kingdom, than could have been accomplished without the New Covenant, under the Abrahamic Covenant alone with its terms of faith and obedience.

## **Apostle Paul Enthusiastic Over God's Plan**

Is it any wonder that after having pictured this matter of the rejection of natural Israel, the gathering of spiritual Israel, and the subsequent giving of God's blessings, through Spiritual Israel to reclaim natural Israel, the Apostle should become enthusiastic? Is it any wonder that he concludes with the exclamation, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Who knew of this wonderful, deep, hidden plan of Jehovah? Who counselled Him to make it thus? The Apostle's conclusion is that such depths of wisdom and knowledge and grace prove that the plan of God is superhuman; that no man ever thought out this plan. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than man's ways! Of Him, and through Him, and by Him, are all these things and to Him be glory forever (Z1909, 243).

## **ANCIENT WORTHIES UNDER FAITH COVENANT**

The question may arise, under what Covenant are the Ancient Worthies acceptable with God? Since they died before Christ and the opportunities of spiritual begetting, they were not favoured with the high calling to membership in the Body of Christ, the elect Church. This the Apostle emphasized in Hebrews 11:39,40.

He informs us that they “pleased God,” but that apart from us, The Christ, they shall not be made perfect. In the Divine order the Church is to be the first fruits of God’s creatures. “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures” (James 1:18). Notice further that the Apostle’s list of these includes Abel and Enoch, before the flood, and before even the Abrahamic Covenant was made. It also includes some who lived during the period of the law Covenant, and who were therefore under it. How, then, should we classify these, as respects the three great Covenants, represented by Sarah, Hagar and Keturah?

### **Distinction Between Abrahamic and Law Covenants**

The matter becomes very simple when we recognise the prime distinction between the Abrahamic Covenant and the law Covenant that was added to it. The first was of faith, not without works. The second was of works, not without faith. As the Apostle says, the conditions of the law Covenant were, “He that doeth these things shall live by them” (Romans 10:5). We are also reminded that the Sarah Covenant is of faith and not of works, but that where the faith is right, the works will “attest” the faith, even though they be not perfect; and that if judged by our works we would be condemned. The entire Jewish nation failed in the Covenant of “works of the law;” yet a few individuals of that nation, rising by their faith superior to that Covenant, trusted not in it, but to the original Covenant of Mercy, Grace— the Sarah Covenant. These are the Ancient Worthies mentioned by the Apostle. He specifies that it was by faith they did and endured. According to their works they were condemned by the law Covenant, but according to their faith they were acceptable to God, along the lines of the Sarah Covenant, even though they could not receive their blessing under it, until first the promised Seed should come and the blood of that Covenant be shed. Similarly, Enoch and Abel, because of their faith, were acceptable to God and listed with the faithful of the law Covenant, as in Divine favour, and subject to the blessing of the Sarah Covenant, because, although they lived before Abraham, they trusted God for the grace which He is willing to bestow upon those who love Him and seek His favour.

### **New Covenant a NEW Law Covenant**

The New Covenant will really be a New Law Covenant, or a New Covenant of works of the law. The old or first law Covenant was faulty and insufficient for Israel, not because the Divine law upon which it was based was faulty, nor because it was an unreasonable demand, but because men were imperfect, “born in sin and shapen in iniquity,” and already under a death sentence, because of Adam’s transgression. The law Covenant had in Moses a faithful mediator, loyal both to God and to the Israelites, but he was incapable

because his own life was forfeited. God has made provision, therefore, that a New Law Covenant take the place of the Old, and has provided a New Mediator, who has already given His life as a redemption price — Jesus, the Head, and the Church, the Body.

The finish of the sacrifice is in sight. The Head and many of His members have already, as New Creatures, passed beyond the veil. Soon the last member of the Body will have been thus “changed” and then the blood of the New Covenant will be sprinkled on behalf of “the sins of all the people” — the people of the Covenant, Israel, with an open door for all peoples to become sharers of their New Covenant blessings, even as we (Gentiles) are now privileged to share the Sarah Covenant blessings which belonged “to the Jew first.” That sprinkling will be acceptable to God and efficacious for the blotting out of the sins of the whole world. This is abundantly attested in the Scriptures and in the types of these “better sacrifices” (Hebrews 9:23).

### **Great Prophet, Priest, Judge, King — Head and Members Cooperate**

Forthwith the Great Prophet, Head and members; the Great Priest, Head and members; the Great Judge, Head and members; the Great King, Head and members, will begin dealing with Israel and through Israel with the world. They will rule, bless, instruct and uplift so many as are willing, “And it shall come to pass that every soul that will not hearken to that Prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23). The New Law Covenant will operate exactly as the Old Law Covenant did, except that the “better sacrifices” sealing it will be fully efficacious, and not need to be repeated from year to year; and the power and glory of its Mediator will be superior, and the results of His works correspondingly great and lasting.

### **New Covenant a Covenant of Works**

This is testified to additionally by the statement of Revelation, which pictures the Millennial epoch, with its great white throne of justice and mercy, before which all the dead, small and great, will stand — for trial; not to see whether they were sinners or not, for that is conceded. All were sinners. Nor will it be to see whether or not God is willing to forgive them, for that is conceded — the sacrifice of Christ will then have been accepted as a full “satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.” Their judgment or trial, like ours, will be to determine whether or not they will come into fullest harmony with God, and have His blessing of joy and eternal life, or, otherwise, be “destroyed from amongst the people.” They will not be judged according to their faith, because they will be under the New Covenant of law and works. As it is written, “They were judged every man, according to their works” (Revelation 20:13).





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## The Angelophone (Angelico) Records

*An Innovation in its time*

With the success of the Photo Drama of Creation it was realized that records were now becoming very popular, so popular in fact that it appears that the Watchtower (IBSA) could not get enough phonograph players from their suppliers for the Brethren to play the records from the Photo Drama.

To overcome the shortage of phonograph players following the release of The Eureka Drama (a scaled down version of the Photo Drama of Creation which combined recordings and slides that could be used in smaller areas and in brethren's homes), the IBSA made an arrangement with the brothers who had formed the "Angelophone Phonogram and Recording company" to supply players and recordings.

The first mention of it was in Zions Watchtower July 15, 1916 (not long before Brother Russell's Death). There were three models available at below wholesale prices: The ACME model, retailed for \$25.00 (USD), wholesale \$12.50, with a special price for the Brethren of \$8.33. The top of the range model was the Cabinet Model, retail \$100 (USD), wholesale \$50.00, and special price for brethren (Watchtower readers) of \$33.33 (R5914).

Recordings of hymns and a special hymn book later became available, but this was not until after Brother Russell's death. In the Watchtower of November 1, 1916 (the same issue that announced Brother Russell's death, R5988), these records were advertised, 50 hymns on 50 records. Also released was the music in a book format called Old Fireside Hymns.

These Recordings were sung by the Renowned Baritone "Henry Burr." On the flip side there were two minute discourses given by Brother Russell explaining each hymn. On the right-hand pages of the book were the words and music, while on the left-hand pages, was the text of the short discourses given by Brother Russell. Henry Burr (1882-1941) was a Canadian singer of popular songs from the 20th

century and an early radio performer. His birth name was Harry McClaskey, Henry Burr was one of his pseudonyms.

One thing to note was mentioned in the Watchtower of December 15, 1917: although the society was not financially involved in the manufacture of these Phonograms, they still worked with the owners (brethren) and the Society was still responsible in financing the production of the 50 Record Set. The WTBS seemed to have discontinued the sale/promotion of these Phonograms and recordings by sometime in 1919. You can still purchase these recordings and Hymn books on the Internet from collectors, although none of the records are legible to play and certainly are indecipherable.

### Example of One of the Sermons

*AH50, "A Thousand Years! Earth's Coming Glory!"*

MESSIAH'S Kingdom repeatedly referred to throughout the Old Testament was the center of all Jewish hopes. But the fact that it will last a thousand years was not mentioned: it was merely Messiah's Day. The Holy Spirit by St. Peter first declared, "A day with the Lord is as a thousand years." St. Paul

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did not mention the thousand years, but merely proclaimed Messiah's Kingdom, and that He would reign victoriously until He shall have put down all opposition to God's will (1 Corinthians 15:25). It is in the book of Revelation that we have the clear statements that Messiah will reign for a thousand years; that His faithful Bride will reign with Him, a "Royal Priesthood"; that during that thousand years Satan will be bound and the whole world will be granted a judgment or trial, whose results will be life-eternal or death-eternal.

Another picture of the thousand years represents Messiah's glorious Reign of Righteousness as a White Judgment Throne, pure, righteous, benevolent, before which will be gathered all people, to the intent that all who will demonstrate their love for righteousness and truth may be uplifted out of sin and death and brought



while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the faithful of the Prophets down to John the Baptist will be the earthly rulers (Matthew 11:11). The call of Spiritual Israelites to joint-heirship with Jesus in His Spiritual Kingdom belongs to this Gospel Age only. The Church's change of nature from human to Divine begins with the begetting of the Holy Spirit and will be completed in the resurrection change. St. Paul explains this and declares, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 15:50). He also tells us that the earthly rulers of the

future cannot be perfected until after the Church's resurrection (Hebrews 11:38-40). So also, Jesus declared, that the least one in the Kingdom would be greater than John the Baptist, the greatest of the Prophets (Matthew 11:11).

Bible chronology shows that we have been in the great Seventh Day, or Thousand-Year Sabbath, for now forty-four years. This period is called the Millennial Dawn. Nearly all the inventions that make our day so wonderful have come to light during this dawning time. The Bible tells that, while a dark cloud will supervene — "a Time of Trouble such as never was" — nevertheless speedily thereafter the glorious Kingdom of Messiah will, like a sunburst, enlighten and bless all the families of the earth (Galatians 3:29, Matthew 13:43, 24:15-21).



back to full harmony with God and to everlasting life (Revelation 20). While the Jews, according to their light, looked forward to Messiah's Kingdom as an earthly one, in which every man would "sit under his own vine and fig tree," and "the wilderness would blossom as the rose," and God's footstool be made glorious — the Church, on the contrary, was given a different, a spiritual conception, of the Kingdom.

We see the propriety of this: Messiah's Kingdom is to be of two parts, the spiritual, which will be invisible to men, but all-powerful; and the earthly, which will be visible to men. Christ and his faithful followers, His Bride, will constitute the spiritual Kingdom;



## Viruses, Wars, and Threats of Extinction

*"Men fainting [expiring] for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world [the inhabited earth]" (Luke 21:26, Revised Version Improved and Corrected).*

According to Johns Hopkins University Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response, the virus known as COVID-19 first appeared in Wuhan, a city in China, in December 2019. Although health officials are still tracing (as of the beginning of April) the exact source of this new coronavirus, early hypotheses thought it may be linked to a seafood market in Wuhan, China. However, a study conducted

in late January noted that the first reported case on December 1, 2019, appeared in an individual who had no link to the seafood market. Investigations are ongoing as to how this virus originated and spread.

While coronaviruses are common in different animals, it is rare that an animal coronavirus can infect humans. These types of viruses can cause colds or other mild respiratory (nose, throat, lung) illnesses.

They also can cause serious diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). COVID-19 is thought to be more like SARS. In 2003, an outbreak of SARS started in China and spread to more than two dozen countries before ending in 2004. The World Health Organization (WHO) listed 8,098 people worldwide who became sick with SARS during the 2003 outbreak. Of these, 774 (9.6%) died.

SARS and COVID-19 illustrate how a disease within a country (mostly in Africa or Asia) can easily spread and grow into a pandemic — an epidemic of infectious disease that spreads through human populations across multiple continents or even worldwide.

## Pandemics in History

The archaeological site now called “Hamin Mangha” is one of the best-preserved prehistoric (5,000 years ago) sites in northeastern China. Archaeological and anthropological study indicates that an epidemic happened so quickly that there was no time for proper burials, and the site was not inhabited again. The bodies of the dead were stuffed inside a house that was later burned down. No age group was spared, as the skeletons of juveniles, young adults, and middle-age people were found inside the house.

The first recorded pandemic, the Justinian Plague, came in the sixth century. Eight centuries later came the Black Plague pandemic. Both plagues were likely spread by fleas living on infected rats coming into human contact (bubonic plague). Fifty to seventy million people died of the three-century long Black Death. Multiple pogroms and massacres against minority groups, especially Jews, were launched by those ignorant of the true source of the plagues.

Smallpox, cholera, and bubonic plague became worldwide diseases in the 19th century until English physician John Snow mapped houses in London that were affected by a cholera outbreak. His work showed that the disease developed in, and was spread by, contaminated water.

Some historians cite the so-called Spanish Flu pandemic in the early 20th century as the most significant contribution to ending World War I. According to the American Center for Disease Control, the influenza pandemic infected one-third of the world population of 1.6 billion and killed over 100 million.

By the middle of the 20th century, many diseases which had caused these pandemics were no longer a threat due to significant advances in knowledge: Edward Jenner developed a vaccine against smallpox; rats and mosquitoes were controlled; and public sanitation was improved. No single discovery was as significant in fighting infectious diseases as penicillin.

Unfortunately, this ease of prevention led to complacency in world preparation against such things as coronaviruses, claims Professor Susan Craddock from the Institute for Global Studies at the University of Minnesota and author of *Diseases: Emerging Infections in the Global City*. With 80 percent of one-year olds in the world now vaccinated, most parents have never see their child struggling to breathe through whooping cough or unable to walk when polio struck.. As an example, when the Soviet Union dissolved, Russia’s healthcare systems deteriorated, including the national immunization program. The country soon experienced a serious epidemic of diphtheria that lasted for years.

## Post-Coronavirus World Trends

The International Crisis Group ([www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org)) works independently to prevent wars and shape policies that “will build a more peaceful world.” The group’s website cautions: “While the COVID-19 pandemic presents a potentially era-defining challenge to public health and the global economy, its **long- and short-term consequences for deadly conflict are less well understood.**”

Henry Kissinger, former U.S. Secretary of State and former National Security Adviser, recently wrote: “The founding legend of modern government is a walled city protected by powerful rulers, sometimes despotic, other times benevolent, yet always strong enough to protect the people from an external enemy. ... As the world emerges from the current crisis, the effort to overcome the effects of COVID-19 plague will require restraint on all sides — in both domestic politics and international diplomacy ... Failure could set the world on fire.”

Since the last ISIS strongholds in Syria fell in early 2019, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a Kurdish-led militia that partnered with the U.S.-led coalition, has largely been left to deal with tens of thousands of ISIS detainees and affiliated family members. Many of the detainees’ home countries refuse to take them back. Humanitarian workers describe these sites as ridden with tuberculosis and perilously overcrowded,

with one speaking of “dramatic mortality rates.” This shows how the global outbreak has the potential to wreak world havoc, trigger widespread unrest, and severely test international relations.

