

the **ISSUE TWELVE**  
honest  
truth





# The voice of one

## In issue twelve

On page 4 we present a study by Harry A. Whittaker, a fine Christadelphian Bible student from England. He is not tradition-bound, but his Biblical approach is truthful and challenging. This study is a chapter in his small book *The Last Days*, published in 1969. We hope to make his books available to our readers.

On page 10 James W. McLain considers the reasons for long life among the contemporary patriarchs, before and after the Flood.

In "Q&A" the editor attempts to answer a reader's questions concerning tribulation. We expect to have Richard Worley, the regular writer of this feature, back next issue.

## The days of Noah

The conditions on the earth in the days of Noah are graphically described in Genesis 4 to 6. Jesus compared Noah's days to conditions that would exist in the end of the age—our day. (Matt. 24:36-39; Luke 17:26-30.)

In his article in this issue, James W. McLain emphasizes the good aspects of long life among the godly patriarchs before the Flood. They could pass on the truth PERSONALLY to their descendants, and so preserve the truth for succeeding generations.

The bad aspect of long life in that age was that sinners also lived a long time, and could do more mischief than modern man with his average 70 years. It was almost like having "immortal sinners"—God forbid!

## Spiritual decline

The days of Noah were characterized by spiritual decline. We are prone to emphasize the great sins committed by those pre-Flood rebels, beginning with Cain's murder of Abel. (Gen. 4.) We emphasize the irregular marriage of the Cainite Lamech, who took two wives. (Ch. 4:19.) We notice the marriages between the sons of the godly patriarchs and the daughters of ungodly Cain, and their violent offspring—the *nephilim*. (6:1-4.)

Those days were also characterized by commission of sins of violence (6:11, 4:23, 24), and of profaning God's name. (4:24, cp. Jude 14, 15.)

## Sins of omission

Jesus' characterization of the days of Noah mentions only that "they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" (Matt. 24:38). What's wrong with that? Some suggest that perhaps they were doing these things to excess. Perhaps like our own times, if one would compare what people spend on food and

# the honest truth

drink as opposed to what they spend on education or charity, you would see warped senses of value.

Mostly, they sinned by putting food and drink first. They put marriage before God. They allowed personal desires and pursuits to replace worship of God! We know that anything that takes God's place is idolatry. The sinful thing about the whole mess was **THEY KNEW** God—his plans and purposes, but chose to ignore him.

Romans 1:16-32 describes man's decline in spirituality in plain steps of devolution or degeneration. As Adam, 1) they knew God, 2) they glorified him not as God, 3) they were not thankful, 4) they became vain, 5) their heart was darkened, 6) they professed to be wise, but were fools, 7) they exchanged the true God for images, and 8) they changed the truth into a lie. These steps have been oft repeated since the beginning.

## They ignored Noah

Another sin of omission on the part of the antediluvians was that they ignored God's herald, Noah. In Genesis 6:3, God gave the world 120 years, and set Noah about building the ark of safety. Second Peter 2:5 calls Noah "a preacher of righteousness." Hebrews 11:7 says "he condemned the world." We picture Noah going about building that huge boat, warning people of impending judgment, and hearing only taunts and slurs.

## Our times

Our days are a carbon copy of the days of Noah. Not only are

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

It is mailed free of charge to all interested persons, as a work of faith. Gifts toward its support are solicited, and are tax deductible.

The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

## CONTENTS

The voice of one .....	2
Jew and Arab, Harry A. Whittaker .....	4
The promises of God, Beth Briggs .....	8
Contemporary patriarchs, James W. McLain .....	10
Q&A, editor .....	14

the same sins being committed—murder, violence, profanity, irregular marriages, and excessive emphasis on food and drink, but people still ignore God's way and his heralds of righteousness.

The people who know God are still omitting to do the things they should. Instead, they are

putting personal desires and pursuits ahead of God. As surely as God brought that world to an end by the Flood, he will bring this one to an end by fire. (2 Pet. 3:7.) Will we be found in Christ—our ark of safety, or dying with the world of the ungodly? It's up to us! □



# Jew and Arab

By Harry Whittaker  
Lichfield, Staffordshire, England

**I**T IS THE purpose of this study to suggest that, contrary to common expectation, the *last* great conflict *before* the coming of the Lord will be between Jew and Arab, and not (as is often thought) between Jew and Russian.

Just as there were weaknesses in the hypothesis of a Gog-Magog invasion of Israel before the coming of the Lord, so there is a corresponding strength about the repeated emphasis in the prophets on an Arab victory over the Jews.

While many students of prophecy have lately found anticipations in Scripture of the present Arab-Jew antagonism, few seem to have taken these prophetic foreshadowings to their logical conclusion. The evidence—Biblical, not political—calls for reexamination.

## Edom=Arabs

First, it is taken as a conclusion requiring no proof that the prophecies of the last days concerning Edom are about the Arabs. Many of the Arab tribes are descended from Esau, and ancient Edom is unquestionably Arab territory today.

The first of these prophecies calling for attention is Ezekiel, chapters 35 and 36. The words here are remarkably explicit: "I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I am the LORD. Because thou hast said, These two nations [Edom and Israel] and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas the LORD was there: therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which

thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; *and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee*" (35:9-11).

Certain events implied

A careful consideration of these words shows that certain events are clearly implied:

1) The annexation of Israel by Arab foes.

2) A divine judgment on these boastful enemies, to be followed immediately by

3) the manifestation of divine glory among the Jews.

Almost every verse in the chapter reinforces these conclusions.

Ezekiel 36 is, if anything, even more emphatic. There Edom is pictured as gloating over a recent triumph: "Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession" (v. 2). For this, divine judgment is pronounced "against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart" (v. 5).

But, by contrast, there is to be regathering and blessing for Israel: "Ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come" (v. 8).

Israel's last agony

What is especially impressive is that this Arab desolation of the Land is represented as Israel's *last* agony before the fulfillment of all their ancient hopes: "Thou [land of Israel] shalt devour men *no more*, neither . . . will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen *any more*, neither

shalt thou bear the reproach of the people *any more*, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall *any more*" (vv. 14, 15).

The logical conclusion seems to be that *the Arab conquest of Israel will be the last that it will experience*.

Prophecy of Obadiah

The prophecy of Obadiah "concerning Edom" has exactly the same shape. Reinforcement of this conclusion just reached is only to be evaded by denying altogether a last-day application of the prophecy. "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever" (v. 10).

There is the same emphasis on the unlawful possession of Israel's territory: "Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity" (v. 13).

Therefore judgment from the Lord must inevitably follow: "The day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, . . . they shall be as though they had not been" (vv. 15, 16).

Nevertheless, Israel will be delivered: "Upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (v. 17).

The ensuing verses (18, 19) indicate the whole of the Land promised to Abraham will be restored, "and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S" (v. 21) (*more*)



# The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.

## PROMISE NUMBER THIRTY

**ISAIAH 1:18—“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”**

The majority of us have never committed any of the “grosser sins,” but all of us have sinned and have need of Christ’s cleansing blood. But, suppose we have committed some dreadful deed such as murder, robbery, assault, or something else in this category? Is there any hope for us then? Our Scripture-promise assures us there is. If we truly repent and turn our backs forever on our evil acts, God will forgive us, and our sins will become “white as snow,” or “shall be as wool.”

And, let us remember if any of us are inclined to look down on such a “sinner,” that it was the publican who confessed his sins that received the commendation of Jesus. It was not the self-righteous Pharisee who praised himself and thought he needed no forgiveness from God.

*Lord, make my sins to be as wool,  
My darkness turn to light,  
And through Christ’s sacrifice, may I  
Keep all my garments white.*

## PROMISE NUMBER THIRTY-ONE

**ISAIAH 26:3—“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”**

How many people in this chaotic world, blessed with everything that money can buy, have not the slightest conception of peace! They drift here and there, always grasping at pleasures which vanish with the obtaining. They are restless and unhappy, always seeking—but never finding—anything to satisfy their unquenchable longing. Though quite unknown to them, it is their desire for the peace of God.

There are others who have suffered poverty, illness, and loss, and yet have obtained harmony and tranquility in their lives. They have become intimately acquainted with God, and have faith that the loving Father permits only such trials as are necessary for their

character building. Like Paul, they were willing to count all things as nothing that they might win Christ. (Phil. 3:8.)

Jesus said to his disciples before he left them: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). "Let not your heart be troubled"! Why should we be troubled when all we need do is believe in and accept this all-encompassing peace that Jesus has promised to give us?

*Dear Father, take my all, I pray,  
That I may be thine own,  
That when my soul cries out to thee  
And life's foundation stone  
Is buffeted by angry seas  
At thy divine decree,  
Thy voice, above the breakers' roar,  
Shall speak sweet peace to me.*

### PROMISE NUMBER THIRTY-TWO

**ISAIAH 30:15—"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."**

This text promises strength, and tells us how to attain it. We will not receive it in tumult and confusion, but in quietness. What does this mean to us? It means we must have some quiet time each day in which to study God's Word, and seek him in prayer. Thus we may appropriate the promises and instruction he has given to us.

We must not allow ANYTHING to keep us from this quiet time. It may be early in the morning before we go to work, or begin our daily chores. It may be when we are ready to retire at night, when the noise and tumult of the day are over, for awhile at least. It is in this way we will gain the promised strength.

We must come to God in confidence, knowing that he hears us always. James 1:6 tells us we must "ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." If a wave is driven with the wind and tossed, it isn't very stable, is it? If our mind falters in unbelief and fear, it is also unstable, and God will not hear us. We must "believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

We must have absolute and unwavering faith in God's ultimate goodness. Then we must put whatever worrisome topic is bothering us from our minds and go confidently about our daily tasks. If we have faith in God, he has heard us. In a way he sees that will meet our ultimate need, and in his own due time, he will answer.

*If trustingly we come to God  
When mind and heart are still,  
And wait in restful quietness,  
We then shall know his will.*

*We must approach with confidence,  
It always is his plan  
To strengthen those who ask him to,  
If they believe he can.*

Thus, again, Israel's final tribulation appears to come from *Arab* enemies.

### Psalm 83

Psalm 83 also has been read by many as a prophecy of Israel's calamity in the last days. Doubtless it had its origin in the historical circumstances of the reign of Hezekiah or Jehoshaphat. Few readers of these words would limit its reference to such a time, any more than they would insist on the application of Psalm 72 to Solomon only.

Psalm 83, then, describes a highly successful confederacy against the people of God: "They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (vv. 3, 4).

### Impressive list

Then follows a long and impressive list of names of the hostile peoples—all of them Arab peoples, or modern Arab territories: Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagarenes, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, the Philistines, Tyre, Asshur, and the children of Lot. (Vv. 6-8.)

The plea for divine succour (vv. 9-11) is based not, as is so commonly the case elsewhere, on God's mighty deliverance from Egypt under Moses, but on his rescue of his people from Arab oppressions: Sisera and Jabin, the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb, and Zebah and Zalmunna.

The Psalm ends with the words: "That men may know

that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth" (v. 18). Such words require reference to the end of this era.

### "Time of Jacob's trouble"

Further evidence may be adduced from Jeremiah 30 and 31. "The time of Jacob's *trouble*" (30:7) is one out of which he is to be saved, so that "strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: but they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king [the Messiah, ch. 23:5, 6], whom I will raise up unto them" (30:8, 9).

The Hebrew word here translated "trouble" is the same as that used in Genesis 32:7: "Thy brother Esau . . . cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and *distressed*."

In the ensuing prophecy of Jeremiah 31:7-22, about the re-gathering of Israel, phrase after phrase goes back to the Genesis narrative of Jacob's return to the Land in fear, because of Syrian foes behind him and Edomite foes coming to meet him. About twenty of these allusions are traceable. The obvious intention is to represent that return of Israel the patriarch as a type of the return of Israel the nation.

Read thus the prophecy carries a strong implication that in the great "time of Jacob's trouble," it will be *Arab* (Esau) hostility and opposition which must be feared, rather than Russian.

### "The city shall be taken"

The familiar details of Zechariah 14 harmonize with this



view: "The city shall be taken, . . . and half of the city [i.e., of the population of the city] shall go forth into captivity, and . . . Then shall the LORD go forth" (vv. 2, 3).

It is not unreasonable to identify this "captivity" of Israel in the last days with that described in Joel 3:1-8. If this equation is correct, then the gathering of the hostile nations for retribution in "the valley of Jehoshaphat" (v. 2) is highly appropriate also, inasmuch as the great deliverance in King Jehoshaphat's time was from a fearsome invasion by "Ammon and Moab and mount Seir [Edom]" (2 Chron. 20:10).

This prophecy of Joel concludes with the words: "Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land" (3:19).

#### In conclusion

From the foregoing accumulation of Bible evidence it can be justly claimed that a fair case is to be made out for believing that the great climax of Israel's history is to come not with the crushing of a tiny Jewish state by a Russian steamroller, but by the fulfillment of the great historic types of Genesis—Ishmael against Isaac, and Esau against Jacob.

The ultimate outcome of this clash is assured, both in type and prophecy. But first Israel must learn, through the most bitter experience of all, to abandon all reliance on working out its own salvation. As yet the Jews show no sign whatever of assimilating the vital lesson that cleverness and industry can never be any substitute for humble faith in the God of their fathers.—*The Last Days*. □



## ***Where do YOU stand?***

One of our human failings, as I see it, has been our admiration for the "middle-of-the-roader." Certainly many of us agree that the exercise of restraint is one of the marks of the good man. But in some areas compromise is flabby and dangerous. Any person of real conviction and strength must choose one side of the road or the other. It would be a strange kind of education that urged us to be "relatively" honest, "sometimes" just, "usually" tolerant, "for the most part" decent.

As you read history and biography, I think you will not come to equate greatness with compromise. Rather, you will find it in decisiveness, combined with charity, gentleness, and justice. There will be some wrong decisions, of course, but as long as mistakes are recognized the loss is far less serious than that occasioned by playing the middle of the road, sitting on the fence, undecided, unconvinced, incapable of strong feeling.

Life should be a continuing search for those people, those ideas, and those causes to which we can gladly and wholly give ourselves.

—William G. Saltonstall. □

# Contemporary patriarchs

By James W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

**N**ORMALLY, the reading of genealogies is a dry and uninteresting pastime. How many times I have skipped over the genealogies in the Book of Genesis, and mentally said, "So what!" It becomes quite another matter when the genealogies are represented graphically and can be visually studied. Some very astonishing facts come to light.

Some traditional ideas are immediately dispelled. As an example, I had long believed, and taught, that Abraham did not leave Haran until the death of his father, Terah. Abraham left Haran at the age of 75, or A.M. 2021. (Gen. 12:4.) Terah died in Haran 60 years later, A.M. 2081. All the record says is, "Terah died in Haran" (Gen. 11:32).

## Composition of the chart

Most of the chart is taken from the genealogy from Adam to Noah, found in Genesis 5, and the genealogy from Shem to Abraham, found in Genesis 11:10-32, plus Genesis 9:28, 29; 25:7. The chart is divided into increments of 100 years for the measurement of time. The abbreviation "A.M." represents Anno Mundi, or year of the world—from creation onward.

To prove the chart, add up the begettal times, add the length of Abraham's life, and one arrives at 2121 years, or A.M. 2121. Any intermediate point can be verified by adding the begettal times

up to the person considered, adding the length of his life, to arrive at the time of his death, A.M. The supplemental chart on the length of life of each man, and the time in his life of the begettal of his son, will aid in proving the lines that are on the chart.

## Reliability of the record

An acquaintance objected to accepting the length of life as given in the Bible record. He maintained that they must have had a different method of counting time in the old world, and that no man could live to be 900 years of age. He cited as an example a foreign country, in which he served, where each month is called a year. Thus, a boy of 10 would be said to be 120 years old. My reply was, "All right, let's assume this may be true in the Scriptural account. Take each age given, divide it by 10, and see what will happen to the whole record." This would mean Adam lived to be 93, and Nahor not quite 15 years old. This would also mean Cainan begat Mahalaleel at the age of 7; Enoch begat Methuselah at the age of 6 1/2; Salah begat Eber at the age of 3, etc. By this theory the world would have been only 165 years old at the time of the Flood, instead of 1656.

The Assyrians seem to have multiplied the times, rather than to divide them. They gave the

CONTEMPORARY PATRIARCHAL LIFE SPANS

	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	1900	2000	2100	2200	
ADAM																							
SETH																							
ENOS																							
CAINAN																							
MAHALALEEL																							
JARED																							
ENOCH																							
METHUSELAH																							
LAMECH																							
NOAH																							
SHEM																							
ARPHAXED																							
SALAH																							
EBER																							
PELEG																							
REU																							
SERUG																							
NAHOR																							
TERAH																							
ABRAHAM																							

	LIVED	A. M. DATE	BEGAT AT
ADAM -----	930 -----	0-930 -----	130 -----
SETH -----	912 -----	130-1042 -----	105 -----
ENOS -----	905 -----	235-1140 -----	90 -----
CAINAN -----	910 -----	325-1235 -----	70 -----
MAHALALEEL -----	895 -----	395-1290 -----	65 -----
JARED -----	962 -----	460-1422 -----	162 -----
ENOCH -----	365 -----	622- 987 -----	65 -----
METHUSELAH -----	969 -----	687-1656 -----	187 -----
LAMECH -----	777 -----	874-1651 -----	182 -----
NOAH -----	950 -----	1056-2006 -----	500 -----
SHEM -----	600 -----	1556-2156 -----	100 -----
ARPHAXED -----	438 -----	1656-2094 -----	35 -----
SALAH -----	433 -----	1691-2124 -----	30 -----
EBER -----	464 -----	1721-2185 -----	34 -----
PELEG -----	239 -----	1755-1994 -----	30 -----
REU -----	239 -----	1785-2024 -----	32 -----
SERUG -----	230 -----	1817-2047 -----	30 -----
NAHOR -----	148 -----	1847-1995 -----	29 -----
TERAH -----	205 -----	1876-2081 -----	70 -----
ABRAHAM -----	175 -----	1946-2121 -----	-----

ages of the old-world patriarchs as many thousands of years each.

One thing is sure. You can multiply or divide the ages given, but the RELATIONSHIP between the patriarchs remains fixed. The contemporary nature of the chart remains unchanged.

#### Writing and records

It has been said, "How can you depend on the record being authentic, when those people could not read or write? There was no alphabet invented until about Abraham's time." This is a common delusion on the part of modern man. The archeologist knows better.

Long before the alphabet was invented, records were written in cuneiform characters, or in pictographic characters. Biblical Hebrew is not strictly an alphabetical language, even now. There are no vowels in Hebrew. At the first, the sound of each Hebrew character was learned by rote. Later, marks were placed

with the characters to indicate the sound. Each character represents an object, and is a complete word or name of the object.

The first character in Hebrew is *aleph*. It represents an ox. It began as a crude drawing of an ox head, with horns. It went through several changes to become what it is today. The second character in Hebrew is *beth*. It is a complete word, meaning house. We recognize it in these word-phrases; *beth-el*=house of God, and *Beth-lehem*=house of bread. This character, too, has undergone changes. It began as a crude square, representing a house. Later, a pitched roof was added. Finally, today, it is a booth with an open door.

Using the Hebrew characters as a pictographic language, one can read the whole plan of God in the first sentence in Genesis. How correct and how true, "In the beginning was the Word"

(John 1:1); not entirely a matter of time, but in the sentence itself.

#### Why such long lives?

This is the thing that is marvelous. It is God's way of preserving a knowledge of himself and of his acts of creation. Six of the pre-Flood men, in the chart, were contemporary with both Adam and Noah. Noah's father and grandfather were contemporary with Adam.

The story of creation is not some mythical tale, handed down and embellished in the telling. It is a firsthand account, given by the man who was there—Adam.

Both Noah and Shem were contemporary with Abraham. Abraham was 60 years old at the death of Noah. Shem outlived Abraham by 35 years. Shem is considered by some to be the Melchizedek who received tithes from Abraham. (Gen. 14:18-20).

It would require only two men to stand between Adam and Abraham; for example, Lamech and Shem.

Whether they did, or did not, have a written language is not the issue. What is important is that the truth about God was readily available to pass from Adam down to Abraham. When God's purposes for mankind were fully revealed to Abraham in the Covenant of Promise, it was no longer necessary for men to live 900 years, and to be contemporary to preserve the Truth.

#### Assyrian history

The Assyrian account of the Flood is very similar to the Biblical record. They say there were ten dynasties or ten kings before

the Flood. This would provide a counterpart to the ten patriarchs on our chart. They say Noah (they call him by another name) took the records of the first world and stored them at Sippura in Babylon and recovered them after the Flood.

#### Tower of Babel incident

Had you considered that the confusion of tongues and the scattering of the ethnic groups occurred only a brief time before Abraham, or possibly in the early days of his life? It was in the days of Peleg that the earth was divided. (Gen. 10:25.) Peleg lived only 239 years. He was contemporary with Abraham for 48 years.

This may explain why Abraham was so readily accepted by Pharaoh and Abimelech. They may have had family associations before the dispersion. They may have even been acquaintances.

Joktan, the brother of Peleg, was the progenitor of one section of the Arabian people. He must have led them down into Arabia as a part of the dispersion.

The people in Haran, Canaan, Arabia, and Egypt were there in advance of Abraham, but not a LONG time in advance. The shortness of the lifetime of Peleg would not allow of any great period of time.

In conclusion, I must say how little we know and understand about the patriarchs because we do not read carefully. How wonderful is God's method of preserving the truth about himself and his work of creation! □

(A full-length sermon by Bro. McLain on the foregoing is available on cassette from this office; price \$1.00.)