According to the Crisis Group, five dangerous trends could arise as the pandemic wanes:

(1) Vulnerable populations in war areas may be unable to get relief (Libya, Venezuela, Iran, Gaza, Guinea, Yemen).

(2) The reduced capacity of international institutions to relieve populations in conflict areas due to the need for domestic spending (Middle East, West Africa, China).



Henry Kissinger



(3) Social Order disruptions emerging from ongoing health-care concerns, xenophobic sentiment against immigrants, and bias against ethnic groups, e.g. the “Chinese” virus or the Islamic Republic “biological aggression.”

(4) Political Exploitation by despotic governments, jihadist groups, and human rights abuses.

(5) Major Power relations as the global systems realign in areas such as supply chains, humanitarian aid, and sharing of technical cooperation.

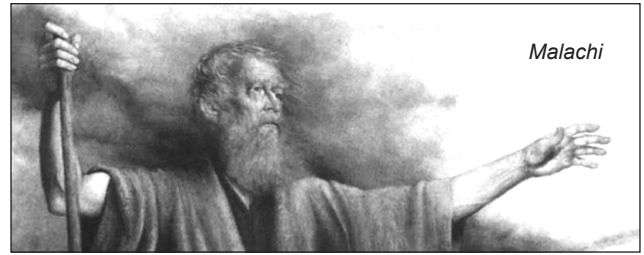
This pandemic has the potential to be long and especially draining on world resources. At this writing we are just beginning to see the impact on unemployment, health care, and other key parts of society. How long and how costly will it be? And when will the next such crisis come?

## No More Pain

The Bible pictures Jehovah as a Great Physician who cures from disease: “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Psalms 103:3). The Prophet Isaiah foretold a time when “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity” (Isaiah 33:24). “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” (Isaiah 35:5, 6).

Pestilences are the natural consequences of sin and the death sentence passed upon Adam and his progeny. Those who received the benefits of Jesus’ miracles and were healed of their afflictions eventually died. It was not yet time for these miracles to bring eternal blessings. They did, however, offer insight into the miraculous power that will be used on behalf of all people in Jehovah’s kingdom.

Jehovah justly pronounced the curse of death upon mankind. But He intends to remove the curse eventually: “There shall be no more curse” (Revelation 22:3). This is guaranteed through the ransom price provided by Jesus. During this age, the benefits of Jesus’ death accrue only to those invited to share in his sufferings as an offering for sin. When this group, his bride (Revelation 17:7-9) is complete, there will no need to sustain this present evil world (Galatians 1:4) and attendant sickness, pain, and death. God will reverse these conditions in his kingdom, as described in Revelation 21:4: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” The Apostle Paul says that the reign of Christ and his Church will continue until it has destroyed not only sickness, but death itself. “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:25, 26). The destruction of death must include the demise of disease as well.



The signs we see on earth today indicate that the promised time of deliverance of the world from sin and death is near. The Prophet Malachi foretells that the Great Physician, “the Sun of righteousness [shall] arise with healing in his wings,” and he connects it in time to the day of the Lord, or the day of Jehovah. He says, “Behold, the day [of Jehovah] cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:1, 2).

Jesus said that this day of the Lord (Jehovah), known also as a “time of trouble such as never was” (Daniel 12:1), marks the end of the age, but not the end of the world (Matthew 24:3, 21). The current experience with the Coronavirus is one more sign that we are now in this foretold time of trouble and of the end of the age. Soon, the healing kingdom of Christ will be established in the earth. All who are in their graves will be raised and given an opportunity for life without disease, without death (John 5:28, 29). All mankind will be granted free access to the one and only true fountain of youth: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). To this unmatched promise the great and gracious God of the universe has set his personal seal. “And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Revelation 21:5).

No matter how much we see the world’s lack of progress in fixing itself, we can know the final outcome. Others tremble, we should not. The phrase “do not be afraid” appears 365 times in the Bible. It is a daily reminder to us to live without fear. As long as Jehovah permits things to continue, let us be ambassadors for Christ in every aspect of our lives (2 Corinthians 5:20):

- Maintain high personal integrity
  - Be alert to the dignity of others
  - Be objective in our judgments
  - Be independent from the world in our thinking (based on Biblical principles)
  - Focus on the character development of others
  - Be sympathetic to the major problems of today
- “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10)!

# John McClintock (1814-1870)

*A Christian Scholar*

John McClintock was born on 27th October 1814 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His parents, John McClintock and Martha McMackin, were immigrants from Scotland. He started out working in his father's bookstore, then in 1830 he left his family and moved to New York to take a job as a bookkeeper at the Methodist Book Concern. It was at this time that he converted to Methodism and became interested in becoming a minister.

He began his studies at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, however ill health caused him to abandon his studies in his first year. He returned home to Philadelphia and in 1832 recommenced his studies at the University of Pennsylvania. In his zeal he completed four years' worth of studies in just three, graduating with high honors in 1835. Upon completing his studies, he had a brief role as a Methodist Pastor in a small church in Jersey City, New Jersey. He left this position due to severe problems with his throat, which affected him for the rest of his life.

In 1836 he moved to Carlisle, Pennsylvania to take up work as an assistant professor of Mathematics at Dickson College. He remained there till 1848, during which time he became the Professor of Mathematics in 1837 and then Professor of Latin and Greek in 1840. He continued to do some preaching at this time when his throat would manage it and began to protest against slavery and the Mexican War.

In his personal life at this time he married Caroline Augusta Wakeman in 1836 and had two children, Emory and Augusta. He was arrested for instigating a riot over slavery in 1847. This riot enabled the rescue of many runaway slaves, the trial attracted a lot of attention, and led to him being acquitted. He remained at Dickson college for one more year after this before resigning to take the role of editor for the Methodist Quarterly Review. Despite leaving Dickson College he remained on good terms with them and served as a trustee from 1849-1859.

He remained in his role as editor till 1856 during which time he brought a high intellectual quality to the publication, particularly with his introducing essays discussing the works of the French Positivist Philosopher Auguste Comte, whose beliefs focused on recognizing only what could be proven by science. McClintock believed that whilst his science was very sound, that it showed that science was limited in what answers it

could give for human questions, which left a gap that only religion could fill. His essays actually gained the attention and respect of Comte and they ended up forming an unlikely connection. In 1850 his wife Caroline passed away and in 1851 he married Catherine Wilkins Stevenson Emory. Together they had one daughter, Anne, in 1859.

He was offered the Presidency of Wesleyan University in 1851, which he turned down, and Troy University in 1855, which he also declined, preferring to remain in his role as editor. In 1856 he left that role and became the Pastor of St. Paul's Methodist Church in New York. From there, in 1860, he moved to Paris where he was Pastor of the American Chapel, remaining there until 1864. However, in 1867, at the request of Daniel Drew, the founder of Drew Theological Seminary, he became the first President of what would eventually become Drew University, in Madison New Jersey. One of the first things he did upon assuming this role was to organize the purchase of literature from Europe on a large range of topics, but with a particular focus on theology. He also donated some of his own books to the collection.

He devoted much of his free time to studying, translating German theological books into English, and authoring his own Latin and Greek textbooks. His largest and most influential work was undertaken at Drew University, where he became associated with Dr. James Strong. Together they co-authored their *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, now commonly referred to as *McClintock and Strong's*, along with 200 assistants. He did not live to see the completion of this project as he died three years into it in 1870 when they had only completed the first four of the original 10 volumes. Dr. Strong completed the remaining six volumes and the additional two supplementary documents.

It has been said that John McClintock through his work as a preacher, teacher, editor, and author, did more than any other man to raise the standing of the Methodist church, which at the time was in its infancy and had little respect from the more prominent denominations. He also brought a higher level of intellect to the church itself. His work continues to be influential to this day and has helped to make theology available to the common man. Br. Charles Russell used the information that John McClintock had gleaned in quite a number of his articles.



*John McClintock, 1814-1870*

# Our Lord's Return and Presence

*The Time Has Come*

Jesus promised he would return for his disciples. We see this unambiguous promise in John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

We may take several salient points from Jesus words here:

- (1) He will return to receive us to himself!
- (2) He will prepare a "place" for us!
- (3) This promise is to be a comfort to us — "Let not your heart be troubled."

Of course, it is natural to wonder, how long before Jesus would return? During Jesus' ministry, this question came up. Jesus discusses it and gives us a great deal of information about his return.

We find it in Matthew 24:3. Jesus' disciples asked this question: "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Reading this as it comes to us in most of our English versions, we interpret it to mean, what are the signs preceding Jesus' coming that indicate it is close? However, when we scrutinize Jesus' answer in the Greek text we find the meaning somewhat different.

The Greek word translated "coming" is *parousia* (Greek, παρουσία). *Parousia* means "presence," not "coming." There are a few translations that pick up on this significant change.

"And as he was sitting on the MOUNT OF OLIVES, the DISCIPLES came to him privately saying, "Tell us, when these things will be?" and "What will be the SIGN of THY presence, and of the CONSUMMATION of the AGE?" (Diaglott)

"And, as he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him, privately, saying — Tell us, when these things shall be, and what the sign of thy presence, and the conclusion of the age" (Emphasized Bible, Rotherham).

There is no controversy about what *parousia* means. In fact the meaning is so plain and powerful that Joseph Rotherham devoted an appendix entry about explaining his own translation of the word. Here is a brief excerpt of what he wrote:

"In this edition the word *parousia* is uniformly rendered "presence" ("coming," as a representative of this word, being set aside). The original term occurs twenty-four times in the N.T.,<sup>1</sup> ... The sense of 'presence' is so plainly shewn by the contrast with "absence" (implied in 2 Corinthians 10:10, and expressed in Philippians 2:12) that the question naturally arises — Why not always so render it? The more so, inasmuch as there is in 2 Peter 1:16 also, a peculiar fitness in our English word 'presence.' This passage, it will be remembered, relates to our Lord's transformation upon the Mount. The wonderful manifestation there made was a display and sample of 'presence' rather than of 'coming.' The Lord was already there; and being there, he was transformed (compare Matthew 17:2) and the 'majesty' of his glorified person was then disclosed" (Appendix Entry to *The Emphasised Bible*, by Joseph Bryant Rotherham, 1902).

Rotherham goes on to note that the majority of translators have a prophetic view that compels them to use "coming" instead of "presence" because they see this as a singular event as opposed to a period of time. But Rotherham was undeterred because of the compelling evidence of the meaning of *parousia* as "presence."<sup>2</sup>

Obviously any "presence" begins with an arrival. But a review of the scriptures on this subject does emphasize the idea of a period during which a lot of activity occurs. For example, a number of texts demonstrate that our Lord's return and subsequent presence would be accompanied by a great feasting on spiritual food, requiring some extended time.

"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that **he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them**" (Luke 12:37,38).

And, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, **I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me**" (Revelation 3:20).

We note first that the previous stage to the Laodicea church was the Philadelphia church, and it preceded the time of Jesus' return. The entire message to the Philadelphia church is contained in verses 7 to 13. In verse 11 we are specifically told "I come quickly." In other words, he had not come yet, but this church is very near the time he would come.



*Jesus on the Mount of Olives*



For the final stage of the church, the Laodicean stage (verse 14 to 22), we are told, “I stand at the door and knock.” He has arrived. He is **present** at this stage of the church. Furthermore, he is ready to “sup” with those who open the doors of their heart and understanding. This feast reflects the same blessing of spiritual food we saw in the Gospel of Luke. The purpose of this spiritual feast is the restoration of pure truth, much of which had been corrupted after Apostolic times.

Another aspect of Jesus’ return and subsequent presence is the judgment he will perform. And while he will judge the world and nations and people, he will first judge the church. Jesus asked: “I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, **when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?**” (Luke 18:8).

The Greek for “cometh” here does mean “arrival.” And when Jesus returns, he will inspect the church for faithfulness. Peter comments on this principle in 1 Peter 4:17: “For the time is come for **judgment to begin at the house of God**; and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?”

This same theme is depicted by the Prophet Malachi: “Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts. But who can abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness” (Malachi 3:1-4).

The Lord will return and “suddenly come to his temple.” This temple is another symbol of the church. “Know ye not that **ye are a temple of God**, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Micah here writes in the “day of his coming,” which clearly is a reference to the period of time after his arrival. The Messenger of the Covenant — Jesus — will judge the “sons of Levi,” another reference to the church, and purge them as gold and silver. This is part of the activity of Jesus’ *parousia* and demonstrates further that there will be members of church on the earth during this period of his presence.

The Apostle Peter also writes of this period of time showing that there would be those who scoff at the church over the issue of Jesus’ presence: “knowing This first, that in the Last of the DAYS Scoffers will come with scoffing, walking after their OWN Lusts, and saying, “Where is the PROMISE of his PRESENCE? for from the time the FATHERS fell asleep, all things continue in this way from the

Beginning of the Creation” (2 Peter 3:3,4, Diaglott).

This text is interesting in that the presence of doubters of the presence of Jesus is actually an evidence of the presence. The evidence is there, but, as the Apostle says in the next verse, they are *willingly ignorant* of God’s plans. This text also proves something else of importance. It would be impossible for a scoffer to deny a visible presence. That they are denying it shows that Jesus’ presence will be invisible, evident only because of other indicators.

There is more in this third chapter of 2 Peter that touches on this subject. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

The phrase “will come as a thief” is not well translated as it stands. It should be translated, “will be here as a thief” or “will be present as a thief.” The Greek word *hecko* means be **present** or be **here**. The idea is that Jesus will be here, present, unawares — “as a thief.” This is confirmed in Revelation 3:3: “I will come (Greek *hecko* — be present) like a thief” (NIV).

What is the authority for this translation? Consider the following works:

- Strong’s Concordance — #2240 — to arrive, that is to be present.
- Young’s Concordance — to have come, be here.
- Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon — to have come, be present, be here.
- Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament — to have come, have arrived, be here.
- Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words by Vine — “I come and am here.”

Vine in particular notes that *hecko* means — “come (arrive) and be here.” *Hecko* does not mean the instant of arrival, but includes both arrival **and** presence.

Even looking at Jesus’ own words with respect to his return, we see unmistakable logic that his presence is a period of time. Let us compare the words used in two Gospel accounts and note the result:

Matthew 24:37	Luke 17:26
“But as the days of Noah were,”	= “As it was in the days of Noah,”
“so shall also the <i>parousia</i> of the Son of man be.”	= “so shall it be <i>in the days of the Son of man</i> ”

This verse-by-verse comparison shows conclusively that the *parousia* of Jesus is the same as the “**days**” of Jesus, i.e., a period of time.