# Q&A

By the editor

## TRIBULATION

### Question:

I thought I could find a reference to the effect that the church, or the righteous were to be taken before the tribulation, but I don't seem to find it. The only one I find is Isaiah 26:19-21. The 24th chapter of Matthew looks like they might have to go through the tribulation. What's your idea?—E. R., Calif.

### Answer:

A study of the word "tribulation" in the New Testament shows it comes from the Greek word *thlipsis*. Young's Concordance gives its meaning as "pressure, affliction," and notes it is also translated afflicted, anguish, persecution, and trouble in the King James Version.

A study of the places where *thlipsis* occurs shows it to be "horizontal" in nature—from man to man. Only one time does it seem to be used in reference to the unrighteous. (2 Thess. 1:6.) All other references show tribulation—pressure or persecution—as coming on the righteous.

### "Through much tribulation"

Jesus told his followers, "In the world ye shall have tribula-

tion [*thlipsis*]" (John 16:33). He told them again in Matthew 24:8, 9, "All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted [*thlipsis*], and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake."

Paul told the disciples in Asia Minor, "We must through much tribulation [*thlipsis*] enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:21, 22).

We all know how Jesus and his followers were persecuted and killed because of their faith and witness for God. In most instances they were afflicted by their own people—the fleshly minded ones, who were not yielded to the will of God—the Jews. Later, some were persecuted and killed by the Roman emperors. The true church has been undergoing tribulation all through the centuries.

### A question

A question we always ask, If Jesus and his chosen followers were persecuted and killed—went through tribulation, why should latter-day disciples think they should somehow escape tribulation? We don't know of a single promise that indicates we will escape tribulation. In fact, if we read 2 Timothy 3:12 correctly, if we DON'T suffer persecution it is a sign we aren't living godly in Christ Jesus. Truly, "The servant is not greater than his lord" (John 13:16), and the Lord went through tribulation, so why shouldn't his servants?

### Wrath different

While tribulation is horizontal and comes on the righteous, the

wrath of God is entirely different. There are several texts that promise that the true disciples will not suffer God's wrath. "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:9). "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:9). "Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10b).

The word "wrath" in each of the foregoing is from the Greek word *orge*, and means "anger, wrath," according to Young, and is also translated anger, indignation, and vengeance in the King James.

Wrath is said to come from God "upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6). John 3:36 says, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18). Wrath is "vertical," and comes from God upon men.

So, you see, there is a vast difference between tribulation and wrath. We can't hope to escape tribulation—persecution from men, but we are promised we will not be subjects of God's wrath or anger on the unrighteous.

The text in Isaiah 26:20, 21, which many have used to "prove" the church would escape the tribulation, is speaking of God's "indignation." The Septuagint Version (LXX) used

the Greek word *orge* for "indignation" in this instance, showing it is speaking of God's wrath, rather than tribulation. In LXX it reads, "Go, my people, enter into thy closets, shut thy door, hide thyself for a little season, until the anger [*orge*] of the Lord have passed away. For, behold, the Lord is bringing wrath from his holy place upon the dwellers on the earth."

#### "Great tribulation"

There still remains a question as to whether the saints will undergo the "great tribulation." The nature of the prophecies in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 seems to have special reference to Israel and her "time of trouble." (Dan. 12:1.) This will be a result of internal pressure—civil war, and outside pressure by her enemies. The elect remnant in Israel will be persecuted by their own people.

It is difficult to say what DIRECT effect the tribulation in Israel might have on us, but we expect the church—the true church—to be persecuted in the last days.

#### No "rapture"

We see no place where the church is promised to be "raptured" away to escape anything. The word "rapture" does not occur, nor does the theory of a rapture occur in the Scriptures. It is wishful thinking on the part of some who do not like to think of undergoing trouble in the last days.

We do hope to be among those caught up into earth's atmosphere to meet Jesus when he

comes to earth. (1 Thess. 4:13-18.) The word "air" in verse 17 means "atmosphere," not heaven. There is no promise the church will ever go to heaven—for any length of time!

We have often wondered why people thought they needed to be raptured away from anything in the first place? Surely, as it says, the righteous living will be changed to immortality "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:52). If immortal and incorruptible people can be hurt somehow, what is this whole thing about, anyway?

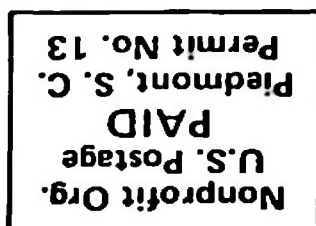
It appears to us that, not only will the saints undergo tribulation, they will be present on earth when God pours out his wrath on the nations who come

against Jerusalem. (See Zech. 14:11, 12.) A type of this would be the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by "fire from the LORD out of heaven" (Gen. 19:24). Lot and his two daughters escaped to Zoar, and Abraham looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and saw "the smoke of the country" go up "as the smoke of a furnace" (v. 28). But, none of these people of God were hurt when God destroyed the ungodly nearby.

#### Summary

It is plain, from the references cited, that members of the true church undergo tribulation. The "great tribulation" has special reference to Israel. There is no Scriptural basis for a "rapture" of the church. The immortalized and incorruptible saints could not be hurt, anyway. The wrath of God is reserved for the disobedient. □

Paul C. Johnson  
Box 100  
Oregon, IL. 61061

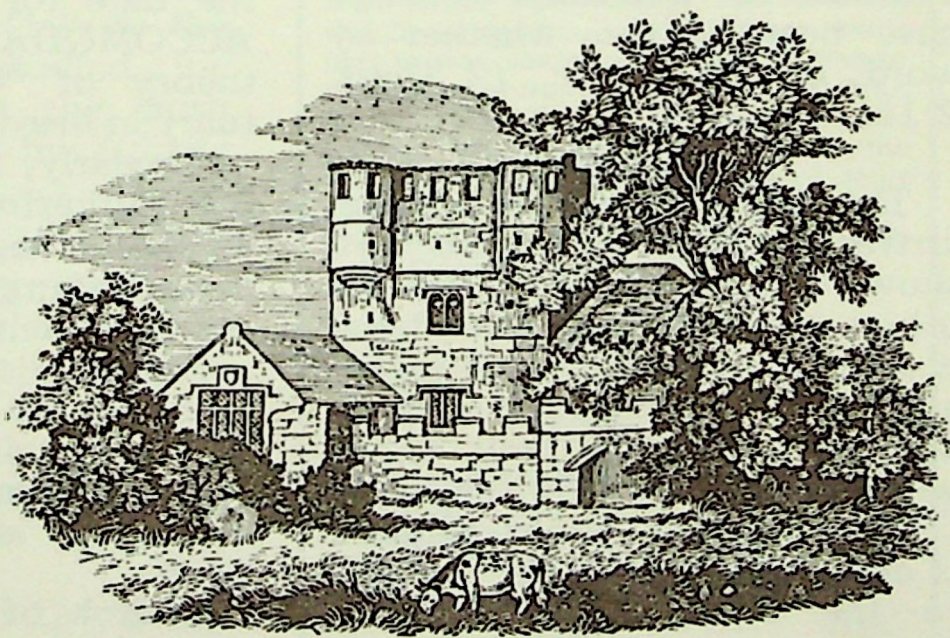


The Honest Truth, Inc.  
Station A, Box 8933  
Greenville, SC 29604  
Address Correction Requested  
Return Postage Guaranteed



# the honest truth

ISSUE THIRTEEN



**READ:** VISIONS OF GOD, page 4  
THE RAPTURE QUESTION, page 14



# The voice of one

## Prophecy and tradition

It is doubtful if most of us realize what a large role tradition plays in what we believe and do.

Our word "tradition" means "the handing down of information, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction"; also "an inherited pattern of thought or action (as a religious doctrine or practice or a social custom)." —*Webster's Seventh Collegiate*.

We all owe something to tradition. As a connection with our forefathers in the faith, it is strengthening. Paul admonished the Thessalonians to "stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15).

### Not all bad

The fact that almost no one arrives at the truth on his own shows that what we receive from others is not all bad. Even here, it is understood that each seeker after truth will have a "Berean attitude"; that is, will verify what he has heard by the Bible.

That tradition is not all good is emphasized by Jesus. He said to the scribes and Pharisees, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. 15:6).

## Help or hindrance?

Along prophetic lines tradition can be a help or a hindrance to arriving at the truth. Our faith is strengthened when a prediction — such as the restoration of Israel as a nation — comes true. Our belief is reinforced when we have studied something out and then find that our fathers before us had also arrived at the same conclusion.

But, tradition is proving a real hindrance to the study of prophecy, not just in the Church of God, but in other fellowships.

In *Signs of the Times* (Nov. 1975) considerable space is given to trying to justify William Miller's error in setting 1844 as the date for Christ's return by ACCOMODATING it into a theory of "cleansing the sanctuary in heaven."

Similarly, followers of Russell and Rutherford have developed a whole theology just to keep from repudiating the date-setting errors of their leaders.

Some of our Christadelphian brethren are inhibited in prophetic studies because they might disagree with Dr. John Thomas' continuous-historical views.

Church of God people are as hindered by tradition from the middle years, believing in a two-phased second coming of Christ,

secret rapture, sojourn in heaven, etc. We say "middle years" because such is foreign to our publications in the earlier years. Reliance on Blackstone's *Jesus is Coming* helped foster this later erroneous tradition.

Too, the romance with the old Protestant tradition of the "Roman interpretation" has gone on too long, and is blinding the eyes to more Biblical alternatives.

We are in danger of modern tradition, too, as many of our younger men seem to feel further study is useless since our theology has been systematized into one neat, man-made volume.

#### Not traditionalists

Our forefathers were not traditionalists. They broke with tradition to come out of the "denominations," into a climate of free search of the Scriptures. They did not intend to leave their finds to become the binding tradition of OUR time!

They were not "inspired," even as we are not. Only to the extent that they studied the Bible and arrived at the truth were they inspired by it; the same as with us.

#### Study and watch

It is time we examined our beliefs on prophecy, to see if they are based on tradition or the Bible. We may be making God's Word of none effect by our traditions as surely as the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day.

Let's get back to the Bible, and then let's watch the Mideast — the central arena of world history! □

## the honest truth

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

It is mailed free of charge to all interested persons, as a work of faith. Gifts toward its support are solicited, and are tax deductible.

The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

#### CONTENTS

The voice of one .....	2
Visions of God, James W. McLain .....	4
Q&A, Richard Worley .....	9
The promises of God, Beth Briggs .....	12
The rapture question, Part one, A. T. Johns .....	14

# Visions of God

By J. W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

## Introduction

This study we consider to be as important to an understanding of prophecy as our recent studies on "the dominion" and the "advent of God." It is due to one of those chance discoveries in a text we had passed over many times, without recognizing its meaning or importance.

The discovery is, that the whole Book of Ezekiel has the same basic outline as the Book of Revelation.

The vision of God on his throne in Revelation 4 and 5 is very similar to Ezekiel's vision by the river Chebar, recorded in chapters 1 and 10. A third vision, giving the same scene and the same events, was seen by Daniel. (Chap. 7.) John's vision in Revelation seems to draw heavily from both Ezekiel's and Daniel's visions.

### These visions include

All of these visions include:

- 1) God on his throne;
- 2) Christ in his presence;
- 3) A firstfruits before God's throne, in the company of Christ;
- 4) Opening of the Book of Judgment;
- 5) Judgment of Israel and the world;
- 6) The Kingdom and dominion given to the saints of the most High.

## The time

The period of time covered by the visions is "the day of the LORD." We must acknowledge that the throne scene is a scene of judgment. Moses described this day in Deuteronomy 32. All of the prophets have quoted it and amplified it.

In all three visions there is the Book of Judgment. In Daniel 7:10, "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." In Ezekiel 3:1-4 the prophet is caused to eat the book and then to pronounce judgment against the house of Israel and against all of her enemies. In Revelation the book with seven seals is given to the Lamb. As soon as he begins to open the seals judgment begins.

### Not Ezekiel's time

The content of the Book of Ezekiel could hardly apply to his own time. He was in captivity in Babylon. The city of Jerusalem had been destroyed. The Temple had been destroyed. There was no priesthood left in Jerusalem. His prophecy of judgment must belong to another time. As it coincides with the other visions, ending in the destruction of all of Israel's enemies, and brings the final restoration of Israel, the whole book must be considered a prophecy of "the day of the LORD."

## Visions of God

Ezekiel's vision of God is especially rich in symbolism and imagery, drawn from many sources. It would take a book to present all the descriptions that are contained in the symbols.

It has been said that one picture is worth a thousand words. Here, with a few symbols, all the attributes and authority of God are given.

So many were the gods of Babylon and idolatrous Israel, it was imperative that the God who was pronouncing judgment be identified. By the symbols, the vision shows him to be:

- 1) The God of all creation;
- 2) The God of the Passover;
- 3) The God of Israel;
- 4) The God of Sinai and the Law;
- 5) The God of the Tabernacle;
- 6) The God of all judgment.

### The God of all creation

The symbolism, in Ezekiel 1, of the **FOUR LIVING CREATURES** is borrowed from the record of creation in Genesis 1:21 and 2:7, "And man became a living soul." The original Hebrew is, "And man became a **LIVING CREATURE**." It is the identical Hebrew expression that is applied to beasts and all other living, breathing creatures. (Gen. 1:24.) **LIVING CREATURE** indicates the complete dependency of all in which is the breath of life.

In his sermon to the Greeks on Mars' Hill, Paul declared this dependency on the Creator, "He giveth to **ALL** life, and breath, and all things; . . . for in him we live, and move, and have our

being" (Acts 17:22-31). The attachment of the **FOUR LIVING CREATURES** in Ezekiel's vision to God, is the symbolic representation of this truth.

In John's vision, the **FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS** proclaim that the one on the throne is the Creator: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11).

### Never separated

In Ezekiel's vision in chapter 1, the **FOUR LIVING CREATURES** moved about, were lifted up, and stood on the earth, but they were never separated from the source of their life — the Creator. The spirit of the **LIVING CREATURES** was in the wheels. (V. 20.) They were never separated from their wheels. In like manner, we are never separated from our Creator, and the breath of the spirit of life. In the day we do become separated we return to the dust from which we were taken, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 3:17-20).

A thousand words could not more clearly show the dependency of all living creatures on the God of all creation. Being the God of all creation, he has the right and the authority to judge his creation.

### A wheel within a wheel

If the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels, as Ezekiel 1:20 says, then a wheel within a wheel (10:10) may suggest a spirit within a spirit. In John's vision, these creatures also

represent an elect company who are sealed, who are kings and priests, who are before the throne of God. They would be sealed "with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). This would be a spirit within a spirit, a wheel within a wheel.

#### Dominion

There are FOUR living creatures because they relate to dominion. North, south, east, and west; the four quarters of the earth; the four winds; all suggest God's dominion over all the earth.

Dominion further suggests the special dominion, the Land of Promise, Eden, the garden of God, that was given to Nebuchadnezzar and succeeding nations. It is the dominion that will be given to the people of the saints of the most High. (Dan. 7:27.) It also suggests the FOUR sides of the camp of Israel in the wilderness. (Read Gen. 13:14; Dan. 7:2; 8:8; Matt. 24:31; Rev. 7:1; 5:10; 20:4; Ex. 19:5, 6.)

#### The God of Israel

The faces of THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES were: an eagle, an ox, a lion, and a man. (Ezkl. 1:10.) These were the four standards of the camp of Israel. The camp arrangement is given in Numbers 2. The symbols of the standards were obtained from ancient Israelitish records.

The soles of the feet of the four living creatures is the sole of a calf. (Ezkl. 1:7.) It symbolizes JESHURIN, God's calf that waxed fat and kicked — Israel. (Deut. 32:15; 33:5, 26; Isa. 1:3; 44:2.) Much imagery of Sinai and the Tabernacle further indi-

cates that the one in the vision of Ezekiel is THE GOD OF ISRAEL.

#### The firstborn

We have long assumed that when a Jew accepts Christ he enters into the body of Christ, where there is neither Jew nor Greek. There is nothing wrong with this view, except we have failed to notice there is to be a special Christian selection in Israel at the time of the end, called a FIRSTFRUITS, or a FIRSTBORN. Special reference is made to this group, as a part of the whole picture of what will take place in the nation of Israel in the time of the end.

The position and reward given to this group is no different than what we have always applied to the body of the church. The whole Book of Ephesians seems to deal with this question, as to how the Gentiles and the Jews can be made one body in Christ. (2:14, 15.)

#### Repentant segment

This whole idea presupposes that there must be a revival and repentance in a SEGMENT of Israel at the time of the end. This will bring the most bitter persecution against those in Israel who have acknowledged Jesus as the Lamb of God, a sacrifice for



THE CAMP OF ISRAEL AND THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.

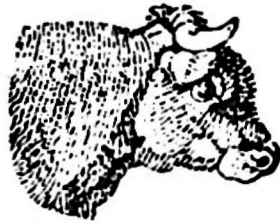
Proportions have been greatly exaggerated in the chart so as to give a closer view of the Tabernacle, the furniture, and the standards. The emblems (faces) on the four standards are not given in the Scriptures. They are derived from several books on Biblical antiquities. They are confirmed by usage in Ezekiel 1:10 and Revelation 4:7.

MANASSEH

EPHRAIM

BENJAMIN

GAD

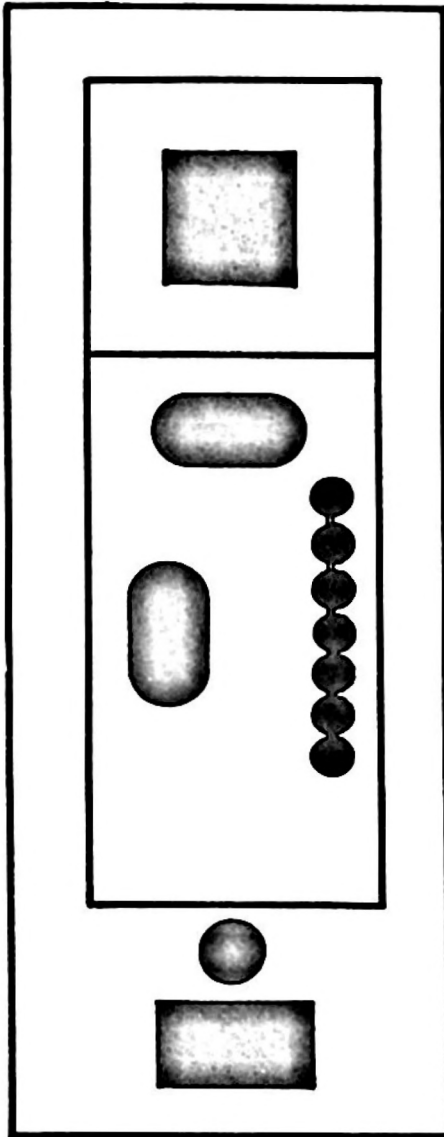


ASHER

REUBEN



DAN



SIMEON

NAPHTALI



ZEBULUN

JUDAH

ISSACHAR

their sins, and their King, the lion of the tribe of Judah.

Evidence of this group is contained in all three visions of God. It is symbolized in Ezekiel's vision of the cherubim. (Ch. 10.) The wheel within a wheel suggests the sealing by the Holy Spirit. This is further amplified by the marking of a select group by the angel with the writer's ink horn. (9:4.)

This is shown in Daniel's vision when "thousand thousands ministered unto him" (7:10). It is shown in John's vision as a group that is sealed with the seal of God. (Rev. 7:2, 3.)

The persecution of this group may be read in Luke 21:16, 17; Daniel 11:33; Revelation 7:14; 12:4, 5; 20:4. The reward of this group may be read in Revelation 5:9; 7:15-17; 14:1-4; 12:5; 20:4.

This Israelitish-Christian group is represented by the cherubim. It is interesting to know that the meaning of cherubim is, "One grasped or held fast." — Young's Concordance. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25).

#### **This group typified**

The memorial in Israel of the firstfruits of harvest typifies the ingathering of this **FIRST-FRUITS** group. When they have been harvested, then the vine of the earth is cast into the winepress of the wrath of God. (Rev. 14:4, 14-20; Isa. 65:8, 9.)

In the night God delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt, the **FIRSTBORN** of Israel was saved from death by placing the blood of the lamb on the facings of the door of the house. In the same night all of the firstborn of Egypt died. The death angel passed over — hence, **Passover** — the houses of Israel. The **FIRSTBORN** of Israel was saved by the blood of the lamb.

The keeping of the Feast of **Passover** was to be a memorial until a new **FIRSTBORN** of Israel is to be saved by the blood of the Lamb of God. (Read Rev. 5:6-14; 7:9-17; 14:1-7; 15:1-3.)

#### **God of the Tabernacle**

So many are the references to the Tabernacle and the Temple in the three visions, that the reader is left in no doubt that the God of the visions is the **GOD OF THE TABERNACLE**.

Throughout Ezekiel 10 the four "living creatures" are called cherubim. The cherubim were the figures that were a part of the mercy seat, which was over the ark of the covenant, in the holy of holies. (Ex. 25:8-22; 2 Chron. 3:11-13; 5:1-10.)

The whole throne scene in Revelation 4 and 5 is based on the organization of the camp of Israel in the wilderness, and the Tabernacle in its midst. This indicates that the whole vision is dealing with Israel; the firstfruits; the judgment of the vine of the earth (Israel); the destruction of Israel's enemies (the beasts); the judgment of both the living and the dead; and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. □



# Q&A

By Pastor Richard Worley

## CAN BELIEVERS SIN?

### Question:

There seems to be a contradiction between 1 John 1:8 and 3:6-10. Can you explain what is meant in these passages?

### Answer:

In the First Epistle of John we find two classes of statements in regard to the connection of sin with the believer. One seems to say the believer is confronted with sin and has the capability to sin, and the other seems to say the believer has no problem with sin for he is now immune.

This teaching of immunity has become well-known as Wesley's doctrine of "Christian perfection." Those who teach this are careful to say they do not mean absolute conformity to the righteousness and holiness of God, but they are referring to "gospel perfection" in contrast to "legal" or "Adamic" perfection. However, these verses declare the standard to be the perfect righteousness of God. (V. 7.)

### Sin is in all

There are statements that teach explicitly that sin is in all

of mankind. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10).

These words clearly teach that if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and if anyone should say he has not sinned, he makes God a liar. The apostle adds that the grasping of this truth is essential for salvation, because he states in 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

### A difficulty arises

If John had stopped there no difficulty would have arisen, but the words in the second passage mentioned seem equally as plain. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not

righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 John 3:6-10).

How are the two statements to be reconciled?

#### The two natures

Some have tried to bring these statements together by assuming the doctrine of the two natures is being put forth, as described by Paul in Romans 7:25. The thought is that in every believer there are two natures; the old, which is always evil, and the new man, which is always righteous. When regeneration is effected the old man is not bothered, but remains as old and sinful as he ever was. The new creature is to be as free from sin as the old nature was from holiness. As the one can only do evil, so the other can only do good. It is this new nature, then, that John refers to in 1 John 3, and the old nature that is being described in 1 John 1 and 2. This would mean that John was not speaking of MEN, but of NATURES. Hence, there is no contradiction.

#### A more reasonable answer

The foregoing is not a satisfactory explanation, however. First of all, the teaching of the two natures is mainly that of Paul and not of John. This does not mean the doctrine of the two natures is not correct, but that it is foreign to the writings of John. Because of this it is necessary to look beyond this and see if there is a more reasonable answer.

To find what IS being said we must get out the Greek books, and look not only at the root words used but also the tenses. In 1:8-10 we have no problem

understanding what is meant, because the present and perfect indicative tenses mean the same in English as they do in Greek.

#### Habitual action

In Greek the present indicative is also used to describe an action that is done consistently and habitually. A good example is found in 3:8, "The enemy has been sinning from the beginning" (Diag.). Thus we get the thought of a continued performance. Because of the tenses used, then, we see that John was not speaking of "momentary" sins as he did in the first chapter, but was speaking of a PRACTICE of sinning; something that is done on a regular basis.

The Emphatic Diaglott by Benjamin Wilson, which has given special care to the verb tenses and then expressed the thought in more understandable terms than the King James, translates the passage this way: "Dear children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous. He who practices sin is of the enemy; for the enemy has been sinning from the beginning. For this was the Son of man manifested, that he might destroy the works of the enemy. No one who has been begotten by God practices sin; because his seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten by God" (Vv. 7-9).

No man lives who can say he has not sinned or has no sin. Even the believer may sin on occasion, but if he confesses there is ready forgiveness. Yet, we ought not to feel we can

adopt a habit of sinning so that God's grace can be experienced all the more. Paul said God forbids this. (Rom. 6:1, 2.) Let us set our lives apart in the fear of God, that we might always do his will.

## REBAPTISM

**Question:**

Is it necessary for a person to be rebaptized?

**Answer:**

In order to answer this question it is necessary to define "baptism" and "rebaptism." This is necessary to do as a rite and as a word. The word originally meant to "dip," "to make whelmed (fully wet)."

With the literal meaning in mind, then, it is correct to say that when one is swimming and is "dipped," he is baptized. The term was used of Jesus in Luke 11:38 when it says, "When the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed [baptizo] before dinner." The word "washed" is from the Greek word for baptism. Jesus had not "dipped" his hands in water to cleanse them before eating.

### More than dipping

It is evident that baptism is more than a dipping. It is to be preceded by belief, faith, and repentance, and followed by good works. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4.) We can reason, then, that all dipping, plunging, and washing is not Scriptural baptism, unless it is preceded by a correct faith and belief in the God of the Scriptures.

Using the word "baptism" can be a misnomer. Example: Joe was active in a church organization and decided to "join." To do so he agreed to a belief in a triune God, the death of Christ, and a hope of going to heaven. He was then "baptized" or dipped. But, was he baptized in the Scriptural sense of the word? I think not.

### Rebaptism

There is no account of rebaptism in the Bible. According to Ephesians 4:5 there is only "one baptism." Let me explain. In Acts 19, Paul found disciples who had been baptized with the baptism of John. (V. 3.) Paul discussed this with them, and when they heard of the full gospel of Jesus Christ "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (v. 5).

I think it is important that it says they were baptized rather than rebaptized. The reason for this is that John's baptism was with a different end in view, that is, repentance, and did not carry the power and promise of the Holy Spirit and salvation. The same is true today. There are many dippings, but only one baptism in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins. All others are of some person — Wesley, White, Russell, etc.

### Baptismal formula

Think of the implication in the baptismal formula, "In the name of the Lord Jesus." Jesus instructed his disciples to baptize in "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19). Peter, on Pentecost, commanded the

people to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ . . ." Baptism is to be administered "in the name of."

Ministers marry people "by the authority of the State of \_\_\_\_\_." When one claims Christ as Lord, he accepts baptism "in his name," or by his authority.

#### Only one question

To answer the question of rebaptism we have only one question: Does God recognize a "baptism (dipping)" that takes place when a person has a false idea of God, his nature, his Son,

and the promises God has made to those who serve him? Before a dipping is a Scriptural baptism it must be preceded by a correct knowledge of our Creator, his Son, and the promises that are made to mankind.

There is but one accepted baptism and, therefore, when a person comes to a knowledge of the truth and desires to align himself with the body of believers, he is then truly baptized in the Biblical sense of the word. □

Note: Questions may be sent to this office, or directly to Pastor Richard Worley, 6375 S Kessler-Frederick Rd, Tipp City, OH 45371.—Ed.



# The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Huntington Park, Calif.

## PROMISE NUMBER THIRTY-FOUR

**ISAIAH 43:2—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."**

This text has both a literal and a figurative significance. We remember how the Israelites passed through the Red Sea; how the waters were swept back by a divine hand until a dry path was formed, and through which the people marched safely to the other side. (Ex. 14:21, 22.) We also recall the story of the three Hebrews who refused to worship an image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and because of this were cast into a burning, fiery furnace. (Dan. 3:10-30.)

Most likely none of us will be called upon to face such literal dangers. However, we may at some time pass through seas of temptation and fiery furnaces of affliction. "We must through much

tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Sometimes this requires even greater courage than to suffer literal pain, and day by day we must pray for help and strength.

Some of us have, at one time or another, passed safely through the waters or the fire. God will continue to lead us if we keep our eyes on him, and not on the flood or the flame. As God sent his angel to be with the Hebrews in the fiery furnace, so he will be with us in any perilous situation if we have the courage to say as they did: Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, but if not, we will not bow down to the image (whatever it is that seeks to draw us away from God).

*When I go through the waters,  
They shall not overflow,  
God will constrain the billows,  
And fearful winds that blow.*

*When fires of pain afflict me,  
To fill me with dismay,  
They may scorch but not consume me,  
Just burn the dross away.*

### PROMISE NUMBER THIRTY-FIVE

**ISAIAH 46:4—“Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”**

This should be a source of comfort to some of us who have hoary — gray — hairs. The Scriptures tell us that “The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness” (Prov. 16:31). It isn’t easy to grow old, and how we dread the time when our usefulness will be at an end!

Then again, as the years creep up on us, we are inclined to look back and worry over our failures or mistakes. We think regretfully how much better we could do now, if we could just do things over again. Of course we have made mistakes. Who, indeed, has never made any, whether old or young? The only difference is, because of age, some of us have more years to look back upon.

So, when hoary hairs proclaim that the years are fast overtaking us, let us not begin to wistfully think of the days that are gone, but claim God’s promise that he will deliver and carry us. We thus find strength to cheerfully and efficiently perform whatever tasks he gives us NOW, remembering that always, at all times, “underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33:27).

*What if our hairs are hoary,  
There is much that we can do,  
And though our steps may falter,  
We can help in his work, too.*

*Mistakes must be forgotten,  
We must lift our hearts in praise,  
And though our years are many,  
He will bless us all our days.*

□

# The rapture question

By A. T. Johns, Fredericktown, Missouri

**T**HE DOCTRINE of the "pre tribulation rapture" states that the "body of Christ," the church, will be raptured and removed from the earth BEFORE the time of "great tribulation" starts.

It further teaches that there are two entirely different aspects of Christ's second coming. The first aspect, called "the rapture," is when Jesus comes FOR his saints secretly, "as a thief in the night," and takes them to heaven, to the throne of God for the marriage of the Lamb.

The second aspect, called "the revelation," is when Jesus returns from heaven WITH his saints to be revealed to the world, when "every eye shall see him," as he sets up his Kingdom on the earth and judges the world in righteousness.

This doctrine also states that an interval of time is required between these two aspects. This period of time is believed to be about seven years long, or the length of time of the "great tribulation."

## A comforting thought

The idea that we will escape the time of the great tribulation sounds like a sweet and comforting thought. Jesus said, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all

these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

However, before we espouse or endorse any such doctrine of this nature, let us ask ourselves, Is it sound Bible doctrine? Or, does it sound so good that it tickles our ears and calms our fears? Will it stand the test of close scrutiny in the light of other Bible texts on the same subject? Does it add to, or take away from God's inspired Word? "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Cor. 13:1).

## No secret coming

Jesus himself denied there would be any "secret" second coming for his saints. He said, "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matt. 24:26-28).

In the foregoing text Jesus warned all his disciples against anyone who would teach that his second coming would be a hidden, secret, or unobserved operation. He assured them they

would not miss his second coming, which would be visible to everybody, just as lightning is seen by all.

Jesus described himself as "the carcase," or the one slain for sinners; the one whom the saints feed upon for spiritual renewal. (See John 6:53-56.) Wherever Jesus is, the resurrected dead or changed living saints from all over the earth, like "eagles" (Isa. 40:31), will be gathered and caught up to meet him in the air at his coming.

#### Answered by parables

I believe that Jesus answered the question of a "secret rapture" in his parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. Most scholars will agree that the wheat represents the righteous, while the tares represent the wicked, and the reapers are the angels.

Granted that this is true, let us consider verse 30, "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together FIRST the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." I believe Jesus was teaching that the church of the saints will be right here on the earth UNTIL the harvest, which, according to verse 39, is the end of the age.

Going further in Matthew 13, in the parable of the net, Jesus said, "So shall it be at the end of the world [age]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked FROM among the just" (vv. 47-50). This text indicates also that the righteous or the just will

remain on the earth, while "the transgressors shall be rooted out of it" (Prov. 2:22). Would you say Jesus was mistaken on the question of the proper order of events yet to happen?

#### The saints raptured

Yes, I believe the saints will be "raptured" or caught up to meet Christ at his second coming, but I deny that it will take place BEFORE the time of the great tribulation. The Apostle Paul said to the church at Thessalonica concerning our Lord's second coming, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

Nothing is said here about the time element of the Lord's coming. But if someone very dear to you were to come a great distance by plane to visit you, and you would go to the airport to meet them on their arrival, it is very unlikely that you would board their plane and go back with them to their home. When you go to MEET someone, they return with you; you do NOT go back with them! When the saints are caught up to meet Jesus, I expect him to keep on coming to the earth to bring the promised "times of refreshing" (Acts 3:19-21). That will be part of God's purpose in sending him back. (See Psa. 72:6-8.) *(more)*

### Times of restitution

After the lame man was healed at the gate of the Temple, Peter told the astonished Jews who gathered on Solomon's porch, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive UNTIL the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).

The word "restitution" here is from a Greek word used only here and in Acts 1:6, where it says, "When they were therefore come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time RESTORE again the kingdom to Israel?" It is evident from its usage that it refers to the restoration of the Kingdom of God.

We can be certain that the times of restitution will begin

simultaneously with the reign of Jesus upon the throne of David. This is in agreement with Jesus' own statement in Matthew 25:31, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

### Day and hour unknown

Jesus said in Matthew 24:36, concerning the time of his coming, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." The only "aspect" of Jesus' second coming that is secret is the TIME!

If Jesus is to rapture his saints before the great tribulation starts, will he sneak secretly away from heaven without God or the angels knowing it? Or, would you say that the tribulation under the "man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:3, 8) is to take place at the START of the "millennium"? Either position is sheer folly! Hence, there is NO ROOM for a secret rapture of the saints before the great tribulation! □

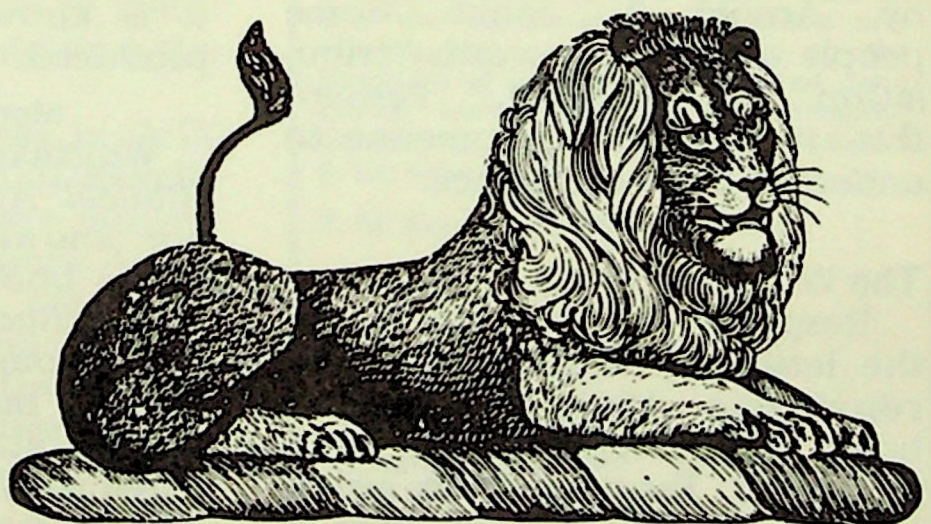
Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Piedmont, S. C.  
Permit No. 13

The Honest Truth, Inc.  
Station A, Box 8933  
Greenville, SC 29604  
Address Correction Requested  
Return Postage Guaranteed



the  
honest  
truth

ISSUE FOURTEEN



**READ:** THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID, page 4  
THE BEASTS OF REVELATION 13, page 8



# The voice of one

## In this issue

On page 4 we present a study by James W. McLain on "The tabernacle of David." Will the Jews build a tabernacle or temple in Israel and revive sacrificial worship? Where might a tabernacle fit into God's plan? Study this subject along with Bro. McLain.

On page 8 you will find a study by Harry A. Whittaker on "The Beasts of Revelation 13." This is chapter 28 of his fine book, *REVELATION: A Biblical Approach*. This is typical of his style and approach, and we know you will find it thought-provoking.

On page 14 we include the second, and concluding, installment of "The rapture question," by Arnold T. Johns. Some people confuse the words "tribulation" and "wrath." Perhaps this study will help someone to understand the difference.

## The Whittaker book

Response by our readers to the letter we sent in regard to reprinting Harry Whittaker's book on Revelation has been gratifying. Prepublication orders have come in from many parts of the country, and outright gifts toward the effort have been generous.

However, we have not yet reached the halfway mark we set as a goal to indicate whether we should go ahead with the project. The amount of money we need from orders and gifts is based on the printer's requirement of one-half down when we order. The favorable price he quoted is guaranteed for 90 days. After that period increases in paper costs, labor, etc., could affect the price. Production of the book is estimated to take 60 to 90 days.

The reason we have determined that the halfway mark is sufficient sign that we should proceed, is that we have an order for 400 copies payable on the day of publication. We believe the balance of the total printing charges will be forthcoming once it is known the book is being produced.

## More about the book

Whittaker's *REVELATION: A Biblical Approach* is unique, to our knowledge. Ferrell Jenkins, in his book, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation* (Cogdill Foundation Publications, Marion, Ind.), had the right idea, but his attempt was feeble compared to Whittaker's work.

The burden of Whittaker's book is that the Book of Revelation "from beginning to end is a masterly mosaic of quotations

# the honest truth

from, and allusions to, the rest of the Bible" (p. 65). He notes that Westcott and Hort cited approximately 500 references in Revelation to other portions of the Word, and he believes there are many more.

Since Revelation is so full of allusions and references to other portions of the Bible, it should be studied and understood in the light of the rest of Scripture. The meaning of symbols, words, personages, and time measures is therefore to be learned from the sources quoted.

## Dual fulfillment

Strong evidence is put forth in chapter 7 for an earlier date for Revelation—66 A.D.—than is generally believed. The effect of this earlier date is that much of Revelation had a fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., as well as a future fulfillment in "the time of the end."

Whittaker makes allowances for Dr. John Thomas' "continuous-historical" method of interpretation as expounded in his book, *Eureka: An Exposition of the Apocalypse*, written in 1861. He does, however, note that the method is unBiblical.

Since the author sees an A.D. 70 fulfillment in much of Revelation, adequate allowance is given to the so-called "Roman interpretation." However, the "Last Days" fulfillment will provide greater challenge to the reader, and will provide motive to our watchfulness.

Unless you feel you know too much about Revelation already, send \$2.50 for each copy to this office. Do it soon! □

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

It is mailed free of charge to all interested persons, as a work of faith. Gifts toward its support are solicited, and are tax deductible.

The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

## CONTENTS

The voice of one . . . . .	2
The tabernacle of David, James W. McLain . . . . .	4
The Beasts of Revelation 13, Harry A. Whittaker . . . . .	8
The rapture question, Conclusion, A. T. Johns . . . . .	14

# The tabernacle of David

By James W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

**T**HERE ARE so many references to a tabernacle in Israel in the last days, that the conclusion is inescapable that Israel will establish either a tabernacle or a temple, and revive the ancient Levitical rituals and sacrifices.

The nation of Israel has a profound interest in this subject. They have recently built a new center of worship in the vicinity of the old temple. It will be interesting to watch, to see if they build an altar and revive a sacrificial system.

Several questions arise in considering this subject. Are there two tabernacles which are steps to the establishment of the perfect service of worship in the world to come? Will they build one, humanly, without the ark of the covenant and the glory of God? Is the first tabernacle to be the promised **TABERNACLE OF DAVID**, with the ark and the glory of God? Will there first be a humanly established tabernacle, then the **TABERNACLE OF DAVID** at the advent, and finally in the world to come a perfect service—not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by the sacrifice that Jesus made? (Heb. 9:12.)

#### Need to review

The student needs to review the building of the tabernacle in

the wilderness, as given in Exodus 25 through 40. It is notable that the tabernacle was dedicated by the glory of God. "The tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory" (29:43). "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (40:34, 38). This glory was in the tabernacle in the wilderness, and in Solomon's temple. (2 Chron. 5:14.)

After the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, never again were the glory of God and the ark present. Even when the temple was rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity, it was without the glory and the ark. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days" (Hos. 3:4, 5).

#### Tabernacle hidden

At the time of the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah took the ark and the tabernacle, and hid them in a cave on the mountain where Moses climbed up to see the heritage of God. (2 Maccabees

2:1-8.) It says that when God gathers together his people again, and receives them unto mercy, "Then shall the Lord shew them these things, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the cloud also" (v.8). The time of this event seems to be well established. The restoration of Israel, and their salvation, is indicated. The tabernacle that was hidden by Jeremiah was, probably, the **TABERNACLE OF DAVID**, considered further on in this study.

#### **Tabernacle moved about**

In the days of the judges, prior to the building of Solomon's temple, especially in the days of Samuel and Saul, the tabernacle was regularly moved about in Israel to make it accessible to all the congregation. Samuel served very much as a circuit judge and preacher, in the company with the tabernacle. (1 Sam. 7:15-17.)

In preparation for the building of the temple, David desired to return the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, so it could be put in the temple. "So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and . . . the ark of the LORD came into the city of David . . . and they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it" (2 Sam. 6:15-17; 1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1).

#### **Tabernacle temporary**

All arrangements for the building of the temple had already been made. The **TABERNACLE OF DAVID** must be considered as a temporary measure, which

must soon give way to the temple. In type, it may be that the return of the **TABERNACLE OF DAVID** in the last days is to be of limited duration, until "the true tabernacle" appears, which the Lord will pitch, and not man. (Heb. 8:2, 9:1ff.)

"All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword . . . In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11).

New Testament authority is given to this prophecy by James using it to show that the gospel is to be for the gentiles as well as the Jews. (Acts 15:13-17.) This proper application of the prophecy does not nullify the great promise that is contained in it for the restoration of David's tabernacle.

#### **Tabernacle in prophecy**

There is a tabernacle, a sanctuary, a holy place, that figures prominently in the prophecies of the time of the end. This tabernacle seems destined to come to a violent end.

One of the stated purposes of the "seventy weeks," determined upon Daniel's people, is to anoint a "most Holy" (Dan. 9:24). The invader of the seventieth week shall "destroy the city and the sanctuary; and . . . in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (vv. 26, 27).

This scene requires that a tabernacle, with daily sacrifices, be established in Israel prior to the last week. Jesus' reference to this

confirms its accuracy. He said some would "see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place" (Matt. 24:15).

I tend to think this tabernacle will be humanly established by the Jews, without the presence of the ark or the glory of God. It seems that the divine presence is reserved for the **TABERNACLE OF DAVID** to be established on Mount Zion for judgment and redemption, as shown in the Book of Revelation.

#### Tabernacle in Revelation

In the Book of Revelation the references are numerous to the tabernacle or temple. Some are plainly stated. Some are in the symbolism and imagery of the tabernacle.

The description of the throne scene in Revelation 4 and 5 draws heavily upon the camp of Israel and the tabernacle. The faces of the four living creatures are the faces of the four standards of the camp of Israel. The twenty-four elders are the twenty-four courses of priests David ordained to serve in his tabernacle and in the temple. (1 Chron. 24:1-4.)