Another scripture that demonstrates the activity following Jesus’ return and subsequent presence is found in Revelation 18:1-4: “After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having

great authority; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird. For by the wine of the wrath of her fornication all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues:"<sup>3</sup>

In this text we have the judgment of Babylon by our present Lord. Along with this is the command for any of the Lord's people who may still be in Babylon to come out and cease all connection with her. Of course, this is another activity that will take time. This judgment, which consists of an eventual full expose of Babylon's sins and corruption, is also a sign of Jesus' presence. It is certainly a sign that we have seen in our own time.

### Nahum 1:5-8

Another text which applies to this time of Jesus' presence provides a connection with Jehovah's prophetic activity. "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken asunder by him. Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that take refuge in him. But with an over-running flood he will make a full end of her place and will pursue his enemies into darkness" (Nahum 1:5-8).

This text mentions the presence of Jehovah in connection with judgmental activities at the end of the age. Scripturally, can we associate Jehovah's presence with Jesus' presence? The answer is yes! In fact it is unavoidable.

Consider first that in the Second Psalm we see that Jesus is Jehovah's appointed King and his agent in carrying out his will (see box, next column).

Thus, there is no question that the judgments of Jehovah are carried out by Jesus in Jehovah's name.

Add to this what Jesus told his disciples about his authority: "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, **All authority hath been given unto**

"Why do the nations rage, And the peoples meditate a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,  
Against Jehovah, and **against his anointed**, saying,  
Let us break their bonds asunder, And cast away their cords from us.  
He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh:  
The Lord will have them in derision.  
Then will he speak unto them in his wrath,  
And vex them in his sore displeasure:  
**Yet I have set my king Upon my holy hill of Zion.**  
I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;  
This day have I begotten thee.  
Ask of me, and **I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,**  
**And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.**  
**Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;**  
**Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.**  
Now therefore be wise, O ye kings: Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.  
Serve Jehovah with fear And rejoice with trembling.  
**Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way,**  
**For his wrath will soon be kindled.**  
Blessed are all they that take refuge in him" (Psalms 2)

**me in heaven and on earth"** (Matthew 28:18).

So we properly associate the presence of Jesus with this presence of Jehovah. In both cases we have activity during the period of their presence.

Returning to the words of Nahum, we see other symbols of the closing events of this world that reinforce the understanding of Jesus' *parousia* as an extended period. For example, "mountains quake," "the hills melt;" and "the earth is upheaved at his presence." Notice the same symbols in the following scriptures:

"But the **day** of the Lord will come as a **thief**; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

"Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change, And though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, Though the mountains tremble with the swelling thereof" (Psalms 46:2,3).

"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt" (Amos 9:13).

Mountains represent kingdoms (see Isaiah 2:2). The earth represents the more stable parts of society and the seas represent the unstable parts of society. The timing of all of the prophecies is the same — during the presence of Jehovah and his Son Jesus. They describe a period of judgment, a period of destruction of this old world during which a lot of things happen. Further we note that his true worshippers are not

removed from the scene immediately, but rather “take refuge in him” while still on the scene. And, as we saw earlier, they are marvelously fed in this divine refuge.

### Dawning of the Parousia

“For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the *parousia* of the Son of man” (Matthew 24:27).

Remembering that the entire 24th chapter of Matthew is in answer to the disciples’ question about the sign of his *parousia*, we find this description by Jesus to be enlightening.

Jesus compares his *parousia* to “lightning” coming from the east to the west. This seems a little strange inasmuch as lightning does not generally come out of the east and go to the west. The Greek word for “lightning” is *astrape*. *Astrape* can mean lightning or it can mean shining. In this text, it seems clear that Jesus is speaking of a dawn shining from east to west.<sup>4</sup>

A clear example of *astrape* being used in the sense of shining is in Luke 11:36: “If therefore thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, it shall be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining [*astrape*] doth give thee light.”

Using this understanding of the word *astrape*, we see that the invisible presence of Jesus will, gradually over a period of time, be perceived along with a recognition of his judgment activities in the affairs of man. The gradual recognition is noted in several places of Ezekiel’s prophecy. In particular Ezekiel 38:19-23 parallels many scriptures prophetic of the *parousia*.

“Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel ... and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the

mountains shall be thrown down ... And I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will make myself known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.”

As Jehovah’s Anointed King, Jesus will carry out these judgments of God and will sanctify his name in so doing. All of this will be “at my presence.”

### Conclusions

The evidence of scripture demonstrates the following things:

- (1) Jesus’ *parousia* is a period, not an event.
- (2) It is the same period as **Jehovah’s Presence**.
- (3) As Jesus is a spirit, his *parousia* is invisible.
- (4) During Jesus’ *parousia* he judges the church, favors them with an enormous spiritual feast, and judges the nations.
- (5) The perception of the reality of Jesus’ *parousia* will be gradual but will eventually be undeniable and the nations will know of Jehovah’s rule through his anointed King and Son.

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(1) Occurrences of *parousia* — Matthew 24:3:27, 31, 39; 1 Corinthians 15:23, 16:17; 2 Corinthians 7:6, 7, 10:10; Philippians 1:26, 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 3:3, 4:15, 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 8, 9; James 5:7, 8; 2 Peter 1:16, 3:4,12; and 1 John 2:28.

(2) Perhaps we might defend the KJV translation by noting that in the 1600’s “coming” meant arrival and presence. As an example: “I have enjoyed your coming so much.” In this case the idea of “presence” is preserved.

(3) This angel coming down out of heaven is Jesus. It is the same angel which comes down out of heaven that lays his hand on Satan and binds him for a thousand years in Revelation 20:1-3.

(4) Consider the RVIC translation of verse 27: “For as the breaking sunshine cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the presence of the Son of man.”

## Keeping the Faith

*“I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).*

**W**as there ever a nobler soldier of the Cross than Apostle Paul — the Redeemer alone excepted? Soldiers of fortune and patriots have indeed left their marks in the world and on the pages of history, but not one of them has left so indelible a mark as Paul. The motive power influencing others has generally been selfishness, but the motive power of the Christian is the reverse — love. Others hazarded and laid down their lives in self-interest, or in the interest of their kin or tongue. Paul, copying his Master, laid down his life for Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female, to assist in gathering the “elect” to be the Bride of Christ — that ultimately through the glorified King and His glorified Bride, all the families of the earth may receive the blessings

which God waits to give through Abraham’s Seed (Galatians 3:29).

God is seeking only for heroes now. By and by He will deal with the remainder, helpfully. The “elect” must all be courageous, “conformed to the image of His Son” — heroes. Hence the promise to the Church is “to him that overcomes.” And let us remember that scripturally considered this character, which the Lord seeks, may be developed in very humble stations; no matter how low, all may develop the overcoming qualities which the Lord will reward (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

When writing the words of our text Paul realised that the close of his career was near — his course was finished. He recognised as a Christian that he had



certain lessons to learn in the School of Christ and this was a part of his course of preparation for joint heirship with Christ in the glories of the Messianic Kingdom. The course included not merely theory, but also practice. He not only theoretically learned about Christ, but experimentally. He became a partaker with Him in the sufferings of the present time. And sympathetically he was permitted to enter into a large degree of knowledge of the “mystery” of the Divine Plan hidden from the world.

Not only had his own course of instruction been a thorough one, but he had been given a post-graduate course as an ambassador for his Lord and Redeemer and as an apostle for the brethren, the Church. Moreover, he recognised the fact that all such as become members of the Body of Christ are so directly under the divine supervision and regulations that their times are in God’s hands — all of their affairs of life, temporal and spiritual. As the Master’s death could not occur “until His hour was come,” so likewise it is with his consecrated members.

He had kept the faith and the faith had kept him. Many do not realise how important are knowledge and a correct faith. “My people perish for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6) is Jehovah’s testimony. And their faith can keep pace only with their knowledge, for faith must have a basis. A correct life depends greatly upon a correct faith. Why did our forefathers burn one another at the stakes in a diabolical manner? Because they were governed by error. False doctrines, styled by the Apostle Paul as “doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1), had been presented to them and they had believed them. The legitimate outcome of the wrong belief, the wrong faith, was wrongdoing. Believing that God purposed the torture of His creatures for centuries in purgatory or for countless millions of years in eternal torment, they copied this misconception of the Almighty in their lives, to our horror.

But Paul had kept the faith — the true faith once delivered unto the saints — faith in the Redeemer’s sacrifice; faith in its application on our behalf; faith in our justification by the Father on that account; faith in the glorious promises of God’s Word; faith in the Lord and faith in the brethren. Surely it meant something to keep the faith — especially when we realise that our great adversary, Satan, is on the alert continually to take it from us or turn or twist it to our loss or injury.

The crown mentioned that the Apostle had seen for many years, with the eye of his faith, was a part of the Lord’s promise. He had absolute confidence in the Lord and in the promise, he had received from Him. That crown had been his cause of rejoicing for many years, not because of pride or ambition, but because of love and benevolence. He would love to receive that crown because it would be the mark of Divine appreciation and love for him,

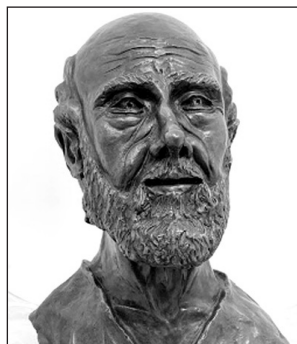
a mark of his faithfulness. He esteemed it because it would afford him untold opportunity of blessing his fellowmen in association with his Lord and the brethren on the plane of glory during the Millennium.

The crown which Paul hoped for required him to be faithful until death as shown in Revelation 2:10, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.” He knew the Bible teaching on the subject of the resurrection — that this was his God’s provision for the communication of His blessing, first for the Church, then subsequently for the world. He knew and taught that there would be “a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15). He desired to have a share with his Redeemer in all of his glorious Kingdom work, and he knew that it could not begin until the completion of this Gospel Age, when all the elect Church, as members of the Bride of Christ, would share in “His resurrection,” to glory, honour, immortality, and glorious Kingdom privileges (Philippians 3:10-11).

It was for this reason that he proceeded to declare that the crown was laid up for him at the time of his resurrection. That crown the Lord would give to him and to all others in the attitude of heart to appreciate His revelation at the Second Advent — “that day.” True, not many at the present time love His appearing. The majority, not only of the world, but also of Christians, seeking but not finding in pleasures, riches, and honours of men, have certain ambitions along these lines which they would like to satisfy first, and then possibly they might be willing for the Lord to establish His Kingdom. But, no! By the time their lives have been spent in such pursuits they are usually thoroughly disappointed and bewildered and generally further than ever from seeking the Kingdom.

None but the faithful will receive this crown. Thank God, the remainder will not be tortured, but, on the contrary, will be blessed by their crowned brethren, from whom, as the Christ of God, will go the blessings of restitution through the agency of the Messianic Kingdom. Eventually all the blind eyes of understanding will be opened — eventually all will see the great Messiah, though invisible to the natural sight. Then every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God. Paul closes his exhortation by reciting that in his trial before Nero some in whom he had full confidence had forsaken him, and he concludes that the Lord, nevertheless, stood with him and strengthened him, and that he had every confidence in His care to the end of the way.

As Paul states “I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14 ASV), and he continued to do this regardless of his circumstances, which is the example that we should follow.



*Bust of the Apostle Paul*

# Advocate and Mediator Contrasted

*The Church is "the mystery of God" (Colossians 2:2).*

**T**he fact that the church is "the mystery of God" has become clearer as the age draws to a close.

We know that Christ and the church are separate and distinct from the world in every way. They are neither under the Law Covenant, nor are they under the New Law Covenant, but are under the Abrahamic Covenant; being also called, sanctified, developed under a special covenant by themselves.

This the Scripture also styles the Covenant of Sacrifice "Gather my saints together unto me, Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psalms 50:5 ASV). This special class of saints, or holy ones, who make this covenant of sacrifice have as their Head the Lord Jesus Himself. When this company shall have completed their covenant by sacrifice, this present Gospel Age will end. Moses, in the Law Covenant given to Israel, represented specially the New Law Covenant, which will be given to the world through the antitype of Moses — The Christ. In other words, the Mediator of the Law Covenant was to be one man, Moses.

The Mediator of the New Law Covenant of the Millennial Age is the New Man, of which Jesus is the Head, and the apostle declares that the members (his body) are made up of those elected both from Jews and Gentiles. From the time of Jesus down through the Gospel Age, the body members of the Mediator of the New Covenant have been in process of selection, and "the better sacrifices" as the basis for the New Covenant have been in process of offering.

During the Gospel Age Jesus has not exercised His office as the Mediator for the world, and the world has no relationship with God, but still lies in the wicked one. The Mediator Himself has been in process of development. As the apostle declares, God raised up Jesus first, and since has been raising up the church, and soon will finish raising them up. It is this Mediator or Prophet of whom St. Peter stated "Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul

that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people (Acts 3:22-23 ASV). The Apostle Paul also tells Timothy "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time (1 Timothy 2:5-6 NASB). No mediating can be done until the body members of the Mediator comprising of "many members" has qualified for the office. The qualification consists of sacrificing according to the Covenant of Sacrifice.

The Christ, Head and Body are, therefore, the Mediator for the world in a prospective sense, in the same sense as Jesus the Babe of Bethlehem could be spoken of as the Saviour, and the King. He is only now becoming the King and has yet saved only a few of His people. There is a wide distinction between the work of a mediator and the work of an advocate. The great Mediator between God and man — The Christ in glory — will fill His mediatorial office for a thousand years and complete it only by the end of that time, when He will deliver over to the Father, fully reconciled, all who can be brought into harmony with the Divine arrangement.

The work of an advocate is different, and, according to the Bible, relates only to the work which Jesus accomplishes on behalf of the church during this Gospel Age. The church will need no advocate in the future. The world has no advocate now. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. It is Jesus individually, who is the Advocate for us — "the church, His body." He advocates our cause, first, by imputing to us the merit of His sacrifice, thus making us presentable as sons of God. Because of this advocacy, we have received the Holy Spirit, and are new creatures in Christ. As new creatures we still need our Advocate, because we cannot do the things that we would like to do perfectly. We have imperfections of the flesh, which as new creatures we cannot fully control. Hence, we need a Throne of Grace and an Advocate, through Whom we may maintain our present relationship with the Father, and thus not be condemned with the world. E.E.M.

## *Note from Reader*

Dear Brethren, The BBI have been mailing a copy of Peoples Paper for many years to my mother. Sadly, my mother passed away some weeks ago. She looked forward to receiving this publication very much, and I would like to thank you for sending it to her for many years. I am also contacting you so that you may now remove my mother's name and address from your mailing list. Colin (Pearl Molyneux, Merseyside, U.K.)