There are seven golden candlesticks. There is a sea of glass (not the brazen sea of the tabernacle and temple). There is a sacrifice; it is the Lamb of God. There is a book, which, when opened, will judge both Israel and the world. There is a service with harpers and singers, as it was in the temple. The incense of prayer is offered upon the golden altar, which is before the throne. (Rev. 8:3.)

The two witnesses are the two candlesticks of the temple. (Ch. 11:3, 4.) Direct reference is made to the tabernacle in Revelation 15:5-8. The ark is seen in this tabernacle. (Ch. 11:19.) The redeemed are before the throne of God in this temple. (Ch. 7:15-17.)

#### A new divine service

This latter tabernacle-temple must be for the ark of the covenant, that all things that are written in the law may be fulfilled. When Israel and the world are judged according to what is written in the law, then the law that was added to the promises will be ended. This will make way for a new covenant, a new heavens and a new earth, a new divine service. In that day, "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (21:22).

The establishment of the **TABERNACLE OF DAVID** on Mount Zion at the time of the advent would answer many questions in regard to the Scriptures. There are several evidences that both God and Christ are present on Mount Zion, for the judgment of the world. (Psa. 110; Dan. 7; Rev. 4 & 5.) All indicate that the "Ancient of days" is present when "one like the Son of man" is given his everlasting kingdom; or, when he is given the book for the judgment.

#### Interim government

This interim government would be on a "tabernacle" basis for the judgment, as it is written in the law, and contained in the ark in the tabernacle of his testimony. This would show Zion

to all people, and give them an opportunity to accept the government of God. That the nations will make the same decision in regard to the reign of God as the Jews made concerning Jesus, is plainly evident. "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). The establishment of the reign of God will anger the nations. (Read Psa. 2; Rev. 11:15-19.) A definite attempt to destroy the camp of the saints is made by the nations. (Rev. 20:7-9.)

This interim form of government will end when all the provisions of the law have been fulfilled, the dead small and great are raised, and heaven and earth have passed away. "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18). There can be no new covenant until the old covenant of the law is concluded.

Such an interim TABERNA-  
CLE OF DAVID would include:

- 1) the personal presence of God,
- 2) the glory of God,
- 3) Christ,
- 4) the church,
- 5) the firstborn of Israel, and
- 6) the tribulation martyrs.

#### Period of the judgment

Daniel and Ezra both indicate the period of the judgment would be approximately seven years from the time the daily sacrifice is taken away. It would be about 1000 days beyond the 1335 days in Daniel 12.

Such an arrangement would help us to understand how it is possible "That whoso will not

come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain" (Zech. 14:17).

When "the day of the LORD," the day of vengeance, is concluded, the law is passed away, and heaven and earth are passed away, then we are ready for the new heavens and new earth, "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13).

There are no adequate human terms to describe the "new Jerusalem." It is not old Jerusalem rebuilt or beautified. It is entirely a new creation of God. Only the choicest gems are used to describe its beauty. This is to be the center of God's government and the final camp of the saints.

#### Center of our hope

We are interested in all the aspects of God's reign on Mount Zion. It is the very basic center of our hope and redemption.

"Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (Heb. 12:22-24a).

I may add, "Will I see you there?" Or, it may be more proper for me to ask, "Will you see me there?" It seems that day cannot be far off, in the light of such rapid developments in Israel, and among their enemies. □

# The Beasts of Revelation 13

By Harry A. Whittaker  
Lichfield, Staffordshire, England

**T**HE BOOK of Revelation was to make known "things which must shortly come to pass." To the first century Christian much in the vision of chapter 12 would appear to come under that description; the casting down of the third part of the stars of heaven and the flight of the woman into the wilderness had their fulfillment in the overthrow of Judaea by Titus and the scattering of Jewry through all parts of the Roman Empire. To the first century observer what would not be so evident would be the interpolation of a big time gap before the "war in heaven" and the victory of God's Kingdom.

Similarly, there are features in the vision of chapter 13 which to the first century searcher of this scripture would seem to have special relevance to his own day. Here was a mighty and ferocious Beast, easily identifiable with the pagan power of Imperial Rome. To this Beast there was given power unlimited. Especially there was power to command the worship of the masses. Its very strength and invincibility made it an object of worship. This Beast turned against the saints of God and, blaspheming the God they

worshiped, brought all possible forms of persecution against them, no matter the country in which they were found.

## The imperial religion

The second beast of chapter 13, having two horns like a lamb and directing and organizing the elaborate worship of the first Beast, would readily fit the role played by the priesthood of the emperor worship. By these men every resource of trickery, deceit, and "magic" was employed to the full to hoodwink the superstitious masses and maintain the popularity and dominance of the imperial religion. And against those who failed to conform to this state worship it was possible to marshal a wide variety of political and economic sanctions so that life became uncomfortable and almost impossible. In the later reign of Hadrian this acceptance of worship of the emperor became the standard test applied to every Christian under scrutiny. He need only offer a pinch of incense at the imperial altar and in a few formal words execrate Christ, and he was discharged from court without a stain on his character.



Thus from many aspects this vision of the two Beasts would come with special force to the persecuted saints of the A.D. 60's. . . . But to stop here with chapter 13 is obviously inadequate. There are sufficient indications in this vision also to require a more complete reference to the Last Days.

#### A futurist application

The sequence of the prophecy from the end of chapter 12 requires this. The second half of Revelation 12 unquestionably belongs to the time of the establishment of the Kingdom, and the linkup between Dragon and Beast of the Abyss (13:2) requires continuity.

At the same time, it is a mistake frequently made to assume that because chapter 13 comes after chapter 12, the first of these must have a completed fulfillment before the next can ensue.

The student of Revelation needs to be constantly warning himself against the expectation of chronological sequence in these prophecies. There is, in fact, a clear intimation that the Beast of the sea prophecy must refer to a time preceding chapter 12:9, when the Dragon is cast out: "The dragon gave him [the Beast] his power, and his seat [throne], and great authority" (13:2). After the war in heaven the Dragon had none of these.

Another point of importance: this Beast is undoubtedly to be identified with the power of the Little Horn of Daniel's Fourth Beast. (Dan. 7:20-25.) The general description, the blasphemy

against the most High, the persecution of the saints, and the precise duration of this wielding of ferocious power are details common to both prophecies. If this may not be taken to indicate identity there is an end to all interpreting of Scripture by Scripture.

Daniel 7:21, 22, 26 makes clear that the power of the Little Horn is to be exercised with rigor in the Last Days immediately before the manifestation of Messiah and the setting up of the Kingdom. Then must not a similar conclusion be reached regarding Revelation 13? These are events which happen at or immediately before the coming of Christ.

#### Beast of Revelation 17

Comparison with the Beast of Revelation 17 yields a similar and, if possible, more decisive conclusion. They both come out of the abyss, both have seven heads and ten horns, both are full of names of blasphemy, both are associated with persecution of the saints, and the Beast of Revelation, like that of Daniel 7, meets with destruction at the hands of Messiah himself. The additional details of Revelation 17 positively demand reference to the Last Days. So it seems altogether logical to give chapter 13 a similar reference.

It is necessary, then, to seek out identification of this Beast out of the abyss with some great persecuting power which will withstand Christ in the Last Days. This is no easy matter, nor is it one where conclusions may be stated with confidence. It is

needful to identify also the ten kings, corresponding to the ten crowned horns, who give their power and strength to the Beast.

#### The Papacy

In *The Last Days*, chapter 4, and in *The Time of the End*, chapter 12, books by this author, reasons have been advanced for regarding application to the Roman Church in the twentieth century as inadequate. All present indications are that the political power of the Church of Rome is as good as finished. Fantasies about a political union between Rome and Communism are ventilated from time to time, but these lack even a vestige of Biblical support, and politically they certainly do not belong to the world of reality. Even if such a monstrosity were to be begotten, the time for its gestation would be far longer than the contemporary political scene in the Middle East allows of. Something of that sort could only come about given a more considerable span of years than seems at all possible.

The identification of the Beast with the great power of Russia has much more to commend it. Of all the powers now in existence in the political world, none is closer in character to the Roman Empire of John's day than Russian Communism, "full of names of blasphemy."

The ten kings allied to this Beast are traditionally subdivisions of political Europe. This is the main line of orthodox Protestant exposition of Daniel 2, 7; Revelation 13, 17. It has exercised too strong an influence. Is

it likely that men wildly astray on many a basic fundamental of the gospel have been endowed by God with extraordinary power of elucidation of these more abstruse mysteries of prophecy?

#### Russia and the Arabs?

A better hint comes from Revelation 11, where the Beast of the Abyss is associated with others who "dwell in the Land" and who rejoice inordinately over the death of the Two Witnesses. This suggests identification of the ten kings with the Arab states, all now in close alliance with Russia, who may be counted on to accept yet closer alliance with that power in any campaign against the people of God in the land of Israel.

If, as has been suggested elsewhere (*The Time of the End*, chapters 3, 4, 7, 8) the overthrow of the State of Israel comes about through Arab invasion strongly supported by Russian resources, there is here the kind of political combination which would explain both Revelation 13 and 17. Even so there are some details where the interpretation is none too certain.

The deadly wound of the Beast healed to the wonderment of all the world, might well be the complete rundown of Russia in the Second World War, and its fantastic recovery within a few short years to become the dominant influence in world politics. "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"

#### Oppression of Israel

The "forty and two months" of oppression, making war with

“the saints” corresponds with the “three days and a half” of the death of the witnesses (11:9, 11)—a period of three and a half years during which the State of Israel is under the heel of its enemies. (*The Last Days*, chapters 5, 6, 7.) The description “saints” is doubly appropriate since it describes Israel as God’s “holy people,” as in Daniel 8:24, and also especially those in Israel who are brought to repentance (*The Time of the End*, chapter 2) through their traumatic experiences and the appeal of God’s Elijah-prophet manifest among them. (Mal. 4:5, 6.) Hence also the description: “blasphemy against God, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven,” i.e., Jews who are once again in the covenant of God’s promises and no longer cast off.

“Power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” is obviously not to be taken with complete literalness. The words probably indicate all the nations (Arab mainly) round about Israel, though there may also be intimation that the campaign against Israel is only part of a much more extensive struggle among world powers, with big success attending the Russian chess-playing.

#### Old Testament help

There follows (13:10) a passage which is puzzling both in its phraseology and in the manuscript reading behind it. The ancient texts offer a bewildering variety of readings here, but happily doubts are resolved by the Old Testament original in Jeremiah 15:2: “Such as are for

death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.” It is a prophecy of ISRAEL’S tribulation. And the next verse proceeds: “I will appoint over them . . . the beasts of the earth, to devour,” thus strengthening the connection with Revelation 13.

Thus the words of 13:10 imply the finality of Israel’s opportunity of repentance. Another Old Testament prophecy chimes in here with the same meaning. In Hosea 13:13 there is a reference to Israel, reprovved and afflicted by their God as a travailing woman in the wilderness (Cp. Rev. 12:2, 6): “Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a LEOPARD by the way will I observe [stalk] them; I will meet them as a BEAR bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a LION: the WILD BEAST shall tear them” (Hos. 13:7, 8). Here is the composite Beast of the Abyss (Rev. 13:2) brought in judgment against the people of Israel. Yet in the end (Hos. 13:14), “I will ransom them from the power of the grave [the resurrection of the witnesses?]; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.” These words Paul applies to the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:54.)

#### The lamb-like Beast

The interpretation of the two-horned Beast out of the earth,

and the details which describe it, involves a fair element of uncertainty, chiefly because of a marked lack of Old Testament connections in this half of Revelation 13. Two different possibilities present themselves. Both will be submitted here for the reader's judgment.

The primary application of this prophecy to Nero Caesar and the imperial religion of emperor-worship suggests a counterpart in the Last Days. The state religion associated with Russia is Communism. Scores of modern writers have commented on the religious character of the Marxist creed. At least one has cataloged resemblances between Communism and Catholicism. Each has its Pope and bench of cardinals. Each has its sacred books (the writings of Marx and Engels) and priesthood (the presidium and party members). Each wields an iron discipline and an economic control over the brain-washed masses. With each there is the worship of pictures and symbols. Each exercises a far-reaching influence in the internal affairs of other countries.

#### "Peace, peace"

The lamb-like cry of Communism has been a constant bleat of "Peace, peace," yet all along its policy has been one of inexorable aggression and stark militarism.

"No man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." The ability of Communist organizations to bring economic paralysis by

strikes and subversion seems to match these words.

The great signs involving fire from heaven (the miracle that Jesus forbade: Luke 9:54, 55) might well be marvels of nuclear destruction or the bouncing of laser beams off satellites put into space specifically for such purposes.

Here one is left speculating. But probably before much time has elapsed disciples of this generation will be startled by the shouting correspondence between many dramatic happenings in the world, and the details written in Revelation—unless by that time civilization has already been reduced to such a state of chaos that news-communication has completely broken down.

This lamb-like Beast is appropriately described elsewhere as the False Prophet. (Rev. 13:14; 19:20.) Fire from heaven was one of the signs of Elijah the prophet. (1 Kings 18:38; 2 Kings 1:10, 12.) Jesus issued special warning against false prophets working signs and wonders. (Matt. 24:5, 11, 24.) And it will be recalled that it was a false vision of a true prophet coming up out of the earth which deceived King Saul in the end of his lamentable reign. (1 Sam. 28:13.)

#### Another possibility

The alternative interpretation to the one attempted just now is identification with the religion of Islam, which will certainly be fully reinstated in Jerusalem when the Arabs, with their Russian ally, overrun Israel. This is the religion of the False

Prophet. And there is appropriateness about the description of this Beast coming up out of the earth—the Land—for Mohammedanism has had roots in Palestine for long centuries. The oppression of Jews both religiously and economically by this False Prophet would be axiomatic. But the rest of the details seem to imply an even closer identification of Islam with Russia than is possible to envisage at present. However, the suggestion is perhaps worth bearing in mind.

#### The Palestinians?

There is another interpretation of the Beast of the sea which would harmonize marvellously well with the Islam suggestion just made. This, which has been in the mind of the present writer for several years as a distinct possibility, is that the Beast represents the resurgence of the Palestinians to the position of dominance in Arab antiJewish politics.

It will be recalled that the Little Horn of Daniel 7, the equivalent of this Beast of Revelation 13, uproots three of the ten horns. It will be a test of the validity of this interpretation if the Palestinian movement takes over three Arab states—Jordan, Lebanon, Syria?

From this point of view the deadly wound which was healed would signify the astonishing rise

to world significance of the wretched, helpless refugees from the three wars between Jews and Arabs, or, even more likely, King Hussein's ruthless repression of the Palestinians in 1971. At the time of writing it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions. One can only bear in mind the possibilities and keep a watchful eye on developing events.

#### Number of the Beast

Nor does the number of the Beast offer any dependable means of reaching a conclusion. The gematria solutions for 666 are just about so numerous. Besides that already suggested—NERON KAISAR, there is the familiar LATEINOS (using Greek letters), and ROMIITH (using Hebrew). In the Second World War MEIN KAMPF was another popular solution, now as dead as the dodo. Even the name of the present writer (in Hebrew) can be made to yield 666.

Is it possible that this kind of approach is somewhat off course? The number of the Beast is "the number of MAN"—666 makes a triple emphasis on falling short of perfection, whereas the gematria of JESUS (in Greek) yields 888, which puts triple emphasis on the fact that he is risen from the dead on the eighth day, a new beginning, the firstborn of God's New Creation.—*REVELATION: a Biblical Approach*. □



"Many of today's problems come about because we worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship."—Bob Talbert in the *Detroit Free Press*.

# The rapture question

By A. T. Johns, Fredericktown, Missouri

**T**HE QUESTION has been asked time and time again, Will the true Church of God have to go through the future time of the "great tribulation"? This is a good question and one that deserves an honest answer. It is also one that requires much serious Bible study on the part of each individual before that answer is revealed.

## Partly answered by type

Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt at the time of Moses is a type, or pattern, of the believer's future deliverance from this sinful world. The ten plagues Moses brought on Egypt will have their counterpart in the three "woes" and the seven last plagues of the future. If you remember, Israel escaped all but the first three plagues. You will also recall that Israel was not removed from Egypt UNTIL all ten plagues had been executed.

## Righteous never removed

"The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth" (Prov. 10:30). At the "rapture" the righteous saints will be caught up to meet the Lord at his coming, but this does not mean they will be removed from the earth. They will still be in the earth's atmosphere, and within its gravitational pull. When we take an

airplane ride above the clouds we are not removed from the earth; we are transported, but not removed.

If the righteous are NEVER removed from the earth, please tell us how Jesus could take them to heaven to escape the great tribulation without violating the inspired Word of God? Or, how could he take them to heaven for the "marriage of the Lamb"? Either, or both, of these would be a contradiction of the Scriptures!

## Paul warned the church

The Apostle Paul warned the church at Thessalonica not to be deceived concerning the time of our Lord's return. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3). It becomes evident, then, that "the day of Christ" will not come UNTIL these two events have taken place.

These two prophetic events will not be fulfilled BEFORE the great tribulation, but DURING that time of trouble. This fact makes it possible for Jesus to destroy the "man of sin" by "the brightness of his coming," "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (2 Thess. 2:8; Matt. 24:29-31).

According to Bible prophecy, the "man of sin" and the "beast" government are to be the prevailing instigators of the "last days" persecution of the people of God during the great tribulation. Jesus himself revealed to John on the Isle of Patmos that the future "first resurrection" would include those believers yet to be martyred by the beast government, under the rule of the man of sin, during the great tribulation. (Read Rev. 20:1, 4-6.)

#### Resurrection after tribulation

If, as pretribulationists teach, the first resurrection and rapture are to occur BEFORE the great tribulation, then Jesus who revealed these events to John must not have placed them in their proper chronological order. Jesus has the first resurrection coming AFTER the believers' persecution by the beast during the great tribulation.

If we are to assume that Jesus was correct, the first resurrection MUST follow the great tribulation.

#### How shall we escape?

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36). The context of this verse shows it is speaking about the second coming of Christ (v. 27), which is coming as a snare upon the whole world. (V. 35.) It is the day of God's wrath. It is NOT speaking of the great tribulation, which at this time will be already past.

How shall we escape the wrath of God? Who shall be able to stand? (Rev. 6:17; Mal. 3:2.) "Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger" (Zeph. 2:3). How will believers be hidden from the fire of God's wrath? Jesus is coming "in flaming fire" to judge the world. (2 Thess. 1:7-9.) Will we be able to stand?

#### Sealed by blood

As mentioned earlier, Israel's deliverance from Egypt is a type of the believer's future salvation. Before the tenth plague Israel was instructed to kill a male lamb without blemish for each household. They were to roast it and eat it with bitter herbs that night. The blood of the lamb was to be painted on the two sides and upper door frame of the house. The blood was a sign or seal of their faith. When the Lord passed over Egypt that night he saw the blood seal on the house, and the people in it escaped the tenth plague. But, the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain.

Paul said, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26, 27). We recognize that baptism in water is a symbolic washing away of our sins in the blood of Christ. (Rev. 1:5; Acts 2:38.) We realize that baptism is the sealing of our faith. This seal is necessary for our salvation.

"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16).

Notice, that to have a part in the first resurrection one must be "in Christ." "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5). Those who believe and are baptized are under the shed blood of Christ and will escape the wrath of God.

The prophet Isaiah said, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Ch. 32:1, 2). This text is speaking prophetically about Jesus Christ, "the man" who shall be as our "hiding place."

Saved from wrath

"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were

yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:8, 9). Again, Paul spoke of the faith of those at Thessalonica, who turned "from idols to serve the living God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:9, 10). Again, notice it is speaking of wrath, NOT tribulation.

Jesus said plainly to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). We should expect persecution. But, who will escape the wrath or anger of God? Those who are in Christ; those who will be changed from mortal to immortal at Jesus' second coming. They will be partakers of the divine nature and be like Christ. Death will have no more dominion over them. □

Mr & Mrs John Carr  
614 W Woodbury  
Macomb, IL 61455

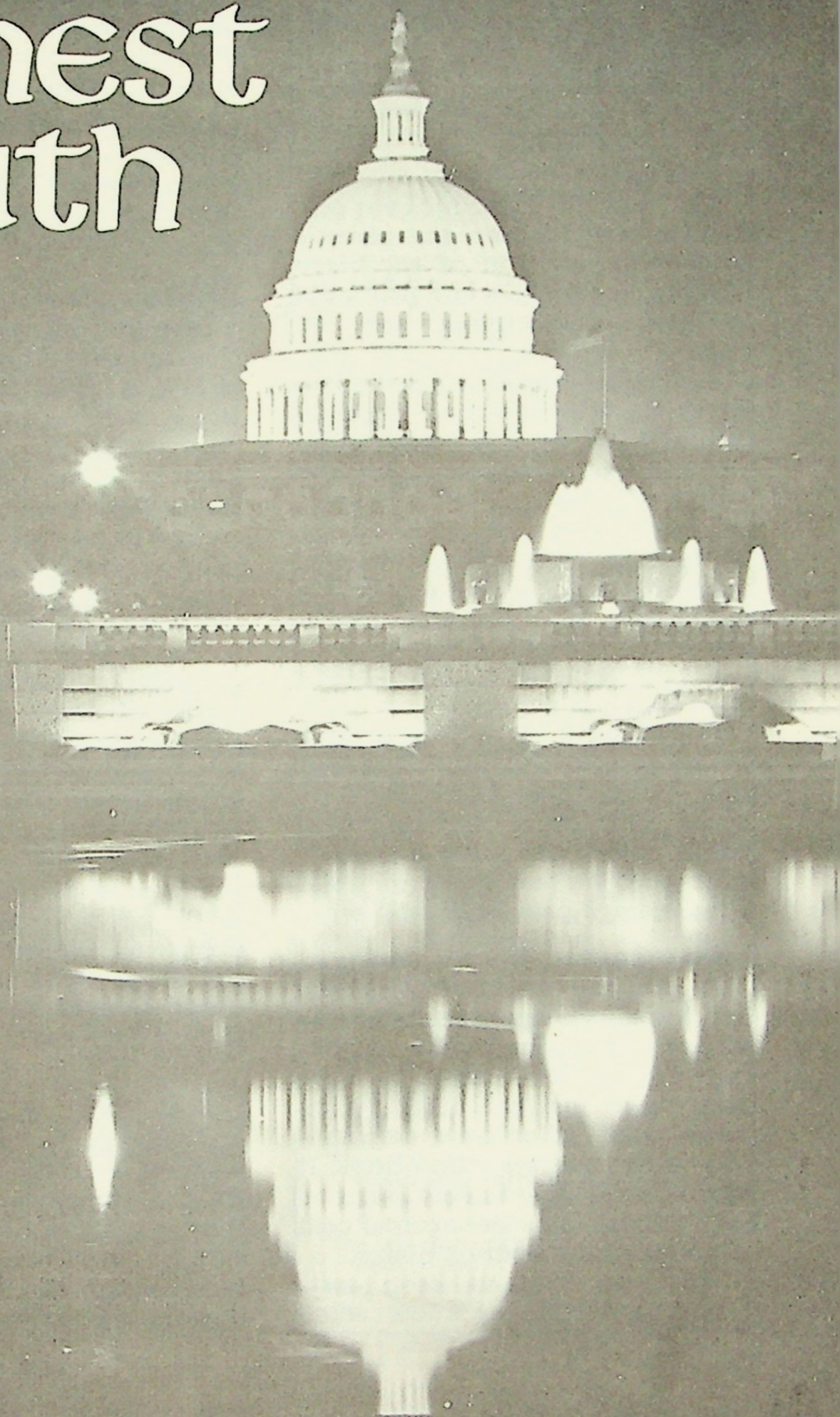
Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Piedmont, S.C.  
Permit No. 13

The Honest Truth, Inc.  
Station A, Box 8933  
Greenville, SC 29604  
Address Correction Requested  
Return Postage Guaranteed



the  
honest  
truth

ISSUE FIFTEEN





# The voice of one

## In this issue

On page 5, J. W. McLain presents some ideas on the miracle of the preservation of the Word of God, as well as some problems involved in copying and sequence.

On page 7 begins a synopsis by Harry A. Whittaker on "The interpretation of Revelation." He had hoped to include this material in the reprint of his book, but there was not space for it. We will be including reprints of this study in all books sent out in the future. You may remove this section to include with your book, if you have already bought it, or write us for a reprint.

On page 11 we reprint a short article from the late R. G. Huggins' book, *The Bible: Its Principles and Texts*, showing how infant sprinkling is "proved" by inference. We fear there are quite a few things proved (?) this way!

## Postage costs

If you use the postal system you know postage costs continue to rise. Rates for mailing books and nonprofit materials have risen again just recently. An increase that affects us considerably is for address corrections. It now costs us 25¢ to find out you have moved, plus the normal cost of making new address plates.

You can help us keep costs down by letting us know when

you move. The increased costs may make us take a closer look at our mailing list in the future.

## Whittaker book

We are pleased to announce that the first American edition of Harry A. Whittaker's fine study book, *REVELATION: A Biblical Approach*, has been received from the printer, and our pre-publication orders filled.

The book is attractively printed, and has some improvements over the first edition, including an index of subjects.

Right now, we are interested in getting the book into the hands of interested readers and Bible students. Won't you help in this effort by ordering a copy for yourself, and one for a friend?

The moderate cost—\$2.50 plus 30¢ postage—is about half what you would pay each month for a daily newspaper. But, oh, the difference in eternal value! Use the order blank in this issue, and order today!

## Our heritage

In the bicentennial year of the United States, it is fitting that we as Americans think about our heritage as citizens of this land. At the same time we ought to think about our heritage of faith as a body of believers. By "heritage" we mean that which has been passed on to us as heirs.

## Our American heritage

All are familiar with the history of the founding of the United States, so it is unnecessary to go into the details of the struggle for independence from England.

It would be unfair to paint all of the "patriots" in glowing white, just as it is unnecessary—almost obscene—for modern historians to point out the personal faults of America's founding fathers. We know they were human. It is impossible that ALL were motivated by just ideals.

On the whole, the writings, the speeches, the adopted declarations, the organization of the new government, all point to a nominal godly desire to right the wrongs of previous rule and guarantee the rights of a free people.

By world standards America has been a great nation.

### Today

Two hundred years later, freedom in America is facing a real challenge. Our freedom is being eroded by big government, big business—which includes big labor unions, and the one-worlders.

Our country is following Europe and Scandinavia in the nationalization of industry, socialism, pornography, and permissiveness. If it's bad, we'll soon have it here, too.

Scandal in high places is not just an American product. It is not new, just bigger and better publicized.

Few people realize that with freedom comes responsibility; a slave has none.

All in all, we are proud to be American. However, we do not

# the honest truth

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

It is mailed free of charge to all interested persons, as a work of faith. Gifts toward its support are solicited, and are tax deductible.

The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

### CONTENTS

The voice of one . . . . .	2
Preservation of the Word of God, J. W. McLain . . . . .	5
The interpretation of Revelation, Harry A. Whittaker . . .	7
Infant sprinkling "proved" (?), R. G. Huggins . . . . .	11
The promises of God, Beth Briggs . . . . .	12
Q&A, Richard Worley . . . . .	14
Our cover: The U.S. capitol	

trust in man for blessing. But, like the people of God who were strangers in Babylon, we seek the peace of this land, "and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall [we] have peace" (Jer. 29:7).

#### Our heritage of faith

More important than our national heritage is our heritage of faith, as it transcends national ties and is not limited to a mere 200 years of existence.

Confessedly, the history of the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith is more of a spiritual than a local history. Not being a "founded" church, we cannot point out one man and say it all began at a certain place and time.

We look to Jesus Christ as the "head of the church" (Eph. 5:23), the apostles and prophets as our founding fathers, and the first-century believers as our mother church. As Jesus was persecuted, so the true church has been a persecuted minority in all ages.

#### A faithful remnant

We believe the promise of our Lord that "the gates of hell [*hades*, the grave] shall not prevail against" his church. (Matt. 16:18.) However, the persecuted faithful remnant is often difficult to recognize in history because the only record we have is that written by the enemies of the truth. There is enough written that we believe the true church can be traced in every generation; even during the so-called "Dark Ages" of Europe.

The so-called "Lutheran Reformation" did little to enhance the cause of truth. Largely politi-

cal, the purpose of Luther was to reform the Catholic church. The doctrine of the trinity was largely ignored, and though purgatory was denied, eternal torment was retained, etc. The names of Wycliffe, Tyndale, and Frith might be cited as men who stood for truth; some at the expense of their lives.

The sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries have many references to the faith. An appendix to Alger's *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, prepared by Ezra Abbot and published in 1860, lists many works during those centuries proclaiming the truth on man and his destiny.

#### The nineteenth century

The nineteenth century ushered in an age of religious awakening in America and on the Continent. Two men stand out as having an effect on the believers.

William Miller, father of the "Adventists," came to the conclusion in 1818 that Jesus would come in 1843; this he arrived at by using the so-called day-for-a-year theory.

There is no doubt that Miller stirred up interest in doctrines held by the Church of God, but we question the conclusion of some that we came out of the Millerite movement. Miller strongly opposed the doctrine of the restoration of Israel—a view still held by Adventist bodies, and never did accept the doctrine of the sleep of the dead—a basic doctrine of the Church of God.

#### Dr. John Thomas

A man who more directly influenced the Church of God was Dr. John Thomas of London,

England, who came to America in 1832. He was involved in the Campbellite movement, but broke with Campbell over a list of questions the Dr. asked concerning the nature of man and the Kingdom.

Dr. Thomas is thought to have baptized at least Joseph and Benjamin Wilson of the Church of God at Geneva, Illinois. Benjamin Wilson is well-known for his *Emphatic Diaglott*. Dr. Thomas came up with the name "Christadelphian"—brethren of Christ—to satisfy the U.S. government in 1864, but not as a name for the church.

#### Many faithful workers

Space fails us to mention the many faithful men and women who carried the gospel of the

Kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ to the four corners of the land. We are indebted to them for contending for the faith, and leaving us a rich heritage. They did not try to tell us WHAT to believe, nor would they want us to hold to tenets that meant nothing to us.

The real issues are the same today as they were 150 years ago; whether we will believe God's truth and serve him, or whether we will walk in man's doctrine and way. We can't do both!

We are proud of our heritage of faith. After all, it reveals to us our true citizenship as heirs of Abraham and the new world. This heritage of freedom also carries with it a responsibility to live it and share it. □



# Preservation of the Word of God

By J. W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

**T**HE EARLIEST complete record of God's Word—styled the gospel—was given to Abraham some 4,000 years ago. The miracle and the marvel is that it has been preserved for us in useful and intelligible form, and in spite of many destructive influences. It has survived to become the active ingredient in our lives, to make us the children of God.

The discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls has allowed us to observe the difficulties of restoring and using material that has been lost for centuries.

The writing material has been found to be extremely fragile, and to have suffered from the long years of exposure. Some portions are barely legible. Some portions seem to be missing. The

proper arrangement of the order and sequence is sometimes most difficult. Another problem is to fully understand and translate language that was in use so long ago.

#### Recurring problem

The problem of the preservation of the Word of God must have occurred many times in the 4,000-year history of the revealed Word. Probably many times the copies of it were lost for long periods of time; they then were rediscovered, new copies were made, and renewed interest was shown in the Word. One such example of this is to be found in 2 Kings 22:8 to 23:25. It was during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah, that the Temple was being renovated, "And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD."

#### Copying errors

Before the invention of the printing press, copies of the books of the Bible were laboriously made by hand with pen and ink. Even so, inaccurate copying has played only a small part in the preservation of the true Word.

Most copying errors have been identified by linguists by observing the quotations that one author makes of another, and by comparing existing copies of the same material.

#### Proper sequence

In the discovery of written material such as the Dead Sea scrolls, one problem that arises is the putting together in proper sequence the various portions of

each book. This does not affect the ACCURACY of what is written within each portion, but it often confuses the scholar as to the continuity of the message.

One example of this problem of sequence is the Book of Daniel. Daniel dated each portion of his writings by naming the king who reigned at the time. A simple comparison of those dates will show the material is not bound together in historical sequence. For example: Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned in chapter 1:1; Belshazzar in 5:1; 7:1; 8:1; Darius in 6:31; 9:1; 11:1; and Cyrus in 10:1.

The value of this knowledge is to make us watchful in the study of all the books of the Bible to determine if the written material has been kept in its original, intended order.

#### We have God's Word

We do not question that what we have is the Word of God. God himself has determined that it should be preserved for a witness in all the earth until the end comes. Inspiration indicates that it was indeed written for those of the last days. "They are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [ages] are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

(Additional texts for study are: Rom. 4:23; 15:4; 1 Cor. 9:10; 2 Tim. 3:16; John 17:3, 17; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21.)

We must be thankful that the precious Word has been preserved for us, that we may be a kind of firstfruits of his (himself) creatures. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18). □

# The interpretation of Revelation

A synopsis by Harry A. Whittaker

## 1. The structure

1) Eight sets of seven: a. Seven letters (ch. 2, 3); b. Seven seals (ch. 6); c. Seven trumpets (ch. 8, 9, 11); d. Seven characters (ch. 12, 13); e. Seven thunders (ch. 14); f. Seven vials (ch. 16); g. Seven visions (ch. 19-22); h. "Come" used seven times (ch. 22).

2) Each seven is: a. introduced by a heavenly vision and an anthem; b. subdivided by a voice into 4 and 3 (first four sets), or into 3 and 4 (last four sets).

## 2. Date of writing

1) ALL the external evidence, except Irenaeus (who shows himself an undependable witness anyway), is for approximately A.D. 66, the Nero persecution.

2) The books of Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter all have copious allusions to Revelation, and all three epistles are known to have been written before A.D. 70; therefore, Revelation was.

3) The detailed way in which seals and trumpets fit the events of A.D. 67-70 settles the question. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

## 3. More than one fulfillment

The NORMAL characteristic of Old Testament prophecy is: a. a short-term reference—speedy fulfillment; b. a Messianic fulfillment in the far future. There are SCORES of examples of this. Since Revelation obviously has so many Old Testament characteristics, ought not the same to be true of it?

## 4. Fulfillment not always in sequence

Beware of seeking SEQUENCE in fulfillment; that is, expecting that the second seal could not be fulfilled until the first seal is finished, etc.

Old Testament prophecies do not usually have this sequential character; e.g., Zechariah 12-14; Isaiah 24-27, 29-33; Joel 1-3; Amos 1, 2.

What these prophecies give is a set of "snapshots" concerning a crisis of divine judgment. Then why not Revelation similarly? We have been conditioned by "continuous-historic" exposition into thinking always in this mistaken sequential fashion.

### **5. Revelation and the rest of Scripture**

Revelation is made up of somewhere between 500 and 1,000 allusions to, or quotations from, the Old Testament and the Gospels. There can be no better mode of interpretation than through equation with the earlier prophecies which the Apocalypse brings together in such profusion. What THEY are about Revelation is also about.

### **6. The heavenly sanctuary (ch. 4)**

The entire book sorts itself out into visions seen in heaven and those seen on earth. The former always refer to the Ecclesia of Christ, described as a "New Israel," hence all the symbolism is in terms of the tabernacle and Israel in the wilderness. The latter always refer to those who are not God's covenant people.

### **7. The sealed book (ch. 5)**

The Book of Life can be opened by none but Christ, the slain Lamb. The vision describes his ascension and glorious reception in heaven, and also the corresponding joy of all believers.

### **8. The earth, the land**

All through the Bible the words "earth" and "Land (of Israel)" are interchangeable. In Revelation it is usually necessary to read "Land of Israel" instead of "earth."

### **9. The seals**

In Revelation 6, 7 contacts with the Olivet Prophecy (Matt. 24, 25; Mark 13; Luke 21) are especially copious. Therefore, whatever the Olivet Prophecy is about, the seals also foretell.

There are at least half-a-dozen good reasons for believing that: a. the first half of the Olivet Prophecy was fulfilled in A.D. 70 and just before; b. the ENTIRE prophecy will be fulfilled at the Lord's coming and just before.

This is true for the seals also. They have had a fulfillment in A.D. 70. Another fulfillment of all seven seals is yet to take place.

### **10. The seals: A.D. 70 fulfillment**

Seal 1. The gospel's conquest of Judaism, rounded off by the destruction of the temple ("conquering and to conquer").

Seals 2, 3, 4. War, famine, and pestilence afflicting faithless Israel.

Seal 5. The souls under the altar symbolize Old Testament saints whose salvation is achieved through Christ after their death. Now there is persecution of first century believers.

Seal 6. The shattering overthrow of Israel.

### **11. The seals: the last days**

Seal 1. Conquest of the nations (and especially of Israel by conversion). Compare with Revelation 19:11-16.

Seals 2, 3, 4. The last horrifying era of war, famine, and pestilence.

Seal 5. Persecution in the last days, possibly of believing saints throughout the world, but most probably of just the small remnant of believers in Israel.



Seal 6. The final devastation of the Land, immediately before the second coming.

#### 12. The 144,000 (ch. 7)

This is a symbolic representation of the true believers in Israel, saved from the judgments of first century (and twentieth century) tribulation. The "great multitude" includes these along with Gentile believers also. Together they make up the "New Israel" of God.

#### 13. The trumpets (ch. 8, 9)

These are introduced (8:1-5) by allusions to a Day of Atonement which brings no forgiveness for Israel, but judgment instead. Trumpets 1-6 had fulfillment in A.D. 70, and will also be fulfilled afresh in the last days. Thus, they are a repetition—with different detail—of the seal judgments.

#### 14. Trumpets 1-6, A.D. 70

Trumpet 1. Roman devastation of the Land of Israel.

Trumpet 2. The unquenchable altar-fire of Jerusalem put out. Much sea-fighting in the Roman war.

Trumpet 3. "Rivers and fountains of water"—the Land of Israel. The star—Halley's comet over Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Israel faces the trial of the bitter waters.

Trumpet 4. Sun, moon, and stars symbolize Israel in eclipse.

Trumpet 5. Locust invasion—an invading army (same as in Joel 1, 2). Five months, the exact duration of the siege of Jerusalem.

Trumpet 6. An angel-led army against faithless Israel (Matt. 22:7).

#### 15. Trumpets 1-6, the last days (ch. 8, 9)

Judgments on Israel, still unreconciled to God, just before the coming of Christ. Very impressive parallels with last-day prophecies in Joel 1, 2; Jeremiah 8; Isaiah 14:29-32.

#### 16. The angel with the open book (ch. 10)

Definitely an angel (Gabriel), not the Messiah. He announces that "the time [of the kingdom] is not yet" (v. 6). (The King James is wrong in saying "there should be time no longer.") Seven thunders are heard, and the messages written down, but not the meaning.

#### 17. The two witnesses (ch. 11:1-13)

A lot of Bible evidence identifies them as Israel with law and prophets. In the last days they are brought low by their enemies in the Land. Repentance means a new and higher status before God. And then immediately follows the seventh trumpet.

#### 18. The seventh trumpet (ch. 11:14-19)

The second coming, the resurrection, and judgment on God's enemies.

#### 19. The woman and man child (ch. 12)

In the first century, Israel brought forth the "New Israel," the early church, and was then cast out from God's presence to live (be kept alive, but only barely) in the wilderness.

Sudden switch to the last days, as in the Olivet prophecy, etc. Then victory over powers of evil—Christ's Kingdom, except for a final persecution of the faithful.

**20. The thunders (ch. 14)**

Six angels "with a loud voice," followed by a seventh (16:1). These are judgments in the Land of Israel at the time when Christ comes in power. (For "Babylon," see #23.)

**21. The song of Moses (ch. 15)**

Saints delivered from all tribulation (?), but not yet glorified. Seven angels make ready to pour out the final judgments.

**22. The seven vials (ch. 16)**

These also involve the Land of Israel. They are the LAST judgments that blessed and cursed Land will see. But these judgments come mainly on the enemies of God's people who have brought Israel to final (yet not irreparable) ruin.

**23. Babylon (ch. 17, 18)**

Equation with the Roman church is completely disallowed. Instead, a massive assemblage of Biblical evidence points to Jerusalem, which in the Apostle John's day was THE great enemy of truth, and is still apostate.

**24. The beast (ch. 13, 17)**

Here is a power, comparable to the earlier oppressors of Israel in their own land, which has ten supporting "kings." It ravages the harlot Babylon (Jerusalem). It persecutes "saints" (the holy people), and is supported by a religious organization called also the "false prophet." This beast COULD be the P.L.O., the spearhead of Arab hatred of Israel. It is supported by the ten enemies of Israel. Jerusalem is ravaged, and its people persecuted. The Muslim religion (13:11ff)—the false prophet (19:20)—is a fervent supporter.

**25. Seven visions ("and I saw") (ch. 19, 20, 21)**

Messiah overcomes his enemies. There is resurrection and judgment, and the bringing in of a wonderful new God-centered order—the new Jerusalem. The symbolism emphasizes the spiritual quality of this Kingdom.

**26. "Come, Lord Jesus" (ch. 22)**

A threefold assurance—"I come quickly," is followed by a threefold prayer—"Come." The second coming itself completes this eighth seven. □



For a full exposition of the foregoing you would profit from the excellent book, *REVELATION: A Biblical Approach*, by the same author. It is available from our office for \$2.50 plus 30¢ postage.

# Infant sprinkling “proved”?

**A** BIBLE CLASS had one member who doubted the truth of sprinkling infants. He became interested in the subject, and became so doubtful of its being Scriptural, he came to be known—and was usually spoken of—as “the doubter.”

One day a happy thought struck the teacher. “We will,” said he to his class, “just fix the doubter’s doubts. Next meeting I require every one in the class to bring with him a text of Scripture to prove that it is Scriptural to sprinkle infants. Our brother’s doubts will be dispelled when he looks at the evidence all in a pile.”

## The class convened

The class convened at the usual hour, and the teacher began to call on the pupils for texts. The first one read, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me” (Matt. 19:14). “It is not direct proof,” said the pupil, “that Christ baptized the children that were brought to him, but we infer that he did.” “But,” interrupted the doubter, “‘Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples’ (John 4:2), so if the people wanted their children baptized, they took them to the wrong person.”

The teacher then cleared his throat and muttered, “The point is only an inference; we pass on to stronger and clearer proof. Next.”

## “Her household”

The second pupil read: “And when she was baptized, and her household—and her household—and her—” (Acts 16:15). “While the text does not have a direct bearing on the question,” commented the scholar, “yet it is easy to see that as her household was baptized, it is probable that her household embraced infants. We infer that it did.”

“But,” broke out the doubter again, “the household might have been descriptive of the children after they had become grown men and women. I infer that this is the case. Or we might infer that Lydia was an old maid, and that her household embraced the agents who were selling her purple in Thyatira. See verse 14.”

## The doubter’s turn

So the class went on inferring and guessing until it came the doubter’s time to read, and when the teacher asked him if he had a text to read, he surprised them all by saying he had, and their surprise increased into amazement when he read, “And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass” (Num. 22:21).