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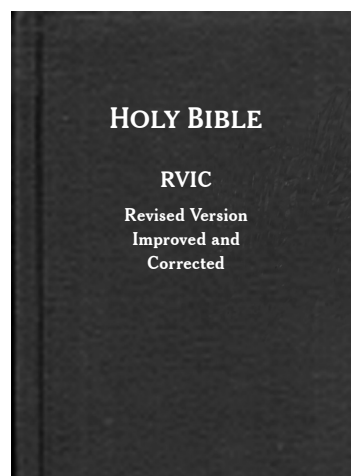
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# The Bible Teachings (Part Seven)

*On the Covenants — Mediator — Ransom — Sin Offering — Atonement*

*Berean Series of Bible Studies • Berean Bible Institute • PO Box 402, Rosanna, Australia 3094*

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## **Church and Ancient Worthies Judged by Faith, Not by Works**

They will be assisted step by step out of imperfection of mind and body up to perfection, including perfect works, which will be their standard or test. On the contrary the Gospel Church and the Ancient Worthies have not been judged according to their works, but according to their faith — works having been demanded to the extent of the blemishes of the fallen nature, but instantly reckoned as lifted out of them, or as having them covered with a mantle of grace.

## **Original Covenant Promised Blessing to all Mankind**

Bearing in mind the fact and conclusions above will assist us greatly in understanding our subject, the relationship of the Covenants to each other and to mankind. The original Covenant promised a blessing that should reach all mankind — a redemption from the Divine sentence, and an opportunity for the return to harmony with God, through faith and heart obedience. This promise has in some respects already had its fulfilment, as we have seen. God has already accepted, yea, been willing to lead or to draw, all who exercise faith in Him and a heart desire to live in harmony, with His will. Already, in this sense of the word, the original Covenant operated before the flood, and since the flood, and toward Abraham, and toward all of Israel, who had the spirit of obedience and faith, and during this Gospel Age has operated amongst mankind in all nations and tongues. But a comparatively small portion of the race has received the blessing, because so small a proportion were in a condition to exercise “the faith of Abraham.”

## **Adding to Original Covenant not a Disadvantage**

While at first it might appear that the adding of the Law Covenant was a disadvantage and similarly that the adding of the New Covenant might, in some respects, be a disadvantage or a curtailment or abridgment of the original, all-comprehensive Grace or Sarah Covenant, yet this is really not so. While the Law Covenant did condemn the nation, because they did not have the faith, it did bring a blessing to many of that nation — many more than were developed in other nations, which had no such Law Covenant, with its limitations, threatenings, chastisements, etc. The New Covenant will be still more successful. It will follow the reign of Grace under the Sarah Covenant and be a reign of law. As it is written, “Righteousness shall he lay to the line and justice to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of misrepresentations” (Isaiah 28:17).

The Redeemer and His followers will no longer be a

flock of sheep for the slaughter, reviled amongst men, but to the contrary, they shall be the kings and priests, clothed with glory, honor and immortality, before whom “Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God” (Romans 14:11). The King shall rule in righteousness and princes shall execute judgments in the earth.

## **Works and Punishments Under New Covenant**

Faith, giving place to sight, the test will be works, according to the ability; and everything less than the ability will receive stripes and corrections in righteousness. That reign of Law and good works will thus be rightly tempered to the condition of each individual, and the result, we believe, will be marvellous — the bringing of thousands of millions to perfection, in harmony with God. So far from the New (Law) Covenant being an abridgment of the Abrahamic (Sarah) Covenant it will be an extension of it, which will make its blessings much farther reaching. The original Covenant now gathers those who can and will exercise faith and obedience. Its usefulness would thus be at an end, were it not for the added New (Law) Covenant, which, ignoring the lack of faith and obedience, will take hold of the world and, by chastisement and instructions, force obedience and knowledge and then gradually develop the heart-obedience of Abraham in so many of them as possible and destroy the others. Thus Abraham, “the father of the faithful,” will become under the New (Law) Covenant the “father of many nations” — a multitude, as the sand of the sea — as well as the father of the faithful under the original Sarah Covenant of faith and grace.

## **God's Arrangement Through Covenant Best**

Thus, we see that the influence of the original Covenant, after electing a Faith Seed, both natural and spiritual, will, through these by the New (Law) Covenant, bless a far greater number than by any other method conceivable. Thus, again the Lord shows us how much greater are His arrangements than any which the human mind could have planned. Surely no flesh can glory in His sight. The more we see of His plans, His purposes, His methods, the more should we glorify Him and realise our own nothingness, insignificance! (Z. 1909, 45.)

## **LAW-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND FAITH-RIGHTEOUSNESS**

### **Divine Law the Standard for All**

Although the Church is not developed under a Law Covenant — neither the old Law Covenant nor the New (Law) Covenant — nevertheless it is being

measured by the Divine Law standard; as the Apostle says, The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us who are walking not after the flesh but after the spirit (Romans 8:4).

The Jew under the Law Covenant was unable to be justified because unable to keep the letter of that law, and because Moses, the mediator of that law Covenant, had no merit or grace to contribute to the people which would excuse them from the letter of the law and make the spirit of that law available for their justification.

### **The New Law Covenant Will Require Obedience to the Divine Standard**

The New (Law) Covenant, like the old one, will require obedience to the letter of the law of God, and not merely to its spirit. The rule of that Covenant will be “He that doeth these things shall live by them.” What advantage, then, will accrue under the New (Law) Covenant above and beyond that which the Jew enjoyed under the old law Covenant.

### **Difference Between Those Under Old and New Law Covenant**

We answer, the difference will be that the New (Law) Covenant will have the better Mediator, who will have the right during the existence of the Millennial Kingdom to instruct, chasten, reward, assist and uplift all who will be obedient to Him, so that by the close of the Millennial Age all who desire eternal life, all who appreciate righteousness, or who could be made to appreciate it, will have been brought up to that perfect condition mentally, morally and physically which Adam enjoyed but lost by sin, and which Christ redeemed by the sacrifice of Himself.

### **Mediation Will Last a Thousand Years**

The mediation will last for the thousand years, and at its conclusion the world will be turned over to the jurisdiction of the Heavenly father — Christ will “deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father” (1 Corinthians 15:24). They will be delivered up perfect, mentally, physically, morally, and be all that Adam was, plus the experiences received through the reign of evil and through the subsequent reign of righteousness. Thus, the old law Covenant and the New (Law) Covenant have special points of similarity, and we see the difference between the two to be, as St. Paul points out, that the New (Law) Covenant has the better Mediator, who is able to cancel the sins that are past and to take away the stony heart, and by restitution processes restore the heart of flesh. Additionally, He will instruct mankind to that condition where they can, if they will, keep the Divine law perfectly, both in letter and in spirit.

### **Object of Gospel Age Lost Sight Of**

This was lost sight of in the dark ages. The real object of this Gospel Age — the selection of the members of the antitypical Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant — the mystery — became obscured. No future age for the blessing of Israel and the world was acknowledged.

Instead the New Covenant was considered as but another name for the Abrahamic Covenant, to which, instead, it is to be an addition.

### **Sarah Covenant Different, Required no Mediator**

The Covenant under which we become Abraham’s Seed — i.e., the Abrahamic Covenant (the Sarah Covenant), had no law provision and no mediator. It was a one-sided Covenant and needed no mediator. It was made with one who believed God, who was justified by his faith, and whose faith was tested by obedient works to the extent of his ability. To this tested, proved man, Abraham, God gave the great promise, “In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” This was the Covenant to which was added the oath of confirmation. That promise and that oath become our strong consolation, our anchorage of hope, because we have become united to Christ as His members — members of the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, which is to bless natural Israel and the world by the long-promised New (Law) Covenant, of which we are being made able ministers or servants.

### **Christ Accepted by Obedience to Law, Church Accepted by Faith and Obedience to Extent of Ability**

To Christ the original Covenant came with the Law “added,” and He inherited by obedience to the Law. He is now accepting us separate and apart from the Law on condition of faith and obedience to the extent of our ability. To us the righteousness of the Law is counted as fulfilled when we walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit of the law, because we thus give evidence that if we had perfect ability we would keep the Divine Law perfectly. And we who are accepted as members of the Body of Christ have entered into a covenant of sacrifice as respects the earthly nature, and to be copies of our Redeemer to the extent of our ability — in heart, in will, and, so far as possible, in deed.

### **After Testing Church, God Will Accept Her Fully**

After testing us thus, if found faithful, God will accept us fully and grant us spirit bodies like unto our Redeemer’s. It is thus, as New Creatures in Christ, that we may be the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, and members of the Body of the great Mediator, the great Prophet, Priest, King and Judge, who during the Millennial Age, under the New (Law) Covenant sealed with His blood, shall establish righteousness in the earth, and lift up the willing and obedient of humanity out of sin, degradation and death to harmony with God and everlasting life.

### **Church Not Justified Under Any Covenant**

Is it asked, under what Covenant is the Royal Priesthood, the Church of the First-Born, justified? We answer, under no covenant. Our justification, like that of Abraham, is by faith. As it is written, “Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it (righteousness) was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on

Him who raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:5, 23-25).

### **Paul Shows Abraham Justified Before Circumcision Ordinance**

St. Paul in this connection points out that Abraham was not justified because of his circumcision, for he was justified by faith and reckoned righteous before he was given the seal of circumcision. Likewise, he was not justified by the Covenant made with him, but the Covenant was made with him because of his faith, and his justification through faith. And thus, it is also with all of us who are counted Abraham’s Seed. After being justified by faith, we are granted the privilege of becoming dead with Christ, and thus becoming members of His Body, the spiritual Seed of Abraham, whose circumcision is that of the heart (Galatians 3:29). (Z. 1909, 228.)

### **THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT NOT THE NEW COVENANT**

#### **God’s Promise to Abraham a Covenant**

The Scriptures over and over again refer to God’s words with Abraham, not only as a promise, but as a Covenant. As, for instance, before it was made, God said to Abraham, come out of thine own land into a land that I will show thee, and I will make a Covenant with thee. It was in harmony with that promise that Abraham removed to the land of Canaan, where God declares that He did make a Covenant with him, to the effect that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. The prophet tells us that that Covenant was confirmed three times to Abraham with an oath — again to Isaac and again to Jacob. (See Genesis 17:19, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14.) This which the Apostle styles The Promise (particular and special above all promises) is also called a Covenant thirteen times in the Book of Genesis alone, besides numerous other references which anyone can find with a concordance.

#### **The Oath-Bound Covenant**

It seems strange indeed that a desire to establish a theory could warp the judgment of any Christian Bible student to such an extent that he would endeavour to ignore the greatest of all imaginable Covenants on record — the Covenant on which all of our hopes as Christians depend. Hearken to the Apostle Paul’s estimation of this Covenant as stated in Hebrews 6. Urging the Israelites to patience and faith that they might inherit the promises, St. Paul says, “For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself ... for men verily swear by the greater and an oath for confirmation is the end of all strife. In this matter God, desiring more abundantly to show unto the heirs of the promise the immutability (the unchangeableness) of His counsel (or purpose), confirmed the promise by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have

fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” The Apostle thus shows that the Abrahamic Covenant (without a mediator, because it was unconditional), was firmly bound in a manner that would be satisfactory even amongst men, namely, by an oath.

#### **God’s Oath**

How much more convincing is God’s oath, making sure, unchangeable that basic Covenant made with Abraham, assuring the heirs of the promise (“us”) that ultimately all mankind will receive a blessing, and that it would come through us (Galatians 3:29). The Apostle tells us that that oath was intended of God for us rather than for Abraham, to give us strong consolation, that we might lay hold firmly of the hope set before us in that promise — that Abrahamic Covenant. He adds (verse 19) that we have this hope as an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast within the veil, whither Jesus has entered as our- forerunner, to whom we are approaching — as members to our Head. He is the Head of that Seed of promise. We, the members of His Body, will shortly follow Him beyond the veil and share His glorious work of blessing the nations, beginning with Israel, under a New Covenant. We, as the adopted members of the Body of Christ, are directly the beneficiaries of the original Covenant, whose other features of blessing the world will all be worked out through us — under the New Covenant arrangement with Israel.

#### **Paul and the Abrahamic Covenant**

Surely there is no consistency or reason in ignoring this Great Oath-bound Covenant made in Abraham’s day, consummated the Divine oath. If it were not a Covenant, or if, as a Covenant, it was not ratified or made operative until the days of Jesus, why should the Apostle say that the law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant was made? Evidently St. Paul considered the Abrahamic Covenant well established, for he adds that the Law Covenant afterwards instituted could not disannul the Abrahamic Covenant (Galatians 3:17). It must have been a thoroughly completed Covenant, firmly bound with the Divine oath, else that statement that it could not be disannulled would be an untruth.

Hearken again to St. Paul’s discussion of the matter with the Galatians, He says, “This I say, that the Covenant, that was confirmed (“previously ratified” — Strong’s lexicon) before of God in Christ, the Law (Covenant), which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” As showing the inferiority of the Law Covenant in comparison to the Old (original) Abrahamic Covenant, St. Paul tells us (Galatians 4:22-31) that Abraham’s two wives, Sarah and Hagar, were allegorical; that the son of Sarah represented The Christ, the Church, Head and Body, while the son of Hagar represented the nation of fleshly Israel. He says, “Which things are an allegory: for these are the two Covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar, which corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and



is in bondage with her children.” On the contrary, he declares that Sarah corresponds to Jerusalem, which is above and free, the mother of us all. He adds, “We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise.” (verse 28). It required nearly seventeen centuries for the development of Hagar’s son, Fleshly Israel, under the Law Covenant. The Son of Sarah (the original or Abrahamic Covenant), has already been more than eighteen centuries in process of development. Through Him all nations shall be blessed. He secured earthly life rights by His obedience; He sacrificed or laid these down at Calvary; He during this age has made them available to His “Body,” and soon will be ready to give them as a legacy to Natural Israel and the world (Romans 11:31).

### **Israel Realised Value of Abrahamic Covenant**

Israel realised the value of this Covenant made with Abraham; it constituted the basis of all their hopes, faith and trust. They supposed that the Law Covenant needed to be added to it, and therefore, they accepted it as an amendment; but they continually trusted, hoped, in the original Covenant, as St. Paul says, “Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hope yet to come” (Acts 26:7). It was after Israel had become discouraged with their inability to keep the Law that God encouraged them, by assuring them that He would make a New Covenant with them, which would operate more favourably — more to their advantage. And so He will. By the end of this Gospel Age, after having selected the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, the New Covenant with Israel will go into effect. As it is written, “This is My Covenant with them when I shall take away their sins. The Deliverer (Mediator, Prophet, Priest, King) shall come out of Sion (the Gospel Church) and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (natural Israel)” (Romans 11:26,27).

### **Gospel Church Not the Seed of Two Mothers**

Undoubtedly then we may assure all who have the hearing ear, that the Gospel Church is not the seed of two mothers or Covenants, but of one, and that that one is the Sarah Covenant, the old, original, oath-bound Covenant. Sarah had but one child, Isaac, who typified The Christ, Head and Body — the heir of all. “We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise” — heirs of the great privilege of blessing all the families of the earth, as members of the great antitypical Mediator of Israel’s New Law Covenant, which will displace and supersede the Old Law Covenant.