After blushing and coughing the teacher said in a kind of confused way, “Why, that verse has nothing to do with the subject; do you think it does?” To

which the doubter replied: "It does not approach the question directly, but we are able to build several inferences on it. 1. The first one may be stated in this form: Most men marry; therefore it is a possible inference that Balaam was a married man. 2. As a rule people are blessed with offspring in the married state; therefore it is a probable infer-

ence that Balaam had children. 3. And finally, it is a likely inference that when the text says, 'Balaam rose up in the morning,' it means that the children were preparing themselves for Sunday school, and that Balaam 'saddled his ass' to take them there to have them sprinkled."—R. G. Huggins in *The Bible: Its Principles and Texts*. □



# The promises of God

By Beth Briggs

## PROMISE NUMBER THIRTY-SIX

**ISAIAH 49:10**—"They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."

Here God informs us that his people shall not hunger or thirst for that which brings genuine happiness—the illumination of his message to man, so that many may understand the true meaning of life and death, and be governed thereby.

The sun of iniquity shall not smite us. God, in his mercy, shall lead us to everlasting springs of water; not the illusion of water as in the desert, but to springs that shall never run dry.

Other texts acquaint us with the fact that the true believer shall never hunger or thirst for literal food or water. But this text seems to refer to the deeper spiritual blessings which the Lord is so anxious to give us. Many of us, through lack of faith and trust, have so often failed to ask for and receive these.

Jesus cried to God's chosen people, the Israelites: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children to-

gether, . . . and ye would not” (Matt. 23:37). Let us not be like the Israelites, but let us know the time of our visitation, and accept the living water that God so freely offers to us.

*God will lead to living fountains,  
When the sun of strife bears down,  
He will help us fight the battle,  
Giving us the victor’s crown.  
Hunger, thirst shall all be ended  
When we take his outstretched hand,  
He will lead to springs eternal,  
Flowing through the Promised Land.*

### PROMISE NUMBER THIRTY-SEVEN

ISAIAH 49:15, 16—“Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.”

There is nothing more enduring in this wicked world than a mother’s love. Poets have written volumes about it. Musicians from time immemorial have composed songs about it that have endured for many years. Many mothers have followed unworthy sons to the gallows or the electric chair, faithful to the very end.

Our mothers sacrifice for us, and worry about us long after we have left our childhood homes. If necessity arises, without a second thought, they would give their very lives for us. In happiness they rejoice with us; in sorrow they comfort us. When we finally lose them in death, one of the greatest blessings of our lives has gone from us.

But, sad to relate, there ARE mothers who will leave their helpless little children, and for no other cause than their own selfish interests. Some of us who have worked with adoption agencies have seen mothers leave their heartbroken, supplicating little ones and go their ways without even looking back.

But, God NEVER leaves his children who are really his own. We will NEVER shed tears or grieve over his desertion. And, just think how precious we must be to him that he has engraved us on the palms of his hands! This means he always sees us, and knows everything we are doing and whatever happens to us at any time.

In one way or another God will come to our rescue if we need him, even when all seems lost. He will ALWAYS, let us stress, ALWAYS come to our assistance if we believe he will, and ask him.

*Some mothers have forsaken  
Their child of tender years,  
Have left him in his sorrow,  
And did not heed his tears.*

*But we are graven on God’s hands,  
How precious we must be,  
His love will last forever,  
Through all eternity.*

□

# Q&A

By Pastor Richard Worley

## WOMAN AND MAN CHILD OF REVELATION 12

### Question:

Please give an explanation of the woman and man child in Revelation twelve.—H.C., Texas.

### Answer:

Rather than give a definite and concise statement as to who is represented in this twelfth chapter of Revelation, let us consider some of the possibilities and see whether or not they are reasonable.

#### Many ideas presented

Many ideas have been presented as to the identity of this mother and child. Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy claimed she was the woman, Christian Science was the man child, and the "mortal mind" was the enemy endeavoring to destroy the newly-conceived religion.

Some had advanced the theory that the church was the woman and Christ was the man child. This has "the cart before the horse," as the church came from Christ and not Christ from the church.

#### A look at the symbols

Let us look at the symbols and see what type of an explanation they give.

A sign appeared "in heaven" (v. 1). What, if any, is the significance of the sign taking place in heaven? There must be some meaning, because the locality is specified. Does heaven always refer to heaven?

In a book of symbols it is still wise to take as many things literally as is possible. Is there any problem in letting this be seen "in heaven"? I think not. There are fewer problems in taking it literally than in trying to make it mean something. It is the sign that takes place in heaven and not the event. If it does mean something else, what does it mean?

#### Refers to Israel?

It has been ventured that it refers to Israel "at a time before the nation was cast off and disowned by God." If this is the meaning in chapter 12, how do we explain verse 3? "Another sign appeared in heaven: and behold a great red dragon." Or verse 7, "and there was war in heaven"? We must exercise care if we attempt to use the same illustration and make it refer to different things in the same passage.

The woman "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet" (v. 1), is a graphic illustration of Israel, and the twelve stars of the twelve tribes.

#### The man child

The man child has been thought of as Christ, OR the church, OR a composite of both.

We should give consideration to all possibilities.

Both Christ and the church have been promised that they should rule with a "rod of iron" (Psa. 2:9; Rev. 2:27). It is also true that Christ is the head of the body, the church. (1 Cor. 12:12.) It is possible that the man child COULD refer to both Christ and the church. The problem with this comes in Revelation 12:17, where the "rest of her offspring" are mentioned. If the church has been represented by the man child in this chapter, who are the ones who "hold the testimony of Jesus"?

**The early church?**

Is it possible that this is speaking of the early church being

born out of the nation of Israel? A question that comes to mind, however, is: Is the church an extension of Israel? Or, is the church an organism that Christ started?

It seems that Israel did not give birth to the church. In Ephesians 2:13, 14, Paul said that through Christ both Israel and the Gentiles were made one group, the church.

The early workers in the church were, for the most part, from Israel. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, also mentioned the Gentiles that were to come, as "those that are afar off" (Acts 2:39).

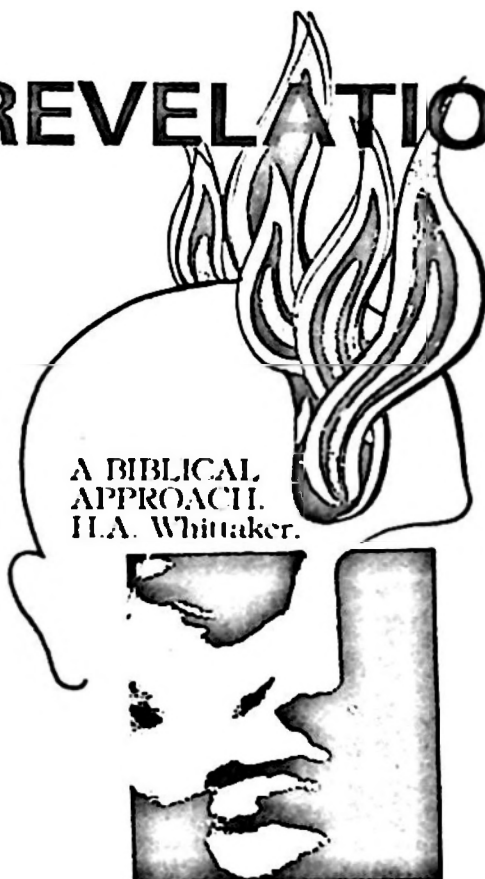
Because the church was a new entity and not an outgrowth of

---

At last, real help on the Book of Revelation! This 304-page book by

Harry A. Whittaker is deep, yet easy to read. Ministers and laymen will appreciate the sound scholarship, and Biblical approach. Attractive paper binding. Order an extra copy to share with a friend or loved one!

# REVELATION



Here is my order for Whittaker's  
**REVELATION: A Biblical Approach:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, & zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please find enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_  
copies @ \$2.50 plus 30¢ postage.

Mail this coupon to:

**THE HONEST TRUTH, INC.**  
Station A, Box 8933  
Greenville, S.C. 29604

Israel, it is difficult for me to see the man child as the church being born out of Israel.

**Another problem**

We are confronted with another problem in Revelation 12:17: "The dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus."

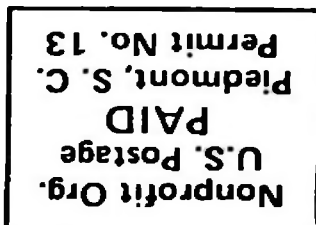
Who are the rest of the woman's offspring? At the risk of seeming to contradict myself, I admit the possibility that the offspring in verse 17 refers to those of Israel who keep God's commandments during the tribulation period (v. 13), and also

professing Christians. The terminology of verse 17 seems to make this distinction: "Who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus."

If this seems to contradict in part what I said earlier about Israel not being that which started the church, it is because that IS what I am doing in part. This tells me there is always a need for further study on any subject that is approached in the Scriptures.

As we study our ideas are going to fluctuate somewhat. However, we are to look into all of these things, so as we see the day approaching we will be able to discern the times. □

John Lewis  
Box 100  
Oregon, IL. 61061



The Honest Truth, Inc.  
Station A, Box 8933  
Greenville, SC 29604  
Address Correction Requested  
Return Postage Guaranteed

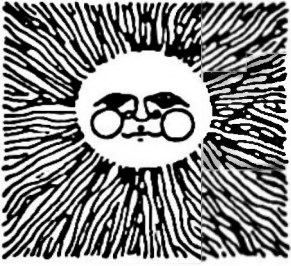


# the honest truth

ISSUE SEVENTEEN



**READ:** THE "DEVIL" OF THE BIBLE, page 4



# The voice of one

## A double issue

We present in this issue double the usual number of pages. We were sidelined for awhile due to surgery, and have been involved of late with other publishing activities, noted in this issue, namely, planning and producing Sr. Beth Briggs' book.

So, please accept our attempt to "make up" an issue by producing this double issue.

On page 4, Bro. Duncan MacLeod presents a study on the "devil" of the Bible. Hearing more and more of a personal super-tempter being taught in the Church of God, he wondered if what he had always been taught was wrong. What we have here is the result of his reinforced belief in the nonpersonality of the "devil." (Duncan is a son of the late Bro. Norman J. MacLeod, well-known to many of our readers.)

We present another installment of Sr. Beth Briggs' "Promises of God" on page 11. She is in her 93rd year, and though her health is not good, she is still alert and strong in the faith.

On page 15, we present a very fine analysis of Psalm 23, by Bro. Harry Whittaker of England. (Response to his book on Revelation continues good, and it is still not too late to order a copy.)

On page 19, your editor gives his answer to the doctrines taught by Evangelist Billy Graham in his column, "My Answer." It is our conviction it still makes a difference what we believe and whom we support.

On page 26, Bro. J. W. McLain presents the first in a projected series on the church. In this issue he discusses the implications of the Jewish Apostolic church. We are so Gentile-minded, perhaps this view will seem strange to us.

## "Promises" book published

We are pleased to announce that Sr. Beth Briggs' "Promises of God" feature is now available in book form. The 96-page soft-bound book is attractively printed with a two-color cover, and in a convenient size—4¼ by 7 inches.

The book includes seventy promises of God—from Genesis to Revelation, with Sr. Briggs' comments, and an original verse concerning each promise. Also included are Sr. Briggs' devotional comments on the 23rd Psalm, plus four original poems on different subjects.

Having had her share of joy and sorrow during her long life, Sr. Briggs has been able to convey this to others in the same situation. She said, "I wrote the

'Promises' about fifteen years ago when I was feeling a little 'down in the mouth.' When I was having trouble I appealed for prayers, and was told to read the promises for myself; that they were the most comforting of anything this person knew. I did."

Promises for now, too

About God's promises Sr. Briggs has said, "We know from the Bible that the future will be glorious for God's people. I feel that we need comforting NOW, in the hard times we are going through. We can take God's promises to us now, and then enjoy their complete fulfillment in the life to come."

We will continue to print installments of the "Promises" in THE HONEST TRUTH, but we encourage our readers to send for at least one copy of the book. Churches and pastors could make good use of these books as gifts to those in hospitals, to shut-ins, to the bereaved, and the discouraged.

Use the handy order blank on page 29 to order as many copies as you can profitably use. The cost is only \$1.50 per copy, including postage. Order today!

#### Note to our readers

We solicit your prayers and support for this ministry. Also, we ask you to send us the names and addresses of friends and relatives for our mailing list. There is no charge, as this is a work of faith. If you do NOT wish to receive the publication, we'd like to know that, too, as there is considerable expense involved in printing and mailing. □

## the honest truth

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

It is mailed free of charge to all interested persons, as a work of faith. Gifts toward its support are solicited, and are tax deductible.

The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

#### CONTENTS

The voice of one . . . . .	2
The "devil" of the Bible, Duncan MacLeod . . . . .	4
The promises of God, Beth Briggs . . . . .	11
The twenty-third Psalm, Harry A. Whittaker . . . . .	15
My Answer to Billy Graham, the editor . . . . .	19
The Apostolic Jewish church, J. W. McLain . . . . .	26

# The "devil" of the Bible

By Duncan MacLeod, Encino, Calif.

**M**ANY CHRISTIANS will tell you there is a personal "devil" because the Bible says there is one. Others say it is not important whether there is one or not, while still others say they don't know what it is.

What does the Bible say about this subject? If we take certain isolated scriptures out of context, and if we try to interpret them literally at the same time, we tend to get an affirmative answer. If, however, we study the subject in context with the whole Bible—in all its ambiguity, ambivalence, symbolism, etc.—we can only come up with a negative answer.

Too few of us study the Bible as we should. We are content to follow tradition, or what others tell us. We take our beliefs for granted. Some of us are intimidated by others with a stronger will than our own. Because of the strong emotional reaction in some quarters to the mere mention of the subject, it is usually "swept under the rug." It is indeed a shame, because it prevents a free and open discussion of this most important subject.

The reason Christ was manifested was to destroy the "devil" and his works. (1 John 3:8; Heb.

2:14.) If we hope to obtain salvation we must understand, believe, and obey the gospel plan of salvation. We cannot do any of these if we don't know what and who the "devil" is, because it is obvious the things concerning Jesus and how he brought the plan into effect are the most important parts of the gospel plan. (Acts 8:5, 12.)

## Popular belief

The "devil" of popular belief has as much power as God. This evil force has influenced everyone since the beginning of time. Even Christ was influenced by him, and was the only one not to be overcome by him.

Consider his portrait. He can be man or beast with a very menacing shape. He is ambivalent; simultaneously attractive and repulsive. He cajoles and intrigues. He is visible and invisible, while his capacity for change is unlimited. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient.

He devastates whole cities or nations in an instant. He causes wars, famines, plagues, etc., yet he remains invulnerable and triumphant in all his schemes; always planning more agony and torment for all mankind.

Man is completely his prisoner. "Satan" always attacks man in his weakest moments, when he can't defend himself. He has a tremendous advantage over God in the continuous battle over man's "immortal soul"; whether he will drag man off into a burning hell to be tormented forever, or whether God will succeed in luring him into heaven to experience eternal bliss. The advantage is that man is already prone to do evil, rather than good. In terms of the numbers of the "devil's" subjects in this wicked world compared to the number of subjects that will be in the Kingdom of God, we can see how great that advantage is.

Who "Satan" really is

"Satan" should always be translated "adversary," and can be anyone good or bad. God often acted as a "satan" when he sent his angelic agent to oppose or test men. An angelic agent tested Job. (Job 1:6; 2:1-7.) A heavenly spirit (not called satan here) deceived Ahab through false prophets. (1 Kings 22:19-23.) The angel of the Lord was sent as an adversary to stop Balaam in his mad desire. (Num. 22:22-35.) Joshua was accused by the adversary before the heavenly court, because he was guilty of sin along with the people. (Zech. 2:1-5.) David was told by the adversary to go and number Israel. (1 Chron. 21:1.) "The anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah" (2 Sam. 24:1).

God created evil

Sin was brought into the world by man (Rom. 5:12), and God created evil to punish him for that sin. "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things" (Isa. 45:7). In the fifth verse of the same chapter God said, "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou has not known me." "Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?" (Amos 3:6). "What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10). "Behold . . . do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks" (Micah 2:3). The greatest punishment of all is death, and that is certainly an evil from which none of us can remove our necks. (See Rom. 6:23.)

"No power but of God"

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God" (Rom. 13:1-5). The only one possessing immortality is God. (1 Tim. 6:16.) Only God does marvelous things. (Psa. 72:18.) God warns against sin. (Gen. 2:17.) God is able to destroy body and soul in Gehenna. (Matt. 10:28.) "In whose hand is the soul [life] of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10). "Behold, all souls are mine; . . . the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4).

It is quite obvious that belief in a personal "devil" is blasphemy. And, especially with proof that shall be brought up

later on, there is also no excuse for saying we don't know what it is, or that it doesn't matter.

#### "Satan" in Jewish thought

Up until the 6th century B.C., the Jews thought of God as the creator of both good and evil. Natural disasters were thought of as punishment for doing wrong. (Deut. 28; 31:17; 1 Kings 14:9, 10.) God was also thought of as using the evil acts of men to advance his purposes. (E.g., Isa. 10:5-11, where the Assyrians are said to be sent by God to punish Israel.) Moral evil was attributed to him, as when the Lord sent a lying spirit into the mouths of false prophets to deceive Ahab (1 Kings 22:19-23), and "an evil spirit from the LORD" terrified or troubled King Saul. (1 Sam. 16:14, 15.)

Because God was thought of as being only holy, they found it difficult to accept his responsibility for evil. Zoroastrianism, with its strong belief in an evil being—*Angro Mainyus*, had a strong effect on Jewish theology during the Persian period (539-332 B.C.), and gave rise to the concept of "satan" that was developed in the same period and is contained in the New Testament.

#### Diabolos

The word "devil" has a very mysterious connotation, and very few people agree as to what its character, attributes, and existence are. It is a completely improper translation of two words that have simple translations, and when properly understood are easy to apply.

*Diabolos* is a compound word, from *dia*—through, and *ballo*—

strike or pierce, as with an arrow or dart; thus meaning "strike through." A person has been struck through when he has been destroyed by calumny, slander, etc. A *diabolos* is a false accusation, slanderer, calumniator, traducer. *Diabolos* in each of us causes us to pass over from right to wrong—to commit sin. In other words, wicked men in general. (Read Psa. 5:5; 10; 50:18-23; 55:15, 23; 109; Prov. 12:14; 23:26.)

With the proper understanding of the word "devil" we have no problem in interpreting the passages of Scripture that use it. For instance, if we don't give place to the "devil" we are not giving in to temptation or the lust of the flesh. (Eph. 4:27.) The roaring lion that walked around to devour people was none other than the wicked rulers of Rome who persecuted and put Christians to death. (1 Pet. 5:8.)

#### Daimon

Common belief is that "demons"—*daimoni* are spirits or spirit entities which are capable of entering bodies of mortal people, singly or in companies, and afflicting them with various illnesses and diseases such as madness, blindness, deafness, etc. In spite of the advancements of science and medicine that offer proof to the contrary, this is a very strong part of belief, particularly in the field of what modern man calls psychiatry.

Rites of exorcism, voodooism, witchcraft, etc., all have to do with eradicating demons. Superstitions and the occult all have their basis in them. Music, art,

language, literature, religion of every type, and practically every other facet of life has been, or is, affected by belief in demons.

*Daimon* occurs about sixty times in the New Testament, and *diabolos*, thirty. Paul used *diabolos* in 1 Timothy 3:11; 2 Timothy 2:3, Titus 2:3, where it is translated "slanderers," and "false accusers." *Diabolos* is never used to describe a demoniac or one possessed; it applies to both sexes.

#### The power of death

Man, sin, death; that is the order of things. Any sin, or every sin, that is committed is worthy of death, and there is no escape from eternal death, except through the precious blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. This, then, is the heart of the gospel plan. Sin, or sinful man, is the "devil" that Christ has figuratively destroyed.

Hebrews 2:14 and 1 John 3:8 in themselves preclude there being any possibility of a supernatural "devil." When we add the other passages and verses that harmonize with these, the evidence is simply overwhelming.

Sin entered into the world by man, and death by sin. Death passed on all men, in that all have sinned. (Rom. 5:12.) By man came death, and by man came also the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all die, through Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:21, 22.) "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb. 9:26.)

Man is enticed by his own lust. Lust conceives sin. Sin brings death. (Jas. 1:13-15.) The carnal mind is enmity against God. (Rom. 8:7, 8.) Christ destroyed enmity on the cross. (Eph. 2:16.) "The friendship of the world is enmity with God," and the "spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy" (Jas. 4:4-7). "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

#### Descriptive of sin

Lust, enmity, carnal mind, spirit in us, devil, etc., are all words descriptive of sin, or that which causes us to sin. The list of references could go on until it covered the whole Bible. Why not? The Bible, after all, is a book about devils (sinners).

Our conclusions could be along the following line: 1) Christ was manifested to destroy the "devil" and his works; 2) We are all "devils," or of the "devil"; 3) The "devil's" works are sin; 4) The sinner's reward is death. If there were a "personal devil," then these verses would be very contradictory, as Christ came to save sinners, of which the "devil" is one, yet he came to destroy the "devil" and his works.

One thing we should bear in mind is that the "devil" spoken of has the power of the second death. The only reason the "devil" exists, is that man does. After the second death, only immortal people will exist. Hence, no "devil," or power of death.

#### Spirits

Tantamount to belief in a personal "devil" is that spirits are

supernatural, immortal beings or angels. Let's examine the word "spirit" in all its ambiguity. In 1 John 4:1-3 there are four kinds of spirits mentioned: 1) people—false prophets; 2) people who will confess Jesus; 3) the Spirit of God; and 4) the spirit of antichrist (having to do with mental and moral attitudes, unbelievers).

As far as there being a spirit, "devil," or whatever one may wish to call it, the only wicked spirits in a personal sense are false prophets, teachers, priests, and wicked men in general. "Try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1).