### **“After Those Days I Will Make a New Covenant”**

In Jeremiah 31:53 we read, “after those days,” as setting a date for the New Covenant. Why is this? And what days must precede the making of the New Covenant?

### **Chastisement of Israel. Seven Times of Punishment**

God foretold that if Israel would be faithful, He would bless them in every sense of the word, but that if they would walk contrary to Him, He would walk contrary to them and chastise them “seven times for their sins.” (Leviticus 26:28). This expression in this connection is, with variations, repeated three times. In one instance the word “MORE” is used. “I will chastise you seven times more for your sins.” The Hebrew word rendered more, according to Strong’s translation, would properly be rendered “continuously.”

### **Seven Times Not Literal**

This threat of punishment we interpret to mean, not that the Lord would give Israel seven times as much punishment as they should have, but that He would punish them seven times (seven years) more (continuously) for their sins. These seven times or seven years were not literal years surely, for they received more punishment than that on numerous occasions. The seven times we interpret as symbolical years, in harmony with other Scriptures — a day for a year, on the basis of three hundred and sixty days to a year. Thus, the seven times would mean 7 x 360, which equals 2520 literal years. And the word more or continuously would signify that this period of 2520 years would not be the sum of all their various years of chastisement at various “times,” but this experience of 2520 years of national chastisement would be one continuous period.

Next, we should ask, has there been such a continuous period of disfavour in Israel’s national history? The answer is, Yes. In the days of Zedekiah, the last king to sit upon the throne of the Kingdom of the Lord, the Word of the Lord concerning the matter was, “O, thou profane and wicked prince, whose time has come that iniquity should have an end: Take off the diadem! Remove the crown! I will overturn, overturn, overturn it (the crown, the kingdom) until he comes whose right it is, and I will give it unto him” (Ezekiel 21:25-27). This period of 2520 years, or seven symbolic times, expires according to our reckoning in 1914 (1914-18). In other words, the period of Gentile times, or Gentile supremacy in the world, is the exact parallel to the period of Israel’s loss of the kingdom and waiting for it at the hands of Messiah.

### **Israel Unready at First Advent**

Messiah at His First Advent found them unready as a nation to be His Bride, to share with Him as the Spiritual seed of Abraham, and it has required, as God foreknew and foretold, all this intervening period to select Spiritual Israel, the royal priesthood, the “holy nation,” the “peculiar people,” the Body of Christ, the Body of the Mediator between God and mankind.



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## The Test of Endurance

*“Tell him, ‘Let not him who girds on his armour boast like him who takes it off’” (1 Kings 20:11 NASB).*

**T**he test of endurance is certainly one of the severest tests of faithfulness to which the elect Church, the Body of Christ, is subjected. It is the test which gauges and registers the strength of every other virtue and grace. No soldier of the cross will be crowned with the laurels of victory who has not stood this test. The Christian life is a warfare, and the above words of one of the kings of Israel to a boastful enemy of the Lord’s people are applicable, not only to every new recruit in the Lord’s army, but, similarly, to all who have not yet finished the good fight of faith.

The first gush of enthusiasm in the Lord’s service, much as we may and do appreciate it, may be but the hasty production of the shallow soil of a heart which immediately receives the truth with gladness, but, having no root in itself, endures but for a time, afterward, when affliction and persecution arise, immediately is offended. “In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away” (Mark 4:16-17 NASB). Such characters cannot stand the fiery tests of this “evil day,” it is written: “each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work” (1 Corinthians 3:13 NASB).

Therefore, the Apostle Peter says, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you” (1 Peter 4:12 NASB). All of the elect Church must be so tried; and blessed is he that shall endure unto the end. The sure Word of prophecy points to severe conflicts and great trials in the closing scenes of the Church’s history. Elijah, a type of the Body of Christ, finished his earthly course and went up by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire

— strong symbols of storms and great afflictions. John the Baptist another type of the Church, was cast into prison and then beheaded. We are forewarned of the great necessity of the whole armour of God, if we would stand in this “evil day.”

Everyone who aspires to the prize of our high calling must brace himself for the severer conflicts and trials of faith and patience that may suddenly and without a moment’s warning be sprung upon him. In the battle of this day, as in all other battles, the effort of the enemy is to surprise and suddenly attack and overwhelm the Lord’s people; and the only preparation, therefore, that can be made for such emergencies is constant vigilance, prayer and the putting on of the whole armour of God — the Truth and the spirit of the Truth.

“By your endurance you will gain your lives” (Luke 21:19 NASB). No other grace will be more needed than this in the fiery ordeals of this “evil day”; for without endurance no one can abide to the end. All along the Christian’s pathway the believer will come to new crises, perhaps these often seem of trivial importance, yet they realise that they may be turning points in their Christian course. Who has not realised that they can come upon us at any time? There comes a temptation in weariness in well-doing, together with

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the suggestion of an easier way; or there springs up a little root of pride or ambition with suggestions of ways and means for feeding and gratifying it. Then there comes, by and by, the decisive moment when you must choose this course or that course; and lo, you have reached a crisis!

Which way will you turn? Most likely you will turn in the direction to which the sentiments you have cultivated have been tending, whether that be the right way or the wrong way. If it be the wrong way, most likely you will be unable to discern it clearly; for your long-cultivated sentiments will sway your judgment. “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12 NASB). How necessary, therefore, is prayer, that in every crisis we may pass the test successfully! Nor can we safely delay watching and praying until the crisis is upon us; but such should be our constant attitude.

The life of a soldier, ever on the alert and on duty, is by no means an easy life; nor do the Scriptures warrant any such expectation. On the contrary, they say, “Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ;” “Fight the good fight of faith,” etc. Yet many Christians seem to have the very opposite idea. Their ideal Christian life is one without a breeze or a storm; it must be one continuously calm. Such a life was indeed more possible in former days than now, though the world, the flesh and the Devil always have opposed them, and always have had to be resisted by every loyal soldier of the cross. But now the opposition is



*The Apostle Paul, a Soldier of Jesus Christ*

daily becoming more and more intense; for Satan realises that his time is short, and he is determined by any and every means to exert his power against the consummation of the Lord’s plan for the exaltation of the Church.

Consequently, we have had within this Harvest period many severe storms of opposition; and still there are, doubtless, more severe trials to follow. But those who, with overcoming faith, outride them all — who patiently endure, who cultivate the spirit of Christ with its fruits and graces, and who valiantly fight the good fight of faith, rather than withdraw from the field — such will be the “overcomers” to whom the laurels of victory will be given when the crowning day has come.

## For Unto Us a Child is born, a Son is Given

*“The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14 NASB).*

### The Virgin Birth

**T**his verse in Isaiah is confirmed by Matthew as referring to Jesus. “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,’ which translated means, ‘GOD WITH US’” (Matthew 1:20-23 NASB).

In Luke’s gospel more information is given about the birth of Jesus. The angel Gabriel was sent from God to speak to a virgin named Mary. “‘And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and

you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel answered and said to her, ‘The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason, the holy Child shall be called the Son of God’” (Luke 1:31-35 NASB).

The question may be asked, what was the need for a virgin to conceive and give birth to Jesus? The problem goes back to the first man, Adam. He had been created perfect and would have everlasting life if he had remained true to God’s requirements and not eaten of the forbidden fruit. He failed the test and so the Apostle Paul tells us: “Therefore, just as



through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12 NASB).

God's justice required a perfect human being to provide a sacrifice to pay the price for Adam's sin. As the verse in Romans states that "death spread to all men, because all sinned" none of Adam's progeny could provide the satisfactory price to redeem all of mankind. Peter confirms that Christ was the only one "WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH" (1 Peter 2:22 NASB).

To have Jesus born as a perfect human being had a problem. As all mankind had fallen into sin through Father Adam, the life force could not come from man. The egg could be provided by Mary, but the sperm could not be provided by Joseph, no matter how righteous he might be. "Therefore, that which was born of the "virgin" was separate and distinct from all humanity. His life came not from an **earthly** father, but from His **Heavenly** Father" (R4964).

## The Birthplace

"As for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2 NASB).

Micah foretold of the birthplace of Christ, and yet Joseph and Mary were from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. This would seem to be the logical place for Jesus to be born. But God's foreknowledge meant that He knew that Caesar Augustus would decree that a census was to be taken, each in his own city. "Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth" (Luke 2:4-6 NASB).

This birth was to be of the future King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the savior of the world, surely worthy of a royal birth in the palace with all the trappings of his position, the arrival to be announced to the world and yet this was not to be. Luke records, "And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in cloths, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7 NASB). There was no announcement of his arrival to the nation only to lowly shepherds in the fields by a multitude of angels praising God and saying "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased" (Luke 2:14 NASB).

It is interesting that the angels did not give this announcement in Mary's presence but through the lowly shepherds. From verse 18 there were others that heard the story from the shepherds who returned to their fields glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen.

## The Requirements of the Law

**Eighth Day:** Paul states "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law" (Galatians 4:4 NASB). Joseph and Mary knew the law of Moses and following the instructions in Genesis 17:12, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day.

**Fortieth Day:** When Mary had completed her purification as set out in the Law (Leviticus 12:1-4), Jesus was brought to the temple to be presented to Jehovah. From the description of the offering of a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons shows that Joseph and Mary were in a poor position unable to provide a one-year old lamb. "But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean" (Leviticus 12:8 NASB).

## The Magi

There is little information about the Magi other than they had come from the east to worship the King of the Jews. They had been on this journey for two years. The arrival of the Magi into Jerusalem greatly troubled Herod the King. He summoned the chief priest and the scribes to inquire about the location of the birth of the Messiah. Being told that the site was Bethlehem he secretly called the Magi to inquire the exact time of the appearance of the star. The statement "and lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them" indicates that the star had become stationary over Jerusalem where they inquired "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?"

The Magi continued their journey east till it stood over the place where Jesus was. "After coming into the house, they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way" (Matthew 2:11-12 NASB). Jesus was no longer a babe but somewhere between one and two



*Visit of the Magi*

years of age. This is confirmed in Matthew 2:16, where Herod slew all the male children two years old and under.

### **The Flight to Egypt**

The flight to Egypt was under the direction of Jehovah delivered to Joseph by an angel. “Get up! Take the Child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy him.” The urgency of this flight is shown by the fact that they left during the night, a dangerous time to travel. This journey to Egypt fulfilled the word of the prophet “OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.”

They remained in Egypt for approximately eighteen months before the angel of the Lord again appeared, stating “‘Get up, take the Child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.’ So, Joseph got up, took the Child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel” (Matthew 2:20-21 NASB).

Matthew’s account indicated when the Magi saw Jesus that the family was still in Bethlehem and it was not until the return from Egypt and the warning from Jehovah in a dream that Joseph “left for the regions of Galilee, and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: ‘He shall be called a Nazarene’” (Matthew 2:22-23 NASB). When we look at the prophecies in Isaiah, that he would lead a humble life and be despised and rejected, this certainly fitted into the attitude of many of the Jews who despised and condemned the Nazarenes (John 1:46 John 7:52).

### **Jesus as a Child in the Temple**

This significant event in a Jewish boy’s life is only recorded by Luke 2:41-52. Br. Russell comments “It was a Jewish custom that a Jewish boy should be considered ‘a son of the Law’ when he attained his twelfth year. He thus became responsible under the Law and thenceforth was required to keep its festivals” (Reprints 4957:3, 3711:2, 2559:4).

The journey with a group of fellow travelers from Nazareth to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover would have taken five to six days to cover the ninety miles. By the time they prepared for the Passover, observed the Passover and the days of unleavened bread, the family would have spent at least eight days in Jerusalem.

On the return journey they discovered on the first evening that Jesus was not with their kinsfolk and acquaintances. They returned three days later to find him in the temple seated amongst the teachers, listening, and asking questions. His hearers were amazed at the intelligence of his own answers.

His parents were astounded and asked, “My son, why have you behaved like this to us? Here have your father and I been looking for you anxiously!” Jesus’ answer confused them “Why did you look for me?” he said, “Did you not know I had to be at my Father’s house?” It may have appeared that he did not think that he had to obey his earthly parents, but the narrative tells us that he did as they told him. The last statement that is recorded of his childhood is, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52 NASB).

## **Our Source of Strength and Hope**

**W**e now find ourselves fast approaching the close of what has been an uncertain and tumultuous year. New cases of the Coronavirus disease, and deaths are being recorded every day throughout the world. The quick disappearance of this disease-causing pandemic has not come to fruition as many had thought. Instead of uniting us in a common effort, we appear to be growing further apart.

People’s lives have been turned upside down due to the uncertainty concerning how they take care of their family, stay healthy both physically and financially, and seeing that their children are getting a proper education. Confusion, violence, and social injustice is running rampant. Medical personnel and facilities have been stretched to their capacity in many cases. The grip of the Adamic curse of sin and death upon mankind has been very evident. Fear, pride, falsehoods, political turmoil, distrust of leaders, and a lack of love for fellow man, are permeating the world.

The restless sea of humanity is asking for justice and accountability from others, and in many cases not showing accountability for their own actions (Jude 13, Psalms 65:5-7). Although there has been much speculation, no one knows when things will get better for all of us. We can be assured however, that Jehovah knows (Isaiah 46:10).

### **What Now?**

Due to these troubling circumstances, we may ask ourselves, “What now?” The trouble and sorrow that has borne down upon humanity has been bitter, and many in their distresses have wondered whether God has any pity, or even exists at all. We should look to the scriptures for comfort and assurance so that our faith and trust in God can grow. Then we will not be fearful. The Psalmist wrote these words: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalms 30:5). This “night” of sin, sorrow, and death began with the disobedience of our



*Weeping for a Night, Joy in the Morning (Psalms 30:5)*

first parents in Eden, and it has indeed been a night of weeping (Genesis 3).

However, we are not to despair, for there is to be a morning of joy for the human race. That morning of joy will usher in a new day of blessing that will be brought about through the establishment of God's kingdom, with Jesus as its ruler, and the government of righteousness foretold by all God's "holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20, 21). This shows us the strong contrast between the present evil age and the coming age of righteousness. What a wonderful governmental arrangement this will be! Among many other long-sought desires, it will establish universal and lasting peace, which man in his selfishness has been unable to do. The divine head of this government, who is Christ, is referred to in prophecy as "The Prince of Peace," and we are assured that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:6,7).

In addition, there will be economic security. This is symbolized in the prophecy by the assurance that every man will dwell under his own "vine" and "fig tree" (Luke 10:19). Much of the suffering in the world throughout the ages has been due to lack of food, clothing, and shelter. Even today millions of people exist on insufficient supplies of food and water, have little clothing, and live with the most meager of shelter over their heads. However, this will be corrected through the agencies of Christ's kingdom. All shall have the opportunity to live in peace and safety (Isaiah 11:9).