If we try to apply the word "spirit" in the sense that many people do, we will be so confused there will be no logic involved at all. Some of the translations have to do with wind, breath, emotion, the power of God, life, people, angels, etc. Unfortunately many people manage to drink spirits to excess!

#### Angels

The angels we read about in the Bible were prophets, priests, teachers, etc. There were angels of integrity, obedience, bearers of specific tidings and commands, warriors, witnesses of creation, rebuke, etc. The angel of the Lord is represented as God's personal agent. In many passages

he is like the divine personality. Many times he spoke in the first person singular as God.

"Angel" means "messenger," and can be applied to anyone who bears the divine message of God. "Angel," as applied to mortal man, is found in the following examples: "Behold, I send messenger [*aggelos*]" (Matt. 11:10). This was in reference to John the Baptist. "Messenger" is also found in Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24-27; 9:52, 2 Corinthians 12:7, James 2:25.

The question of whether natural or supernatural angels or messengers is meant, must be decided by the context, which is not difficult. See such texts as: Genesis 18:1, 4, 5; 19:1, 15; Exodus 23:20, 21; 33:11; Acts 7:35; 1 Peter 1:10-12.

#### Lucifer

The only mention of Lucifer (Isa. 14:12) is the incorrect translation of the Hebrew *helel*, meaning "a waning luminary." Isaiah was referring to the waning power of the king of Babylon, but from a supposed reference in Luke 10:18 and Revelation 9:1-11, Lucifer came to be used synonymously with "satan."

The common belief that Lucifer was the name of an angel who fell from heaven to become the "devil," can be very easily disproved by reading Isaiah 14:4-20. This passage describes the proverb against the king of Babylon. He is described as an oppressor who has ceased. His pride told him he would exalt himself above the stars of heaven. He would be like the most High.



The only "heaven" he could have fallen from is the political one, or the one he had built in his own mind. It also makes no sense to say a fallen angel could influence nations that didn't even exist at that time. Furthermore, why would a "devil" who loves darkness, wish to return to the place from which he has fallen, and where God dwells in the light which no man can approach unto? (1 Tim. 6:16.)

#### "Sinful angels"

Genesis 6:2 is supposed to describe fallen angels; the belief started in Jewish mythology—in the Book of Enoch. However, the sons of God spoken of were sons just as we are, by mental assent. (1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 2 Cor. 6:17, 18; Rom. 8:9-19.)

The sinful angels spoken of in 2 Peter 2:4 that are in chains, and "reserved unto judgment" of the great day, certainly can't be living in hell. The sinner's penalty is death. The words of Jude 6 are easily applied to mortal man also, since he can be an angel. What happened was an event to put them in remembrance, though they once knew it. Messengers were sent to take possession of the first estate—the Promised Land, but "left their own habitation," and gave a false report. (Read Num. 13:1 to 15:2.)

They knew from the history how God "having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not" (Jude 5). These sinful messengers were responsible not only to the law of Moses, but to the law of the spirit of life, and are to be judged

by him who shall judge "the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1).

#### Cacophony

An angel "laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years" (Rev. 20:2). Can the serpent mentioned in Genesis 3:14 be the serpent in Isaiah 65:25? First he was cursed and made to crawl on his belly, eating dust for the rest of his days, yet he is described as eating dust again in the Kingdom. Does logic tell us that "satan" managed to escape the curse altogether, and be allowed to join the sons of God; walk freely up and down and to and fro, and be allowed to test Job as described in the first two chapters of Job?

#### The "devil" bound?

How can a "devil" with all the names given him be bound for a thousand years in a pit with no bottom? Further verses state he will be sealed for all that time, and eventually be thrown into the fiery pit to be tormented forever. (Rev. 20:10.) Can we possibly interpret this literally? There are many people who say we can.

Could "Satan's seat" be at Pergamos and not in hell? (Rev. 2:13.) Was Judas actually a "devil"? (John 6:70.) What about Peter in Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33; and Luke 4:8?

Did some supernatural monster lead Christ around in the wilderness for forty days? He who could recognize "satan," cast out devils, and heal the sick,

even when they were not in his presence? No, Christ was tempted "in all points . . . like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). (This is a good reference for those that insist Jesus is God. God can't be tempted, yet Jesus was. Jas. 1:13.) Christ said "no" to the devil in the flesh—the carnal mind, lust, temptation, sin, etc.

#### "The body of Moses"

Do you suppose an archangel would be so foolish as to contend with anyone over a corpse? (Jude 9.) Study will show the body spoken of was none other than the nation of Israel, in that they were led by Moses. We are considered the body of Christ, or a church body.

In order for any living thing to exist from Genesis through Reve-

lation, it would have to be immortal, since it involves a period much longer than any mortal could have. We can prove in many ways, then, that no personal "devil" exists.

To those of you who would like to read some very interesting material about this subject, I very strongly recommend the book entitled, *The World's Redemption*, by Thomas Williams. It is the most complete, analytical, easy-to-understand book I have read about the subject. I personally feel indebted to him for writing such a splendid chapter about the "devil," and have borrowed several ideas from him. □

(Copies of *The World's Redemption*, a hardbound book of nearly 600 pages, are available through this office for \$6.00 per copy, postpaid.—Ed.)



## BEYOND TOMORROW

By Beth Briggs

*Beyond tomorrow is a better day,  
The love of God will dwell in every heart,  
No more shall there be sorrow, pain, or tears,  
And in that day we nevermore shall part  
From those we loved who sleep the sleep of death  
Or from our dear ones who are with us still.*

*There was a garden, beautiful, God made  
With luscious fruit and man to do his will;  
But Adam did not heed God's voice and fell,  
And sin and evil came and filled the earth.*

*For long years sin has crushed man to the ground,  
But soon this world shall know a second birth;  
For Christ is coming, righteousness shall reign  
In all the land, and this his children know,  
Beyond tomorrow is a better day,  
God's holy Word, the Bible, tells us so.* □



# The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Downey, Calif.

## 40. GOD WILL COMFORT US

ISAIAH 66:13—"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

Most of us remember how our mother comforted us, and how we came to her with all our little problems that seemed so great to us. No matter how trivial they might be, she always found time to take us in her arms and kiss away our hurts. So it is with our Heavenly Father; he will likewise comfort us.

We might ask, what comfort is there when we are languishing on beds of sickness, with four walls closing inexorably in upon us? Or, what comfort is there even if we are able to be about our daily tasks, but constantly suffer from some incurable disease?

There is no comfort except that given by God, and the knowledge that he stands beside us with his love to make the days and nights bearable. We console ourselves with the thought that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). It is only for a moment in God's eternal plan that we must suffer thus. If we keep our minds fixed on the everlasting reward that will soon be given to the faithful, we can, to some extent at least, forget the pains that wrack us.

What consolation is there when a loved one has died, and our hearts are broken and bleeding? There should be consolation in the fact that the trials of our loved one are over, and a crown of glory that fadeth not away awaits him at the coming of the chief Shepherd. (1 Pet. 5:4.)

A cherished dream of ours does not materialize, but our disappointment can turn into gladness if we realize that, after all, it was but a fleeting illusion. God has much better things in store for us that will give us greater joy.

*Like a mother, God will comfort  
All who come to him in prayer,  
No matter what our sorrows are,  
He always will be there.  
Our loved ones may be far away,  
Or we may be all alone,  
But we have a Heavenly Father  
Who loves and keeps his own.*

## 41. OUR SEARCH FOR GOD

**JEREMIAH 29:13** – “Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

Many of us seek God halfheartedly, and so we never find him. He does not wish halfhearted service, he requires wholehearted devotion, and this only will he accept. God will not reveal himself as long as we are unwilling to place ourselves and everything we own on the altar of sacrifice, and walk, if need be, entirely alone with him. Are we doing this, or are we keeping back just one little indulgence that “couldn’t possibly hurt anybody anyway”? Do we really want to find him?

Do we sometimes feel a vast emptiness within ourselves and wonder why we are so dissatisfied with everything, so restless and discontented? If this is the case, we have not really found God. How are we to find him? God has told us, “This is the way, walk ye in it” (Isa. 30:21), and he has illuminated the way with his presence and love, so that all who will may find it. Then, when we have found it, if we continue to walk therein, our restless longings will disappear and joy and happiness take their place.

*In the fever of the battle,  
When the enemy would smite,  
We will find that God is waiting  
In his majesty and might.  
  
He is moving o’er the waters  
Of the fateful sea of life,  
And will calm their direful roaring,  
Bringing peace from wind and strife.  
  
We will find him when we seek him,  
Giving all to him to keep,  
And his ever-dwelling presence  
Is the blessing we shall reap.*

## 42. WITH US IN OUR GRIEF

**LAMENTATIONS 3:32** – “Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.”

God does not cause grief directly, but allows his saints to experience it if he sees that they are in need of chastening. If we are not chastened, we are bastards and not sons. (Heb. 12:8.) How wonderful it is to know that through whatever may befall us he has compassion upon us according to his mercies!

We all know how dry the earth becomes, and how the flowers, trees, and vegetation shrivel and die if sunshine is continuous, and there is no rain to refresh the ground. How the farmer watches for the rain, and how much lovelier everything is after it has gone and the sun comes out again!

And how much brighter the sunlight in our life, and how much more we appreciate it after our wearisome journey through the shadows! How much more quickly we succour our associates, who, like the man who fell among thieves, wait for the man or woman who will not pass by on the other side! (See Luke 10:33-35.) God's overshadowing love will see us safely through any perplexity, and we will come forth from our chastening to sparkle and shine as a guide to others groping in the dark and anxious to find the light.

*What is grief, but God's own message  
Leading us to heights unknown,  
That we may adorn in beauty  
That fair city as foreshown?  
It may be he wants to mould us,  
That our virtues may unfold,  
And affliction form a vessel  
Not of dross, but purest gold.*

### 43. REJOICE WHEN REVILED

**MATTHEW 5:11, 12** — "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven."

If we are as dedicated and faithful in our Christian lives as we ought to be, it is certain that we will sometimes be reviled by at least a few of the non-Christian people of the world, because we will not do as they do and walk with them in their questionable pursuits. But, notice, when Jesus speaks of persecution, he uses the words "falsely" and "for my sake." We must be certain that we did not bring these revilings upon ourselves by our own actions; but if they were caused by our earnest endeavors to walk in the paths of righteousness, then, says this scripture, we will be blessed.

The prophet has said: "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psa. 84:10). So if we, too, prefer the lowliest position in the house of our Lord to the "pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25), we will go forth with a song on our lips and joy in our hearts. In so doing, we will not only receive the promised heavenly reward, but will discover even in this life that illusive blessing called "happiness" which so many have sought after but never found.

*Do evil men revile us,  
Because we love the Lord?  
Rejoice, for he has told us  
That great is our reward.*

*We will go forth with gladness,  
And he will always bless  
The efforts we are making  
With joy and happiness.*

#### 44. CONSIDER THE LILIES

**MATTHEW 6:28, 30, 33** – “Consider the lilies of the field, . . . if God so clothe the grass of the field, . . . shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Do we worry about our daily bread, our clothing, how we are going to pay our taxes, rent, etc.? If we do, we doubt him. David told us that he has never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. (Psa. 37:25.) And Jesus has also said that we need have no thought for the morrow (Matt. 6:34), “for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.” When we have done the best we can for ourselves, if we are **PUTTING GOD FIRST**, he has promised that he will provide whatever we cannot provide for ourselves.

Now let us go into the garden and behold the lilies, the handiwork of God, in their purity and beauty. The Scriptures tell us that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. He then goes on to comfort and assure us by chidingly but gently telling us that if God so clothes the grass of the field with such loveliness that he will much more clothe us; us “of little faith.”

So let us know when doubts or grief engulf us that the God who made the lilies watches over his most wonderful creation with an abiding love that never falters or fails. If the way seems long and weary, the light is just beyond. If we watch for it and pray for it, we shall find it.

*Consider the lilies of the field,  
Formed in beauty, pure and white,  
He has wrapped them in his loveliness,  
Though it withers and takes flight.*

*If our faith is strong, he surrounds us  
With a glory from above,  
For the Lord has promised to clothe us  
Forever in his dear love.*

□



#### WHAT IS YOUTH?

*Youth is not entirely a time of life. . . . It is a state of mind. It is not wholly a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips, or supple knees. It is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions. . . . Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old only by deserting their ideals.—General Douglas MacArthur.*

□



# The 23rd Psalm

By Harry A. Whittaker  
Lichfield, Staffordshire, England

**I**T IS NOT POSSIBLE to say with certainty when David wrote this masterpiece of devotion, but most likely it was the fruit of his bitter and reassuring experience when he had to flee from Jerusalem at the time of Absalom's rebellion.

The relevance of some of the expressions used is most impressive, and even exciting, when considered against the background of those anxious days. But full consideration of this historical setting must be left to some other occasion. The immediate purpose is to review the warm reassurance which David's moving figures of speech convey to the Lord's faithful.

## The LORD as Shepherd

"The LORD is my shepherd." Many expound all six verses as a commentary on these familiar heart-warming words. *The New English Bible* splits the psalm in two ending the "shepherd" sec-

tion with verse 4. But the metaphors are more smooth and meaningful when the psalm is read as a threefold figure—the Shepherd, the Guide, and the Host. Considered from this point of view there is a great gain in spiritual refreshing and practical wisdom.

The shepherd with his sheep is one of the most familiar and best-loved figures in the Bible. From Abel and Jacob in Genesis, to the Lamb in Revelation, who shepherds his flock of redeemed through the trials of their wilderness journey, this allegory is either hinted at or is elaborately expounded by psalmist, prophet and apostle, and by Jesus himself in two parables. Yet in only one place is this psalm quoted, and that in such a way that the allusion is easily missed.

"I shall not want"

Here the emphasis is on the more-than-ample divine provi-

dence which cares for the flock: "I shall not want." This is the fruit of experience: "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psa. 37:25).

It is one of the great standbys of faith which youth lacks, but which mature years rejoice in, that past experience has proved the reality of heaven's care and control.

#### "Green pastures"

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside waters of restfulness." It is only the full-fed sheep which lies down; and those who have experienced the leading of the Lord know the quality of the blessings to which they have been led.

As the 20th century runs its hectic, sordid course, the contrast between the flashy emptiness of its glitter and cleverness and the quiet, satisfying life of the Truth becomes more and more marked. Here there is a fellowship and a family spirit unsurpassed in any other human association. This is one thing which the assemblies of believers, for all their many shortcomings, achieve better than anybody else in the whole world. Here is inspiration and idealism, quiet solid virtues, and a common loyalty to the Shepherd of the flock.

Today, since the leading of the flock comes necessarily from lesser mortals who are given the oversight of it (1 Pet. 5:2), the big unceasing responsibility on such is to see that there ARE "green pastures" and that the

flock is adequately fed. Nothing will be more likely to set the sheep straying than pasture inadequate in growth or unsuited to their need.

#### Some sheep WILL stray

Even though there will be the most conscientious of guidance and care, some sheep WILL stray, for they are the silliest of animals. It is a wholesome corrective of false notions about one's own outstanding qualities to reflect on the wisdom of God in choosing THIS metaphor for those who are members of his flock—"silly sheep."

Especially do sheep show their lack of good sense or instinct in their marvelous flair for wandering away from the best pasture which satisfies the main flock, in order to browse in remote and dangerous places, ultimately becoming crag-fast, in dire peril. How often it happens! But the Good Shepherd is ever ready to leave the main flock for awhile in order to search and find and rescue.

There is ever special concern for the wandering and the lost. This is the meaning of "he restoreth my soul"; more exactly, "he causes my soul [that is, *me*] to return." It was to this that Peter alluded in the familiar words: "Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop [watch dog?] of your souls" (1 Pet. 2:25).

#### The LORD as Guide

The figure changes. The LORD is now a Guide, imparting reassurance in a wild, unfamiliar country, and leading with confi-



dence to the bourne of warm hospitality. "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." This motive name is: "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Ex 34:6, 7)—hence the paths of righteousness.

#### "Valley of the shadow"

Even the valley of the shadow of death holds no terrors for this guide, for he has been here before. The previous psalm tells of his lonely experience in it. But now it is no place of evil, but a path of righteousness. The Hebrew word for "paths" is *magal*, meaning literally, "wheel-tracks."

The cherubim-chariot of the glory of the Lord has made this valley of the shadow a place of sanctification. And even though at present there be no visible sight of the heavenly glory, there is no less ground for confidence—"for thou art with me." Immanuel! The rod of the Lord for guidance, and his staff for defense are an ever-present comfort in the Holy Scriptures provided for this express purpose.

#### "I will fear no evil"

Therefore, "I will fear no evil." For the one so completely in God's care there is NO evil, but only good. No promise is made of exemption from the bad experiences of life, but for them that love God ALL THINGS work together for good—the trials and hardships most of all! And amidst the worst of them

there can be unflagging confidence of a safe and happy outcome; "I walk THROUGH the valley of the shadow," and not just IN it.

#### The LORD as Host

The next metaphor—of a host providing lavish hospitality—climbs to a climax of relaxed comfort and reassurance.

It is difficult to take literally the words: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies," but this was almost exactly David's experience at the time of Absalom's rebellion. After his flight from Jerusalem, David and his men were received with loyal and unstinted hospitality by the aged Barzillai of Bahurim. (2 Sam. 17:27-29.)

All the resources of that wealthy household were at the stricken King David's disposal. And his enemies, filled with chagrin, knew it was so, and feared for the time when, refreshed and organized, the men of David would bring back their master in triumph.

Lesser men than David have experienced the same bitter and reviving swing of the pendulum. In times of hardship and struggle the Lord provides warm friends whose loyalty staves off complete collapse of spirit. Better still, he prepares a table—"the Lord's table," and here, anointed with an abundance of blessing and cheered with a cup of forgiveness which never fails, there is not only hope, but relaxed confidence and renewed vigor.

Then who in his senses would blithely feel that in this wilder-

ness he had no special need of the Lord's table? Who amongst all the Lord's pilgrims is so self-sufficient as not to want the stay and comfort which a Father's forethought makes ever available?

**"Goodness and mercy"**

"Surely goodness and mercy [symbolized by the oil and wine] shall follow me all the days of my life." Here both the Hebrew and the Greek texts use a word for "follow," which means "pursue," or even "persecute, hunt down." Yet it is the Lord's copious cornucopia of blessing which is so described! In what more striking fashion could it be taught that his boundless hospitality and care turn foes into friends, adversities into blessings?

This word "follow, pursue" links also most beautifully with the beginning of the psalm: "The LORD is my shepherd." He goes ahead and he follows after. Before and behind there is only the presence and help of the God of all comfort.

**"The house of the LORD"**

Worry and fear are altogether excluded, chased away by the knowledge that "I will return [and be] in the house of the LORD forever." The relevance of this more exact reading to David's own case is evident enough. He DID return to Jerusalem and spend the rest of his days close by the sanctuary of the Lord. But far richer fulfillment is yet in store. David planned a temple of God "exceeding magnificent" (1 Chron. 22:5), but saw it only in the

plans he prepared. The day is coming when he will worship his God in a temple far surpassing even that.

**Glad reassurance**

From start to finish this jewel of a psalm has no petition to Almighty God, no expression of hope or longing, but only of glad reassurance; of complete and unshakable confidence in God's providence.

They would do well to share something of this spirit who spend their days obsessed with a sense of their own unworthiness; who put all their emphasis and effort into well-intentioned striving after personal righteousness. The good life in Christ is not one to struggle and agonize after. Instead, let his pastoral care, his guidance, and the abounding richness of his spiritual gifts be received with all thankfulness—and with assured confidence of more to follow.

This is the spirit of God's great men. Moses said, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness" (Deut. 8:2). With such memories, what ground is there for anxiety or uncertainty? Jacob expressed his faith when he said, "God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed [shepherded] me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil" (Gen. 48:15, 16). Here is the support and stay, the positive confidence and unflagging faith of all who sing this psalm of the beloved of the Lord, knowing what it means. □

# My Answer



To

Billy Graham

By the editor

**Y**OUR EDITOR has been a close reader of Billy Graham's "My Answer," which is featured in many daily newspapers across the country. As a general rule, we find his answers quite sound on matters of practice. On matters of doctrine it is quite another story.

We have no idea if all the questions are actually sent in by readers, or who on the Graham staff writes the column. That does not really matter, as these comments are not meant as a personal vendetta anyway, but an objective consideration of the doctrines and principles concerned. We WILL say that many opportunities to teach the truth are muffed, and that a person would be hard put to learn the truth on basic doctrines from the answers printed.

#### Areas considered

There are four major areas of incorrect doctrine which are constantly emphasized: 1) the trinity of God, including the incarnation and diety of Jesus; 2) the nature of man, including immortality of the soul; 3) immediate reward at death in heaven or hell; and 4) that baptism is not necessary for salvation.

#### 1. The trinity

The questions: "Will you please explain the Trinity and give me Scriptural references on this? P.R." "I am a young man trying to get hold of the Christian faith, but one thing troubles me, and maybe you can help me out. The Bible, as I read it, teaches there is one God. Then, how do Christians get the idea of the trinity? Doesn't this teach the concept of three gods? Please explain. H.M."

His answer: "The teaching of the Trinity, or Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the Godhead, is based upon New Testament utterances of our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles." "While the word 'Trinity' is not found in the Bible, the truth of the doctrine is clearly presented."

The texts he uses to "prove" the trinity include Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Favored verses from John 1 are used frequently, as well as Jesus' statement in John 8:58, "Before Abraham was, I am." A fragment out of context he used was, "The great God and our

Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

A great admission of his is that "the term Trinitas was first used by Tertullian, one of the early church fathers who lived from 160 to 230 A.D. . . . And the doctrine has been acceptable to most Christians since that time."