Peace and economic security will not be the only blessings guaranteed to the people under the rulership of "the mountain of the house of the LORD." Isaiah wrote, "And in this mountain will Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that covereth all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He hath swallowed up death for ever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it" (Isaiah 25:6-8 ASV). We have been assured by the word of

God that this present evil world will one day in His due time, give way to a wonderful kingdom of peace, safety, and love. This is made possible as we know by the willing sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, who redeemed mankind from the Adamic curse (1 Corinthians 15:21-28, 1 Timothy 2:5,6).

## **Our Spiritual Development**

With all that is going on, and with the distractions that surround us, we may also ask ourselves, "Where am I (spiritually) concerning my level of faith and trust in the Heavenly Father?" To help determine an answer to this question, we are to apply the words, "Let a man examine himself." (1 Corinthians 11:28). This implies that we examine our heart, including our motives, will, and intentions, that we should always find it true to the Lord. This self-examination should be done daily with prayerful consideration. We again look to the scriptures for comfort, for assurance, and as a much-needed source of strength as we strive, grow and develop in a way pleasing to Him. Psalms 46:2 tells us, "He is our refuge and our strength in trouble, He is our refuge and habitation." Psalms 27:1, "Jehovah is my light, and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" We read in Psalms 81:1, that "God is our strength." "The way of Jehovah is strength" (Proverbs 10:29).

Our Heavenly Father is guiding our heart. He gives us encouragement when we face sarcasm and slander. He overrules our affairs for good. The fiercer the conflict with the powers of darkness, the more glorious the deliverance. The Lord's people are fighting the good fight of faith. We must have courage, born of faith, and strengthened by endurance. Our consciousness of being loyal to God and of divine guidance should keep us without fear. We are to strive also "toward the mark" of perfect love (Philippians 3:14).

Reading from Psalms 73:26,28, "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord Jehovah, that I may desire all thy works." This shows us our dependency on our Father and his dear son. Our flesh is weak and our heart too faint to pursue this course set out before us except as strengthened and upheld by power from on high. This is all because of God's grace or His unmerited favor (Ephesians 1:2-4)

## **"Peace I Leave You"**

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). The peace of God is compatible with great commotion and with sorrow and pain of various kinds; for it is not dependent upon outward circumstances, but a proper balancing of the mind and heart. There is nothing to fear. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans



8:31). We need rest, peace, and the promise of life everlasting to sustain us in these difficult times. We will not find these in the world around us. There is no real peace outside of the Lord's provision. Whatever your condition, whether sickness or health, whether extremely poor or in comfortable circumstances, those who God is dealing with have peace within, and realize that "godliness with contentment is a great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6).

A special scriptural passage of comfort can be found in the 23rd Psalm. "Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of Jehovah forever."

## Comfort From God

Whatever our sufferings may be, the Bible assures us that our Heavenly Father cares and is attentive to our needs. "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13, New International Version). The means by which we may be comforted in the midst of suffering include providential overruling, hymns, scriptures which contain precious promises, guardian angels that may intervene if we are in harm's way, as well as the holy Spirit which enables us to comprehend and appreciate God's tender mercies towards us. God's providence allows adversity upon his prospective divine family while in the flesh, as a means of demonstrating our obedience and crystallizing our characters (1 Samuel 15:22, Psalms 37:26).

The Heavenly Father also provides needed grace and various forms of comfort to sustain us through what otherwise might seem to be unbearable trials. May we appreciate His wisdom in permitting us to endure necessary lessons that will equip us for future service as part of that sympathetic priesthood, that will help restore mankind to perfection during that glorious kingdom reign.

We must always remember that God's hand is not short — he can and will overrule. "Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the

rivers a wilderness." "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isaiah 50:2, 59:1). What wonderful assurances of God's mighty power. These promises are all by faith, and such experiences in which the Lord's will is not made clear to us may actually be permitted as a test of our faith.

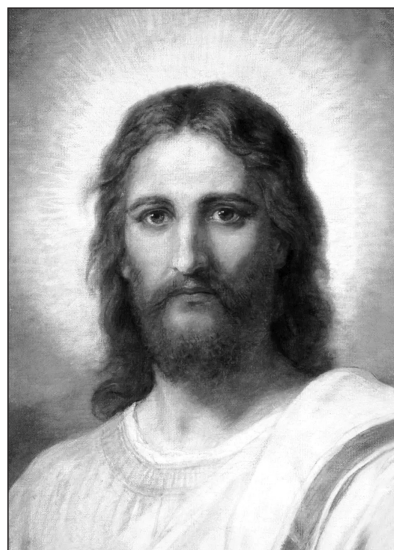
Our experiences, when viewed as an aid in determining the Lord's will, are certainly not least in importance or value. Our experiences, and God's providence in them, are a most valuable and indispensable tool in ascertaining the Lord's will. Experience, it is said, is the best teacher. We can know much in the way of God's will for us by rightly learning from our experiences. Paul expresses our progression through experience this way: "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5). True maturity, both naturally and spiritually, comes best through experience.

Paul spoke of his own spiritual maturity by using the example of the natural man. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11). We are to keep in mind that we do not all grow or progress at the same rate. An important point to remember, is that we must however, grow (1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 3:18).

We are to claim God's promises in our experiences, remembering that his providence is always there to guide us, if we are submissive to him. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). We are to remember that "the steps of a good man are ordered by Jehovah: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). This further illustrates to us that the providence of God over those who have responded to his call is a very special relationship of love and devotion. "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Proverbs 23:26).

## Our Focus

We are now going to look at the scripture, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). This sounds like a bold statement, but it should first be mentioned that this is not to be understood as self-assurance, for we know the verse, "Wherefore let him who thinketh he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). And we know that when we think of self, we tremble. But we look to the Lord believing fully that not one of His promises will fail (Hebrews 10:23). It



*"My peace I leave with you."*

was the power of Christ that rested on Paul during all his experiences, as he spent his life in service to the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:9).

It is important to remember that God through His son will strengthen and equip those who focus on Him and depend upon His grace in every aspect of their lives. “It is God that girdeth me with strength” (Psalms 18:32). We are told to “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:6). Only through consecration and spirit-begetting we can do acceptable works as “a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17,18). It is apparent that the words spoken by Paul demonstrate the great faith that Paul had. Look at Galatians 2:20, “I live by faith in the son.” For, “We walk by faith” (2 Corinthians 5:7); “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:22).

By faith through the enlightenment of the holy Spirit we can enjoy the privileges, and opportunities to know our Heavenly Father and His dear son. We have had a portion of His Plan revealed to us, we can only see the glorious things of the future through a smoked glass, obscurely. “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12). But we are assured that one day, if faithful, when beyond the veil, we shall be like our Lord. (1 John 3:2). With the perfections of the new condition, we will see perfectly, know perfectly, and understand perfectly. “This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith” (1 John 5:4).

Those who are justified by faith shall live by faith in the sure promises of God. We must come to him with a faith begotten of reverence for the all-wise author of the Divine Plan of the Ages. From this starting point faith must progress to higher and higher altitudes. We are reminded of a scripture, “They that wait upon Jehovah shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31). We must progress from a basic faith to a further, higher, and deeper faith.

We know also that there must be a deepening of our faith and trust in him. This will lead to becoming a mature Christian, and one with unwavering faith. Consecrated believers justified by faith in Christ as their Redeemer who have given their hearts to the Lord, then, are not to walk as the world does — only by sight — but with the most holy faith. “The just shall live by faith” (Hebrews 10:38). “By grace ye are saved through faith ... it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:5,8).

As a result of all that God has done for us, we are encouraged to “Let your light so shine among men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

1 John 1:5 tells us that “God is light, and in Him there is no darkness.” Light stands for truth, and for righteousness. Since in God there is no darkness at



*“God is Light” — the Apostle John*

all, he has promised to guide us continually by His Spirit through His Word. To the child of God, there is expressed, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). It is their desire to show forth a faith and a trust in Him. Since he has “called you with a holy calling” (1 Timothy 2:9, Isaiah 42:6), you are the Heavenly Father’s gemstone, and if faithful you will develop a complete and perfect character likeness to Him.

## **Our Spiritual Focus**

Our spiritual health/motivation is not associated with anything involving worldly goods or wealth. These things we have vowed to give up, even concerning our earthly inheritance. We know that Jesus paid the price for us, and he admonished us, “Lay not up treasures upon the earth, But lay up treasures for yourselves in heaven. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also” (Matthew 6:19-21). We are given words of assurance in Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.” Even the seeming delays, difficulties, troubles, persecutions, and seeming disasters that come our way during our lives (James 1:3,4).

It is always our privilege to rejoice, under all circumstances, and our pleasure is always to give thanks to God for all things (Philippians 4:4). We should also be submissive to God so that we develop a strength of character and apply the tests so that we grow in strength spiritually, and in grace, until it is finally fixed and perfected (1 Peter 5:7).

The exceeding great and precious promises of God are briefly comprehended in this one scripture. “The trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:3-4). Remember that if Christ is in you, this is your “hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). It should be our goal to daily “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2). If we have faith in God and in his son, we must show our complete faith and trust in Him. “I live by faith in the son of God” (Galatians 2:20). We also want to study the word of

the Lord, and to apply these things so that we can be pleasing to Him (2 Timothy 2:15). Our goal is to be “fighting the good fight of faith,” and striving to put down the old man, including the flesh’s resistance to sacrifice (2 Timothy 4:7).

It is our aim to let the peace of God into our hearts and minds continually by faith (Philippians 4:7). Our daily lives should involve meditation upon our Lord Jesus, and our Heavenly Father. “And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” (1 Corinthians 3:23). To develop Godlikeness will compel us to strive to reach the perfect mark of character development, and to then stand faithful, “having done all, stand” (Ephesians 6:18). This refers to cultivating or seeking after “the wisdom that is from above, that is first pure, peaceable, and gentle” (James 3:17). We are to follow after charity — love — that is the key.

We desire to “walk not after the flesh but after the spirit” (Romans 8:4). “For the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared for all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, We should live soberly, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13). This is key to determining where we are concerning our spiritual lives, our commitment to fulfilling our vow of consecration, and our desire to demonstrate our trust and faith in God

through His son.

Let us continue to look to our Father and His Word, His dear son, and to the scriptures, as our source of strength and hope. Let us draw strength from each other, and dwell together in unity of the Spirit, showing love for our Father and his son, and for one another — reflecting that love back to “the giver of every good and perfect gift” (James 1:17).

As we are reminded in Ephesians 4:1-1-5, “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of love. There is one body, one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Knowing that those who prove faithful, He will transform to His own spiritual image and likeness, so that they (His Church) may be associated with Him in His great work of bringing in the Millennial blessings. (Genesis 22:18).

Dear brethren, seek the Lord with sincerity, honesty, and peace of heart and mind, without guile and selfishness. Our Lord desires us to bear fruit. The fruits of the spirit are manifested in “temperance, meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness and love” (Galatians 5:22-23).

## The Pillar of Cloud

*(The word “LORD” is Strong’s Number 3068 — ye-ho-vaw, Jehovah, and is the Jewish national name of God.)*

### Israel’s Guide

**A**fter leaving Egypt, God miraculously guided the Israelites by creating a special cloudy and fiery pillar to move some two million people. “The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people” (Exodus 13:21,22 NASB).

The Israelites left Rameses, staying at Succoth, then Etham. Exodus 12:20, Numbers 33:5-7 provides details of the Exodus Itinerary. It appears that the cloud began to cover the nation when the Israelites left Succoth, as there they were in booths, or temporary shelters. From then on they were shielded by the cloud from the hot desert sun. The cloudy pillar led them by day; and the fire pillar by night. It appears the pillar that came down was like a guiding hand.

It is quite remarkable that the cloud and fiery pillar continued with the Israelites during their 40 years in the wilderness and it was not taken away until

they entered the Promised Land. In addition to this miracle, manna was provided, their clothes or sandals did not wear out, nor did their feet swell during this period of 40 years! (Deuteronomy 8:4, 29:5).

What an amazing sight to behold, an all-night pillar of fire with no apparent fuel source and in the daytime a cloud covering the Israelites, despite shifting winds. This was a mobile cloud that zigzagged through the wilderness despite contrary winds for 40 years! For Israel it was, truly, a daily and nightly reminder of God’s guiding power. It was a phenomenon, that was never repeated, that existed only as long as it was needed, until the promised land was finally reached!

### A Witness to Nations

We are informed that it was not only for the sake of Israel, but it was also to be a witness to all the surrounding nations that Israel’s God was wise, powerful, and protective of his chosen people. “And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O LORD, are in the midst of this



people, for You, O LORD, are seen eye to eye, while Your cloud stands over them; and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night” (Numbers 14:14).

The Moabites or Ammonites on any mountain could see the Israelite camp at night. They would see a cloud lighting the camp and a miraculous fiery pillar, or column of the cloud over the Tabernacle that reached up into the heavens. This cloud cover reflected the fiery pillar and provided light at night for the Israelites to see.

Clouds are rare in the deserts and this cloud was both unique and miraculous. Clouds are porous and thus incapable of keeping out rain. But this miraculous cloudy pillar prevented not only a downpour but also the flash floods that rush down the baked desert wadis. For 40 years, the Israelites were protected from wind, screened from the heat and burning sun of the desert, and sandstorms, which are so devastating in the wilderness. They were also protected from the danger of flash floods in the wadis of the desert. This cloud also kept the ground from being super saturated with water which would prevent the movement of their wagons and impede the Israelites’ progress. The cloud was almost like a literal tent above the Israelites. This cloud exercised an influence that preserved them from “storm” (sandstorms) and “rain” (flash floods), which comes down in torrents and races down wadis with the speed of a freight train (as witnessed at wadis of the Dead Sea that have washed buses off the road.). So the cloud was a protecting cover against sandstorms and flash floods, providing a covering upon all of the Israelites.

### **The Cloud at Crossing of the Red Sea**

This cloud played a crucial role at the shores of the Red Sea. The Israelites appeared hopelessly trapped, with mountains looming on the right and the left of them, the waters of the Red Sea lay directly in front of them, and that formidable host of Egyptian troops was rapidly advancing from the rear.

“The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night. At the morning watch, the LORD looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion” (Exodus 14:19,20,24).

It appears the “angel of God” or pillar of cloud moved to a position behind the fleeing Israelites and ahead of the pursuing Egyptians. By so doing it went between them, serving as a barrier. The pillar



*A Pillar of Fire by Night*

cast light, illuminating the way forward to the Israelites. But in contrast it created darkness and confusion at the rear upon the Egyptians. The front of the pillar was like a lamp, and the rear was black. So the pillar proved to be a blessing to the Israelites and created trouble for the Egyptians, thereby creating two different conditions at the one time.

The Israelites would have crossed the Red Sea at night, as in the “morning watch” God “brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion. He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty; so the Egyptians said, ‘Let us flee from Israel, for the LORD is fighting for them against the Egyptians’” (Exodus 14:25). The chariot wheels dragged in the mud or came off. As a result, the Egyptians cried, “Let us flee from Israel! For the Lord is fighting for Israel against us!”

### **Movement of Cloud and Departure from Mt. Sinai**

In Exodus 40:36 to 37:38, the words when “the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle” means when the pillar foot rose up into the main body cloud above it, this was a sign that it was time to move and Israel went onward in all their journeys (Numbers 9:16,17,22).

“Now in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony; and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. Then the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran” (Numbers 10:11,12). Israel had stayed at Mount Sinai for quite some time, and later on resumed their journey. We are told, “Thus they set out from the mount of the LORD three days’ journey, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD journeying in front of them for the three days, to seek out a resting place for them. The cloud of the LORD was over them by day when they set out from the camp” (Numbers 10:33,34).

The first of their journeys lasted just three days, taking them to Paran. When the Israelites broke camp at Mount Sinai, the large canopy cloud moved with them and covered them. “The cloud of the LORD was over them by day, when they set out from the camp.” This verse suggests that the journey most likely began in daylight.

### **Usually Cloud was Over The Tabernacle**

Apparently the usual resting place of the cloud was over the Most Holy of Israel’s tabernacle. Occasionally, when God wished to make a pronouncement to his chosen people, the cloudy pillar moved and took up a position at the door of the tabernacle (Exodus 33:9,10, Numbers 12:5, Deuteronomy 31:15).

In Deuteronomy 31:15 we read, “The LORD ap-



*Pillar of cloud by day*

peared in the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood at the doorway of the tent.” So when the pillar of the cloud moved it was visually trying to draw the nation to pay special attention. We recall that Moses and Joshua had been together in close camaraderie for 40 years and in verse 16 they were about to part, in the following verses Joshua was given detailed instructions and his responsibility.

### **The Shape of the Cloud**

There are two possible suggestions as to the shape of this miraculous cloud. Some consider it as an upright plume as suggested by the word “pillar.” Like a column ascending straight up into the sky. Others view it more as a canopy, like a covering.

The prophet Isaiah sheds some light on this very question: “Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy and a pavilion. It will be for a shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain” (Isaiah 4:5,6, RSV).

In verse 6, the cloud is described as protecting the Israelites from sandstorms, heat, rain, flash floods, and wind. Also it gave them warmth at night — like a booth. “It will be a shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge, and a shelter from storm and rain.” The other surrounding nations, the travellers, and bedouins later on, saw the huge cloud covering the 2 million Israelites and knew that something peculiar was happening over Israel’s camp. For at night it gave a luminescence, rather like the moonlight.

The Isaiah verses are a general lesson showing that God will be with Israel in the future as He was with that nation in the past. The Lord had visible manifestations of His presence with His people, so in the future, when the Kingdom is established, there will be visible manifestations of divine power on behalf of natural Israel. The powers that were exercised back there were temporary, whereas those of the future will be more beneficial and everlasting.

### **Cloud Was Like A Canopy**

The Hebrew the word translated “a pavilion and a canopy” of Isaiah 4:5,6 in the RSV and NIV is *chuppah* (Strong’s 2646). It literally means “covering” (NRSV),

or “canopy.” This word *chuppah* is still used today by the Jews to describe the embroidered canopy under which weddings are performed.

This Hebrew word is found two other times in the Old Testament: Psalms 19:5, translated “chamber” in the NASB, and Joel 2:16, rendered “bridal chamber.” Its significance in the Jewish wedding ceremony of today had a slightly different significance in Old Testament biblical times. Today it is used to represent the new home the couple will make for themselves. But in ancient times, the entrance into the *chuppah* marked the actual union of bride and groom; it also signified their trust in divine protection.

The wording of a bridal chamber is used in reference to the fiery pillar. The dangers of the harsh and unforgiving Sinai wilderness were sufficient to make anyone apprehensive. But the sight of the column of fire by night and the overhanging cloud by day was a constant assurance and reminder that God, who had delivered them from their ruthless Egyptian taskmasters, was able to protect them in the arid desert. If only Israel had believed! How forceful this lesson should be to the Christian today: His wisdom will not lead us where His grace cannot keep us.

### **Nehemiah’s Inspiration for Future Generations**

The returning Israelites from Babylon were reminded by Nehemiah of their first arrival in the promised land. That event had taken place some thousand years earlier. It was then that they observed the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast, also called Succoth (the very first place where they dwelt in booths after leaving Egypt), was to commemorate the protection God provided in the wilderness for 40 years and it may have also marked the cessation of the fiery pillar.

The nation was divided into eight groups and each was led in the same or similar prayer by eight Levites whose names are given in Nehemiah 9:5. It is worthy to note that on two occasions in Nehemiah’s prayer of thanksgiving for the divine protection in their exodus from Babylon, that his prayer specifically refers to the guidance and protection provided by the pillar of fire and cloud, “And with a pillar of cloud You led them by day, And with a pillar of fire by night to light for them the way in which they were to go. You, in Your great compassion, Did not forsake them in the wilderness; The pillar of cloud did not leave them by day, To guide them on their way, Nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go” (Nehemiah 9:12,19).

The psalmist also draws his inspiration from that guiding light and of the cloudy pillar: “Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them” (Psalm 99:6,7).

## “Jesus is The Gospel Age Guide”

In the Gospel Age, though there is no literal pillar of fire or cloudy cover to provide such protection and guidance in a Christian’s wilderness journey, they are not without his guiding light. All of the functions provided by this miraculous cloudy and fiery pillar are given to them through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Like the cloudy pillar, our Lord Jesus is a guide. He guides by his example. He says “I am the way the truth and the life, no one cometh unto the father but by me” (John 14:6). As long as we walk in the path made by his own blessed footsteps in the sand, we shall not lose our way on the road to glory. Christ like the cloud, goes before his people, and says to them, follow me. By marching after him, every step will bring us nearer to that better country. Like Jesus, let us go about continually doing good. We recall Our Lord Jesus prayed often. Before break of day, he climbed the solitary mountain to communicate with his Father. We should at all times be in contact with our headquarters.

Also, he guides us by his word. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psalms 119:105). The Holy Bible, like the “angel pillar,” is an ever present and seen guide. We can see it with our bodily eyes, and even feel it with our hands, and when open to it we may discern it ever pointing onwards, and upwards. If we follow its guidance we will not miss the narrow way, nor fail to reach at last that blessed goal at the end of our wilderness journey.

Jesus guides us by the holy Spirit. “Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all the truth for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come” (John 16:13). By the holy Spirit, even when like Israel’s cloud he may seem to be acting otherwise. Into whatever circumstances of difficulty, suffering, or danger he may bring His people, they need not have the slightest fears. For he is a divine and unerring leader. The road ahead may appear like the wrong way as those in the world are all travelling in a totally different direction to us. But it is the right way, as Job said, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15).

Like the fiery pillar, Christ is our light. His words are, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5). Till illuminated by him, none can see. It is the same great light that chases away our darkness and enables us to see the first step of our spiritual pilgrimage that brightens our very path

during all the succeeding steps of our journey to the New Jerusalem. We can miss the way or stumble on the road only if we wilfully shut our eyes, and refuse to admit his glorious rays. Christ will be the light of the heavenly city. “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof” (Revelation 21:23).

Like the cloud, Christ is our shady pillar. To pilgrims travelling heavenwards, he is “the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isaiah 32:2). He is our shade. Were this blessed shelter provided by our dear Heavenly Father withdrawn, how soon would all that is lovely and pure and God-like be burned out!

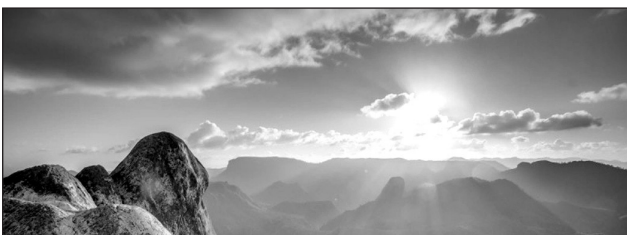
Like the cloud, Christ is our shield. He said to the Apostle Paul, and still says to everyone of his disciples, “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). His grace justifies us, and by his grace we will have part in the divine nature if faithful unto death. Defended by his grace, where are the enemies who can overcome the righteous? If Christ comes between them and the legion of foes ever seeking the destruction of us, we are safe from assault as were the Israelites from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, when the cloudy pillar stood between the pursuing and the pursued.

The Christian’s strength lies in the knowledge of his own weakness, which prompts him to lay hold of an almighty shield, able to defend him in every emergency. However many strong enemies there may be, one has but to look away from himself, and up to him in whom all fullness dwells, in order to be effectually guarded from the darts of the enemy. Guarded by this almighty armour, one may sing, “The Lord is my buckler” (Psalms 18:2). “My refuge and my fortress my God; in him will I trust” (Psalms 91:2).

Like the pillar, Christ is our oracle. “He is the word,” the grand medium of communication between God and man. “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten son, who is in the bosom of the father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). Let us lend our ears to this great oracle, our saviour Jesus Christ, and let us listen and give heed to his commandments, and we shall become wise unto salvation and receive all the necessary directions to that heavenly Jerusalem.

Christ is thus as the fiery cloudy pillar that went before the Israelites, a guide, a light, a shade, a shield, an oracle, a fast friend, and a constant attendant to the Christian. Like the cloudy pillar, he leads, he enlightens, he screens, he shields, he defends, he instructs, and he commands. The Israelites on their march to the promised land are a type of the Christian on their journey through this world to their heavenly promised country.

At the Jordan River the cloud took its departure. It did not accompany the Israelites into Canaan, but Christ will never, ever leave those whom he has guided through the wilderness of this world to the land of bliss.



*Jesus is our Light and guide*



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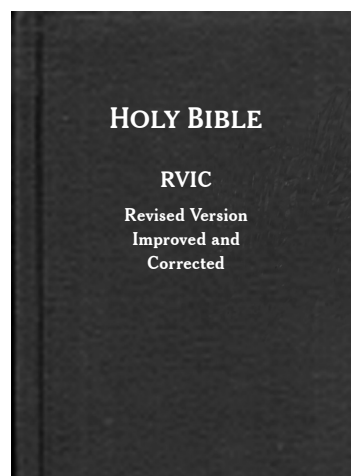
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On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom,  
Sin Offering, and Atonement.

This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute during the 1970's and sets out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the next part of this 274-page book. For Brethren who would like to read more of the content it is available through the Berean Bible Institute's official webpage.

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## Letter

**Dear Brethren,** I write this because I want to say "Thank you" for the received a letter package with 5 Biblical booklets from BBI Inc. I am very happy to receive them. I am really very glad and thankful. They are really precious to me. I am an older Christian woman. I read the Bible and I study, too. I do not speak very good English. I want to receive Peoples Paper, too. I will order books later.

# The Bible Teachings (Part Eight)

*On the Covenants — Mediator — Ransom — Sin Offering — Atonement*

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## Israel's Sins Removed Before Establishment of New Covenant

St. Paul refers directly to this New Covenant to be made with Israel at the end of this age (verse 27), saying, "This is my Covenant unto them (Natural Israel), when I Shall take away their sins" (Romans 11:27). The taking away of their sins is a necessity for them, before they can receive this New Covenant, because God makes no Covenant with sinners.

Israel's sins were not cancelled by our lord when he ascended up on high and appeared in the presence of God for us — according to the type, sprinkling the blood on the Mercy seat for the sins of those for whom it was applied — us, "the household of faith" — not them, not Israel in the flesh, nor any others, than "us."

## Lord's Goat Typical of Church

According to the type, a second sin-offering was to be made, "the lord's goat" was also to be sacrificed by the Priest and its blood sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat, not for the household of faith, but "for all the people." The Lord's goat, as we have seen, typified the Church, the Body of Christ, made acceptable for sacrifice through the merit of Christ's blood and sacrificed by our High Priest throughout this Gospel Age. We delight in this sacrifice and "present our bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, and our reasonable service," because we are assured that if we suffer with him, and be dead with him in his sacrificial death, we shall also live with him and reign with him in his Mediatorial Kingdom, which will bless Israel and the world (Romans 12:1).

## "Those Days" and Joel's Prophecy

This same expression, "after those days," occurs in connection with Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the holy Spirit. Through him the Lord declares the ultimate pouring out of the Divine blessing, the holy Spirit, upon all flesh; but he informs us that it will be "after those days." It is still future; hence here is another evidence that this expression, "after those days," signifies after the completion of the work of the selection of the Church — the Bride of the Messiah — the Mediator, the Christ. The lord proceeds to say through the prophet that his holy Spirit would first be poured out upon his special servants and handmaidens "during those days." And it has been so: ever since Pentecost, the holy Spirit has been for the servants and handmaidens of the Lord, and for no others. It cannot reach the others — the world of mankind in general — until "after those days." The same thought is expressed by the Apostle when he says that "our Lord is a propitiation [a satisfaction] for our sins [the

Church's sins, throughout this Gospel Age], and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world [in due time]" (1 John 2:2).

## Secondary Application of Merit

This secondary application of the merit of our lord upon the Mercy Seat, on behalf of the world, corresponds to the second sprinkling of the blood on the Atonement Day — "the blood of the Lord's goat" — "His own blood" "on behalf of all the people," sealing for them, consummating, the New Covenant.

## Why New Covenant Delayed

Why has the New Covenant been so long delayed? We reply that, although it was promised centuries before Christ, it did not become an assured fact until our Lord Jesus died. His death was sufficient to have sealed that New Covenant and at once to have brought in restitution blessings to Israel, and through Israel to the world in general, if the Redeemer, when he ascended on high, had so applied the merit of his sacrifice. But it is evident that he did not so apply it; first, by the fact that Israel's restitution did not begin there, and has not begun yet, and will not begin until "after those days." Secondly, it is proven by the other fact that the merit of Christ's sacrifice, which was not given to Israel for the sealing of Israel's New (law) Covenant, was given to another class, to a new nation, to Spiritual Israel, and has been applicable to and brought manifest blessings to her during all these centuries of the Gospel Age.

## Our Lord a "Surety" of the New Covenant

So, then, in the Scriptural language, that which our Lord did do in connection with the promised New Covenant between God and Israel at his first advent, was that he became a "surety" and guarantee for its later fulfilment (Hebrews 7:22). From that time, therefore, the New Covenant may be considered as assured or legislated or guaranteed, but not put into force, because, as the Apostle declares, a testament or will is of no binding force until the death of the testator. In harmony with the Divine Plan, the Redeemer applied the merit of His sacrifice to a special class "called" and "drawn of the Father" during this Gospel Age, to be members, to join with him in his sacrifice. These were to receive of his fulness, his merit, as the atonement for their sins, and then they were to drink of his blood or share in his death, that his blood or the merit of his sacrifice might as a blessing pass through them and permit them by sacrificing restitution blessings to attain the divine nature and glory (2 Peter 1:4). None of these may keep the blessing of restitution privileges. Each was obliged in advance to pledge his life in sacrifice

with his lord before his final acceptance and begetting of the holy Spirit to joint heirship with the head in his glory, honour, and immortality. So then, the reason that the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah's day and assured by our Lord's death has not yet gone into effect and become operative in restitution blessings to Israel and the world is that the death of the testator has not yet been fully accomplished; for the testator, through whom Israel will get that great blessing of the New Covenant, is not our lord Jesus alone, but The Christ, Head and Body.

### **Natural Israel and Spiritual Israel re Mercy**

To this agree the words of the Apostle again, namely, that natural Israel will "obtain mercy through your [Spiritual Israel's] mercy" (Romans 11:31). The laying down of the restitution rights received by us from the Lord through faith in his blood is our sacrifice of the same, the dying of the Testator's Body (2 Corinthians 4:10). Israel is to be the beneficiary of this testament, this legacy, this will, the merit of which is all as Jesus said, "In his blood," in his cup, which we must drink.

If the Church are to be members of the great Mediator, why are not Israel, who were baptised into Moses (1 Corinthians 10:1,2), thus made members of the Mediator of the Law Covenant?

### **Israel's Types Complex — Unlearned in Danger of Wresting Scriptures to Their Own Injury**

The Divine arrangement which used Moses, Aaron, the tribe of Levi, and all Israel as types is complex, so that the unlearned and unstable are in danger of wresting them to their own injury. Whoever will begin with the Passover type of the deliverance of the first-born and proceed with the history of the typical people down to the time when they entered Canaan, then turn to the death of Christ as the antitypical Passover Lamb and attempt to parallel the experiences of the Church and the world with the experiences of Israel, will find himself confused greatly until he comes to understand that in Israel a number of types mingled and overlapped.

### **Firstborns Passed Over vs. Deliverance of Israel**

For instance: Recognising the Passover lamb as typical of our Lord Jesus and his death; and recognising the first-born of Israel spared "in that night" as typical of Spiritual Israel, we know that "that night" typified this Gospel Age. We know also that the following morning typified the Millennial morning. The deliverance of Israel through the Red Sea would therefore seemingly typify the final deliverance of the whole world of mankind from the bondage of sin and death, typified by Pharaoh and his army. Similarly, the overthrow of Pharaoh's army would seemingly represent the ultimate destruction of Satan and every evil influence at the close of the Millennial Age. That was the end of that type.

With the end of that type another began, for the march of Israel toward Mt. Sinai, where they entered into covenant relationship with the Lord, typified the approach of the Gospel Church and of the whole

world to the condition of things pictured by St. Paul in Hebrews 12 — the end of this Age, and a time of trouble and the establishment of the New (law) Covenant with Israel for the blessing of all the families of the earth. Following this, the wilderness journey constitutes still another type representing God's people and the failure of many to enter into His rest, because of lack of faith. Subsequently the smiting of the rock by Moses and his not being permitted to enter the promised land is yet another type. The crossing of Jordan is still another type. The appointment of Joshua, the new leader, instead of Moses, is still another type. Israel conquering the various enemies in the land of Canaan is still another type.

### **Baptism of Israel Into Moses Typical of World's Baptism in Millennium**

Coming back now to the first-mentioned of these types — the one which began with the killing of the Passover lamb, the sprinkling of its blood, the eating of its flesh during "that night" in which the firstborns were passed over and spared — we notice that the feature of the type which has to do with "the Church of the Firstborn" and this Gospel Age was passed before the time when the Israelites as a nation were baptised into Moses in the sea and in the cloud. Consequently, that baptism into Moses evidently pictured, not the baptism of the Church of the Firstborn into Christ's death, but the baptism of the whole world of mankind into Christ's life during the Millennium.

### **Israel Into Liberty or Life vs. Church Into Sacrificial Death**

The Church passed from justification of life into sacrificial death with the Lord to become members of the Mediator's "Body." The Israelites passed through the sea and the cloud, not into death, but into liberty — into freedom as a nation. That baptism into Moses evidently therefore represented the deliverance of the groaning creation into the liberty wherewith Christ proposes to make free all who will come unto him in response to his drawing during the Millennial Age. Thus the Apostle tells us that as Jesus already is the Head of the Church, which is his Body, so ultimately he will be the Head of all creation, because it is the will of God "to gather together in one all things under one Head" (Ephesians 1:10).

### **Pyramid of Chart Illustrates Christ the Head**

This we have sought to illustrate in the Chart of the Ages in Volume 1. In the pyramid of that chart we show our Lord Jesus the Head, the Church his Body, the Great Company, Fleshly Israel restored, and ultimately all nations brought under the one Headship. The same thought that the world will become Christ's in the possessive sense is expressed by St. Paul. When telling of the resurrection he says, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust — Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are his at [during] his presence" (1 Corinthians 15:23). The Apostle expresses the same thought that the world will be brought under the control and under the name of



Christ, saying, "In whom the whole family of God, both in heaven and in earth, is named" (Ephesians 3:15).

### **Church of First-born Not Illustrated in Israel's Baptism into Moses**

So then in this type of Israel being baptised into Moses we have a suggestion of what belongs to the Millennial Age, but no suggestion whatever appertaining to the Church of the Firstborns during this Age — no suggestion of a baptism into Christ's sufferings and death. Indeed, nowhere in that type is the association between the Head and the members shown. It merely pictures to us the Lamb of God slain, and our privilege of being spared or passed over from death into life in this Gospel Age — before the general deliverance of mankind from the power of sin and death.

### **Must Adam First Be Redeemed?**

Accepting the Scriptural presentation that "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death as a result of sin, and thus death passed upon all men, for that all are sinners" (Romans 5:12-19); accepting also the declaration of Scripture, "As by man came death, by man also comes the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:21); also the assurance that "As all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22), shall we understand that Adam must first be redeemed and atoned for before any of his children can receive reconciliation? If so, should we understand that Adam was included amongst the believers, the household of faith, on whose behalf Jesus, our great High Priest, appeared and made satisfaction for sin when He appeared in the presence of God for us?

### **Adam Not Included in Ancient Worthies**

Most assuredly we should not! St. Paul did not mention Adam in his list of Ancient Worthies in Hebrews 11. On the contrary, our expectation for Adam is that as a man of the world class, "all people," his sin will be atoned for in the end of this age. When the great High Priest shall antitypically sprinkle his blood on the Mercy Seat for the sins of the whole world, "all the people," just as at the beginning of this age He made atonement for our sins — the Church's. Our expectation also is that Father Adam will be one of the last to be awakened from the sleep of death and be brought forth to the privileges, blessings, opportunities, and testings of the Millennial Age.

### **Restitution Begins with the Living**

Our thought is that the restitution blessings will begin with the generation living at the time of the inauguration of the Mediator's Kingdom; that it will deal first with these and bring them to a measure of recuperation before beginning with any of those who sleep in the dust of the earth; and further that those of the sleepers who went down into death most recently will be the first to come up, while those who went down first will be the last to come up. In other words, the first shall be last and the last shall be first. Our thought

is that quite probably the awakenings of the world will be in response to the prayers of their friends during the Millennium; and that those living at any time will be specially interested in praying for such as were their acquaintances or relatives. We can see no reason why Father Adam should take any precedence in connection with the work of redemption. While it is true that he was the man through whom sin and death entered the world, nevertheless amongst the thousands of millions of his children he has no pre-eminence in the sight of Justice, whose record respecting humanity we understand to be: One man's sin — penalty, Death.

### **Justice Does Not Recognise Individuals**

Likewise, although our Lord Jesus is the one who paid our penalty, Justice in her records would probably take no particular note of that fact, but would merely enter the record, One holy, harmless, undefiled man died and made appropriation of the merit of his death for the household of faith. Later we may assume the records of Justice read, The merit of the one man who died, the Just for the unjust, which was appropriated to "the household of faith," having been laid down again sacrificially, is now applied again — this time "on behalf of all the people" not included in the first application.

### **Justice Did Not Separately Condemn Adam's Children**

The sacrifice of the man Christ Jesus was sufficient for the sins of the whole world, and that ultimately it will be made available for the cancellation of the sins of the world is because Justice in the condemnation merely sentenced Father Adam as a man and has paid no attention to his children in the way of separate condemnation, but counted them all as members of the one man. Hence the death of Jesus could have been applied for anyone of Adam's race, or for any number of them, or for all of them, including Adam. And this last will be the ultimate result (Z1909- 315).

## **MOSES A MEDIATOR BEFORE AARON A PRIEST**

### **Institution of Priesthood vs. Time of trouble**

The record of the institution of the priesthood, the establishment of the tabernacle service, etc., comes after the account of Israel reaching Mt. Sinai — after the account of the mountain quaking and smoking and the terrible sights and sounds referred to by St. Paul (in Hebrews 12:26-28), which, we understand, prefigured the great time of trouble we are expecting, in which society will be shaken and mankind be prepared for the establishment of the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ under the New Covenant. How shall we understand this fact? How can we harmonise it with the Scriptural thought that our Lord became High Priest more than eighteen centuries ago, when he offered up himself and later as Priest presented his blood on our behalf at the heavenly Mercy Seat; and that since then he has been gathering and sacrificing the body of under-priests, and that he, as the Head and they as the Body, will shortly be revealed as the antitypical Moses, the Mediator of the New Covenant?

## Types Not Always in Sequential Order

We must remind our readers afresh that the various types of the Scriptures do not follow one another in sequential order. Moses assuredly was a type of Christ — Head and Body (Acts 3:22). Just as surely Aaron was a type of Christ Jesus, and his sons types of the Church, the Body of Christ, the Royal Priesthood. King Solomon in some respects was a type of Christ. As the rich, the wise, the famous king, his fame was worldwide. Similarly, Melchizedek was a type of Christ, in him being blended the kingly and the priestly offices. These types could not all be worked out in one person and at one time; hence we do not so find them. When thinking of Moses as a type of the Mediator between God and men, we should consider him as St. Peter explains, as composed of Head and members, and that God has been raising him up during this Gospel Age. Our Lord, the Head, first was raised to the plane of glory, honour, and immortality. Later all of his faithful ones, sharers in his sacrifice, will be sharers in his Divine nature and glory, they will be raised up with him by a share in his resurrection (Philippians.3:10), “the first resurrection,” which includes only the blessed and holy. These, his members, shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years and be unto him and unto the Father kings and priests for the blessing of mankind (Revelation 20:6).

### Moses vs. Christ as Mediator

In considering Moses, the mediator of the Law Covenant, as typical of The Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, we should view him from this standpoint — as one Head and many members, just as we would Melchizedek, who represents our Lord, the Head, and the Church, his Body, the Royal Priest of the future. On the contrary, Aaron represents the same great Priest from a different standpoint, because his typical work related to Christ and the Church in the present life only — as a sacrificing priesthood — up to the end of the sacrificial work, the sprinkling of the blood of atonement in the most holy on the Mercy Seat and the inauguration of the new dispensation of glory and blessing. His service, also, in some degree, shows the Millennial work of cleansing humanity from sin and that both the High Priest and the under priests, his members, will be associated in that work.

### Two Types Could Not Be Expressed Simultaneously

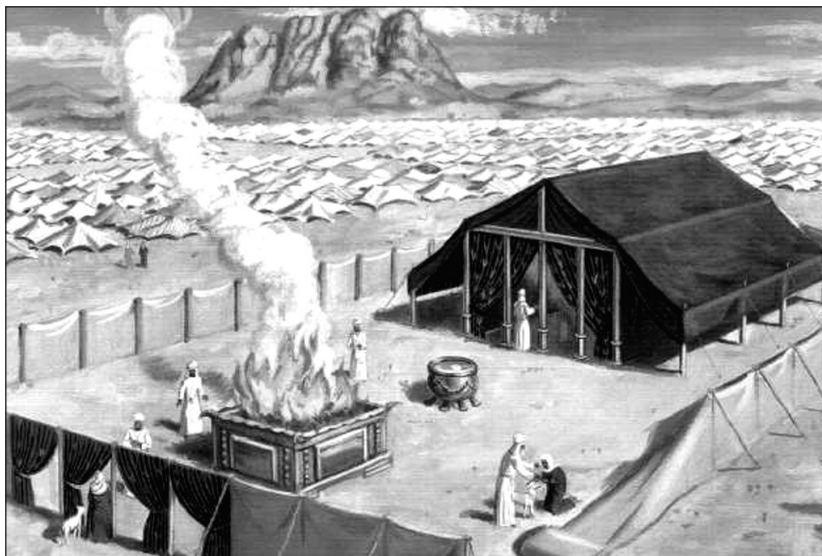
Since the two types could not be expressed simultaneously, it was every way better that the mediator type and the institution of the Law Covenant, typical of the New Covenant, should precede all sacrificing; yea, precede the appointing and setting apart of the priesthood, even though the active work of the Mediator of the New Covenant cannot begin until the close of this age, when the sacrificing of the “better sacrifices” shall have been

completed. Coming first in the record, no one who rightly understands the types could misunderstand this to teach that the antitypical Mediator must first come forth and institute the New Covenant, before the antitypical priesthood would come forward and make the sacrifices, the sin-offerings which would make possible the institution of that New Covenant. We have been surprised that anyone could be so blind as not to see that the sacrifice of Christ is the very basis of his work as the Mediator of the New Covenant. Hence, he could not be in any sense either a part or all of the antitypical Moses, until after serving as the antitypical Aaron. The correctness of this thought is also borne out by the fact that Aaron was older than Moses.

### Answering Argument re Priesthood Was Not Inaugurated Until after Sealing of Law Covenant

It follows, then, that those who raised the objection that the Church could not be members of the Body of the Mediator, because the Priesthood was not inaugurated until after Moses had mediated and sealed the Law Covenant, put themselves in a very foolish light and show the shallowness of their argument. For if this be an argument against the Church being members of the Mediator’s Body, it would be an equally strong argument against our Lord Jesus, the antitypical High Priest, being the Head of that Mediator.

The harmony between the two types is shown in the fact that in the end of the Atonement day, after Aaron had offered the sacrifice of “the bullock for [instead of] himself” as the sin-offering for his body and his house, the household of faith, and after he had subsequently offered “the Lord’s goat” and applied its blood on behalf of all the people, then, as the antitypical Priest, Head and Body, completely clothed in the garments illustrative of his authority and power, he was accompanied by Moses, the mediator, to the altar. Thus, we read: “Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people; and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto all the people” (Leviticus 9:23) (Z1909-325).



*Israel's Tabernacle in the Wilderness*