#### My answer

A history of the doctrine of the trinity should not begin with Tertullian, but with the ancient Assyrians who arranged their pagan gods into families of three. This practice prevailed also among the Greeks and Romans, who renamed the older gods and adopted them into their pantheon. That the church was paganized under Constantine, Augustine, and others, is well-known. That God, his Son, and his holy power should be paganized and trinitized is not unusual.

Billy Graham is right, the trinity is not found in the New Testament, even though he believes and teaches it. The "proof" texts for trinity are strongly against it when properly analyzed.

It will be noted that Matthew 28:19 does not contain a personal "name." "Father" is not a name, "Son" is not a name, and "Holy Ghost" is certainly not a name. "Baptizing them in the name" should be "into the name, . . . implying union and dedication to . . . the fountain of authority and the source of blessing."—*I.B.C.* We believe the disciples understood the Lord's instructions, and they baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38).

The fact that three names or titles appear together does not prove trinity. Peter, James, and John are listed together many times, but no one we know of has tried to ascribe trinity to them.

#### References in John

John 1:1-14 is used by most who believe in trinity or the pre-existence of Jesus. The key to understanding this text is the word *logos*, translated "Word." *Logos* may mean word, saying, speech, reason, purpose, or intent, as shown by usage in the English versions and also in the Greek lexicons. While a masculine word in the Greek, and all pronouns must match the antecedent, other inanimate and impersonal things may be masculine, feminine, or neuter.

God used his *logos*—his word, his reason, his intellect, his purpose—in creating the world. The predictive sayings (*logos*) of God were ultimately made real in the birth of Jesus Christ, but that does not make him God. Other *logos*—sayings—will yet be fulfilled, such as 1 Corinthians 15:54, when "Death is swallowed up in victory" at the resurrection at Christ's coming.

#### "Before Abraham was"

"Before Abraham was born, I am he" (John 8:58, Diag.). This verse and verse 56, about Abraham seeing Christ's day, are meant as conundrums for the disbelieving Jews. The "I AM" of Moses' writings (Ex. 3:14), is not the subject here, but the Messiah. The Messiah existed in prophecy before Abraham came on the

scene, and Abraham looked forward to the reign of Messiah.

This could also have the same meaning as John the Baptist's words concerning Jesus in John 1:15, "He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for he was before me." The Diaglott says, "For he is my superior." Jesus is in a position superior to Abraham.

Although "most Christians" find the trinity an acceptable doctrine, any student worth his salt can see it as a pagan myth. It is not taught in the Bible.

## 2. Immortality of the soul

The questions: "I don't understand what 'immortality' means. Will you please explain it to me? V.C." "Dr. Graham, can you cite a Bible text to substantiate the immortality of the soul? I went through an entire concordance and I could not find one passage saying the soul is immortal.—R.R.H." "Please give me your opinion on death. I think we'll remain in the grave till the day of resurrection. Some say I'm wrong and the soul goes to God at death. M.A."

His answer: "God made men different from the other creatures. He made him in his own image, a living soul. When this body dies and our earthly existence is terminated, the soul lives on forever." "The answer to your question lies in the definition of man as God created him. Genesis 2:7 says man became a 'living soul,' that is, the real person is a never-dying spirit which goes on even after the body ceases to live." "In Philipians' first chapter he speaks of

being 'with Christ' which he says is 'far better' than life here. In Hebrews 12:1 the writer certainly doesn't suggest any idea of the dead in Christ sleeping idly without consciousness."

### My answer

A study of man as God made him is helpful in understanding the subject of immortality. Genesis 2:7 says, "The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul [a living creature, NEB]." Notice it does not say God GAVE man a soul, but that man BECAME a soul. Also, notice that neither here nor anywhere in the Bible does "immortal soul," "never-dying spirit," or "soul that never dies" occur.

The breath made the man a living creature. In this sense man is not above the other creatures. The same Hebrew word, *nephesh*, translated "living soul" in reference to man is used several times in Genesis 1 in reference to the lower animals, both in the water and on land. "God created great whales, and every living creature [*nephesh*] that moveth, which the waters brought forth" (v. 21). "God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature [*nephesh*] after his kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth" (v. 24).

The Preacher said, "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man

hath no preeminence above a beast" (Eccl. 3:19). Of course, we know man is superior to the lower animals in that he has intellect, and a will, and was made in God's image and likeness.

#### Man not immortal

Man's likeness to God did not include immortality—deathlessness. If man had been made immortal, God's warning—"If you eat, you'll die" (Gen. 2:17)—would have been meaningless. The man ate and the man died. It is noteworthy that the Hebrew word *enosh* and its plural occurs 560 times, but only once did the translators render it correctly as "mortal man": "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" (Job 4:17). (See both Strong's and Young's Concordances.) Paul said "this mortal must put on immortality" when Jesus returns to raise the corruptible dead and change the mortal living believers. (1 Cor. 15:52-54.)

Immortality and incorruptibility are not said anywhere to be the present possession of man. They are the sole natural possession of God (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16); are said to be revealed or brought to light by the gospel (2 Tim. 1:10); and to be sought by the believers. (Rom. 2:7.) We seek immortality because we do not now possess it!

#### Paul's "strait"

The reference so often quoted from Philippians 1 does not teach what some suppose. Paul sought to glorify his Master, whether in life or in death. Christ would be magnified if Paul died

as a martyr, but he said it was more needful for the disciples that he live. (v. 24.) It was a "strait," but he mentioned a third thing that was "far better," and that was the return of Christ. The word "depart" in verse 23 is from the Greek *analousai*, which is translated "return" in Luke 12:36; in reference to our Lord's return.

#### Cloud of witnesses

We have never heard Hebrews 12:1 used before to prove immortality of the soul. The great "cloud of witnesses" named in the 11th chapter, would be hard put to be living witnesses since 11:13 says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises." An example of faithful living certainly doesn't have to be alive now!

The unconscious sleep of the dead is a doctrine of the whole Bible. Daniel 12:2 speaks of "them that sleep in the dust of the earth" that "shall awake." Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was "asleep"; he was dead. (John 11:11, 14.) Paul, on at least two occasions, referred to death as sleep. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15:51, 52). "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" (1 Thess. 4:13).

### 3. Heaven and hell

The questions: "Dear Dr. Graham: I have been told the Bible says there are actually

three ways people will spend eternity. Some will go to heaven, some will go to hell, and some will simply become extinct. Where is this found?—Mrs. C.L.C.” “Jesus speaks a great deal about the dead rising on the last day, and I am troubled about whether we go immediately to be with God after death. M.L.C.”

His answer: “The Bible teaches that all people have an eternal future ahead of them. Those who have accepted Christ and trusted him as their Lord and Saviour will go to be with Christ in heaven. For those who have refused God’s way of salvation in Christ, their destiny is hell—this means eternal separation from God.” “We are convinced that the spirit of the believers go directly to God at death. You will recall that Jesus said to the dying thief, ‘Today shalt thou be with me in paradise’ (Luke 23:43).” “The Bible assures us that all who believe will be in heaven.”

#### My answer

The Bible never presents heaven as the future hope of the believer. The earth is man’s eternal abode. “The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men” (Psa. 115:16). God promised Abraham and his seed LAND, not sky. (Gen. 12:7; 15:18; 17:8.) God said, “The righteous shall never be removed, but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth” (Prov. 10:30).

God, Jesus, the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God, the reward, and the reigning saints will all be on the earth, so why

should we want to go to heaven? (Read: Rev. 21:2, 3; 5:10; 14:1; 22:12; Dan. 2:44; Zech. 14:4; Prov. 11:31.)

The promise to the dying thief is best understood in light of his request: “Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42). Jesus promised the thief that he would be with him in “paradise.” A study of the word “paradise” will show it to be a garden, park, or orchard. Eden was the first paradise, and it will be restored as the Kingdom of God on earth. (Ezek. 28:13; Rev. 2:7.)

Jesus could not have meant the thief would be in paradise that day, because Jesus himself went nowhere but to the grave. Dr. Graham quoted only part of the verse, and that changed the meaning considerably, and that being that the promise was made to the thief that day.

#### The Bible hell

We would largely agree with the texts quoted to answer the questions about the Bible hell, but we would not agree on what they mean.

To understand the Bible hell one needs to study the Hebrew and Greek words used. Briefly, the true meaning of the English word “hell” is expressed by the Hebrew word *sheol* and its New Testament counterpart *hades*, which mean the place of the dead, or gravedom.

The word *geenna*, Gehenna, or Valley of Hinnom, does not express the meaning of “hell,” but is used typically of the destruction of the wicked. Refuse was thrown into this valley—the city

dump of Jerusalem, where it was DESTROYED by fire or maggots. The maggot does not die, and the fire does not go out until the refuse has been destroyed.

Applied to the destruction of the wicked, the fire does not last for eternity, although the destruction is eternal in its consequences. Second Thessalonians 1:8, 9 expresses this well when it speaks of Jesus coming with "flaming fire" to take vengeance on those who do not acknowledge God. They "shall be punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION from the presence of the Lord." Notice it says destruction, not torment.

It makes little sense to consign people to heaven or hell at death—requiring judgment, and then raise them from the dead to be judged, and then send them back to the same places. How much more truthful, simple, and beautiful to have it the way the Bible teaches.

#### 4. Is baptism necessary?

The questions: "Why is it I've never heard you speak of baptism as one of the necessary steps to salvation? I hope you'll start to do this more.—M.D.V." "I recently lost my sister, her husband, and their four children in a crash of a small plane. The oldest child was eleven. While my sister and her husband attended a revival a year ago, and made a decision for Christ, none of them were baptized. Please tell me if they meet the Biblical qualifications for heaven. M.G."

His answers: "I certainly believe in Christian baptism. As an evangelist, however, my task is to

announce the evangel, or the 'good news.' . . . Another significant statement of Paul's would be 1 Corinthians 1:17, 'Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.' Paul was the world's greatest evangelist and we must accept his listing of priority . . . If baptism were a requirement for salvation, we would certainly say that. But you couldn't support that knowing, for example, that the thief on the cross had no opportunity for baptism or church membership." "The only conditions are repentance and faith (Romans 10). You'll recall the thief on the cross had no time or opportunity to be baptized or to join a church, yet Jesus said to him 'Today you'll be with me.' "

#### My answer

There are many plain statements about the necessity of baptism as a step toward salvation. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Paul was commanded to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

If Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:17, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel," are construed by some to teach that baptism is not essential, closer study will show otherwise. The context shows



there was party spirit in the church; people bragging about who baptized them. He chided them saying, "were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (v. 13).

Paul did not say baptism was unimportant, but that he did not personally baptize very many. He left that part of his ministry to his helpers, rather than have part in the division. The record is plain that Paul always had co-workers with him who could do the baptizing. Lydia of Thyatira and her family were baptized. (Acts 16:14, 15). The Philippian jailor and his family received baptism. (v. 33.) The twelve men at Ephesus were baptized. (19:5). Paul's words in Romans 6 could not be plainer in showing that baptism was necessary in crucifying the old and putting on the new life.

#### The thief baptized?

It is just as much an assumption to say the thief was not baptized, as it is to say he probably was. From his request, we are led to believe he had heard Jesus preach, and MAY have been baptized. He was versed in the plan of God. He did not request to go to heaven, or ask for Jesus to take his soul. He asked to be remembered in the future, when Jesus received his Kingdom.

To say baptism is not essential for salvation because of the thief's experience, is very flimsy, to say the least. In fact, it is exactly opposite to what we were commanded to do! Of course, we can see how radio evangelists would have difficulty insisting their listeners be bap-

tized. That doesn't change the truth, however, and I certainly wouldn't tell people they needn't be baptized using the thief as a rule.

#### Other areas

There are other areas of doctrine that we could consider in this article. One, the subject of a personal super-tempter, is very evident in Graham's column. Duncan MacLeod's study in this issue covers that very well.

#### Our purpose

Our purpose in this exercise is not to "low rate" Billy Graham as a man. It is not our attempt to try to stop his work as an evangelist. As a work for this present age it probably has a value. We certainly would not try to detract from the "success" of his multimillion dollar association.

Our purpose is to try to make serious believers think about Billy Graham's teachings before they consider supporting his efforts. We cannot see any possible way a true believer could be a part of a Billy Graham Campaign as a worker, counselor, promoter, or contributor.

In principle, there is no difference between the false gods of the trinity and the pagan deities. Baal worship was big, powerful, and successful in Elijah's time. But, we cannot picture Elijah going to the "Baal Pastor's School" to try to learn the secret of their "success"! He stood alone with his true God and won the victory.

You have read "My Answer." When you are asked to take a stand for the truth of God, what will be YOUR answer? □

# The Apostolic Jewish Church

By James W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

## Separateness

From the beginning of God's calling of a special people to serve him, he demanded their separateness. For the high purpose he had in mind for them, there could be no mingling—mixing.

Illustrative of this requirement was the law, "Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee" (Lev. 19:19). A careful study of the Mosaic Law will disclose that separateness was the whole purpose of the law.

At a much later date, the Samaritans illustrated a mingled worship: "So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images" (2 Kings 17:41).

### "None other gods"

Concerning the worship of the LORD, the law required, "Thou shalt have none other gods before me" (Deut. 5:7). Concerning marriage and fraternization with other nations, God said, "Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them,

nor shew mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them" (Deut. 7:2, 3).

After the Babylonian captivity, Ezra rent his garments and lamented because the Jews had failed to keep the separateness demanded of God's holy people. "The holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of those lands" (Ezra 9:2).

The law concerning the clean and the unclean food in Leviticus 11 was designed to keep Israel separate from the delicacies that were common to the Gentiles. I doubt if the purpose was for health reasons.

Nations that subsist on the "forbidden meat" seem not to have any health problems because of it.

### The purpose

The purpose is plainly stated, "Ye shall be holy [separated]; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44). The Jew could eat only "kosher" food; food prepared according to the law. This separated him from eating with Gentiles. It separated the Gentiles from eating with him.

In every facet of life the Jew was to be separated from the Gentiles, for God had said, "The

LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6).

God gave Abraham twenty-five years to separate himself from Haran and from all his father's house, before he gave him a son. God had said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house" (Gen. 12:1).

#### Moses separated

It required an exile of forty years to separate Moses from Egypt and from the house of pharaoh. When the clay was ready for forming, God sent him to deliver the house of Israel from Egypt.

God requires no less from us now, if we would be holy—separate. Mingled gods, mingled doctrines, mingled religion, mingled participation, are all forbidden. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6:17).

#### The Suffering of Israel

The separateness of Israel under the law did indeed estrange her from the nations around her. It was the attitude of the nations in Israel's early history which has prevailed until today, that the only way to deal with Israel is to destroy her.

A much-repeated phrase of today is, "Drive them into the sea!" The leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization has said he has but one ambition, "To destroy Israel." It is apparent in the United Nations that Israel

can do nothing that is acceptable to them, but the Arabs can do nothing wrong.

No other nation on earth has suffered such hostility, so many pogroms, so many dispersions and captivities as God's chosen nation, Israel. Antisemitism is prevalent in most countries. It is only thinly veiled in the U.S.

#### The Hope of Israel

Israel has had but one continuing treasure throughout the history of their suffering, that is the covenant of promise. The flame of this hope has sometimes burned brightly. It has sometimes been dimmed, but it has never been lost.

The holy—separated—ones have clung to this hope even under the most terrible tortures. Consider Eleazer, age ninety, who defied the king, when commanded to eat swine's flesh, and was beaten to death. (2 Maccabees 6:18-31.)

Consider the Jewish mother who, with her seven sons, was most horribly tortured. Their tongues were pulled out by the roots. The utmost parts of their bodies were cut off. They were then roasted in a heated pan. The fourth son witnessed to the king: "It is good, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by him: as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life" (7:14). The mother, "when she saw her seven sons slain within the space of one day, she bare it with a good courage, because of the hope that she had in the Lord" (v. 20). She said, "the Creator... will also of his own

mercy give you breath and life again" (v. 23).

The youngest son said, "Our brethren, who now have suffered a short pain, are dead under God's covenant of everlasting life: but . . . I, as my brethren, offer up my body and life for the laws of our fathers, beseeching God that he would speedily be merciful unto our nation" (vv. 36, 37).

No Gentile can truly understand this devotion in the face of certain death, because they are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenant of promise.

### The Messianic dream

Inherent in the hope of Israel was the dream of a leader who would deliver the house of Israel from all oppression and bondage, and make Israel head over all Gentile nations. Many strong and important promises of God led them to believe in a coming Messiah.

Included in God's promises were these to Abraham: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12); "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies" (22:17); "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (12:7). God said unto David, "I will set up thy seed after thee, . . . and I will establish his kingdom" (2 Sam. 7:12).

The basic Hebrew word for either the ANOINTED or the MESSIAH is *mashiach* (Y.C.). In Psalm 2 David calls him God's anointed, king, and Son. In Psalm 72 David shows the extent of Messiah's dominion, "He shall have dominion also from sea to

sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (v. 8). Daniel speaks plainly of Messiah: "Unto the Messiah the Prince . . . and after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off" (Dan. 9:25, 26).

### Views concerning Messiah

One modern Jewish view of Messiah is, that Messiah is not an individual person, but the whole Jewish nation is Messiah to the world. This is probably a reaction to the Christian claims that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, which Israel rejects.

When Jesus appeared it was thought by some that he may have been Moses, John the Baptist, or Elijah. Perhaps one of the reasons for the transfiguration vision was to show that he was a separate person from either Moses or Elijah. More than that, it was to show that Jesus was equal to the law and the prophets, that he would destroy neither, and that they would all stand together in the Kingdom. This could serve as a lesson to the modern "Christians" who have no regard for anything in the Old Testament.

#### The time was ripe

At the time of the birth of Jesus, the Jews were ripe for belief in, and acceptance of, a Messiah, a deliverer. The Romans had invaded the land, subjugated the people, and were oppressing them. There were several nationalistic, Jewish groups that were ready to revolt from Rome. What they lacked was leadership. They had hoped for a man like Moses, or like David, or like Judas Maccabeus.

There was nothing in their views of Messiah that required him to be more than a great leader, empowered of God. They were concerned only with the immediate deliverance of the Jews from the power of Rome. It was a pertinent view of Messiah, but a narrow one.

It did not concern them how the ten tribes, long ago dead in Assyria, should be restored. It was not a part of their thinking how Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be returned. They were not concerned how all who died in faith, not having received what was promised, should share with them the blessings of Messiah's reign.

#### Jesus' larger work

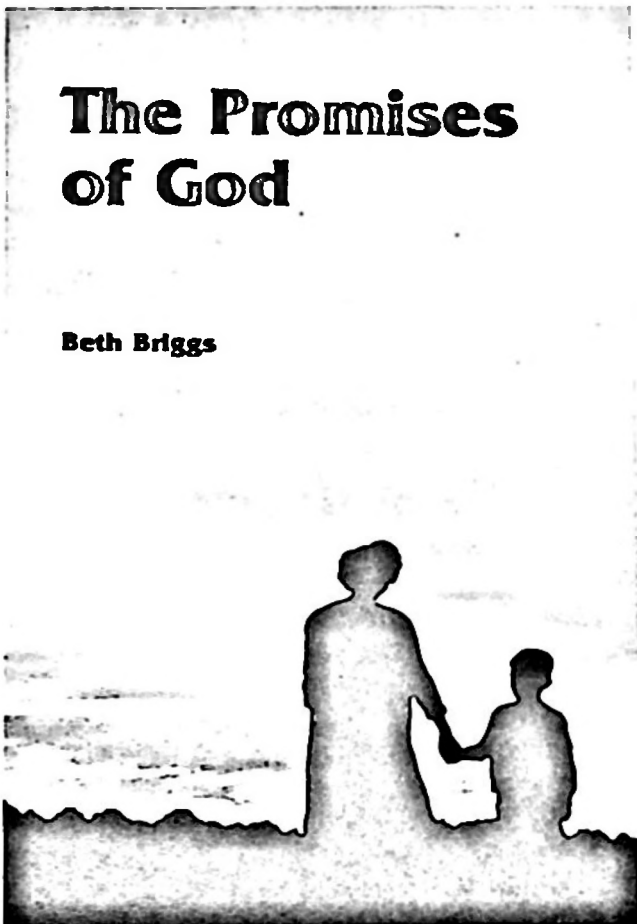
It was to the larger work of redemption, through the resurrection of the dead, that Jesus

addressed himself. It was toward the perfection and immortality of Messiah that Jesus addressed himself, so as to have the power for the complete deliverance of ALL Israel, in all time, and to establish a Kingdom that would never pass away. All previous deliverers had failed to establish a kingdom that would never pass away. Moses had neither the nature nor the power to deliver ALL Israel for ALL time.

Jesus spent much of his ministry trying to show the necessity for his perfection. He taught that Christ must die and be raised from the dead. Only through his obtaining immortality could men be raised from the dead. He must become a firstfruits of them that slept. He must obtain all power in heaven and in earth to accomplish the tremendous task of the

## The Promises of God

Beth Briggs



**THE PROMISES OF GOD** are the hope of the believer for God's great tomorrow. But, they can be a daily source of blessing and strength NOW! Here is help for the troubled, the discouraged, and the bereaved. Order a copy for yourself, and an extra for a friend!

Here is my order for Beth Briggs' PROMISES OF GOD:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, state & zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please find enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ copies @ \$1.50 including postage.

Mail this coupon to:

**THE HONEST TRUTH, INC.**  
Box 8933  
Greenville, S.C. 29604

At the fall of Jerusalem, the Jewish Christians, called Ebionites, escaped from the city and fled to Pella. Thereafter they were rejected by both the Jews, as apostates, and the Gentile Christians, as unacceptable.

Romans 11 is a hard-hitting lesson against the arrogance of the Gentile believers, "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee" (v. 18).

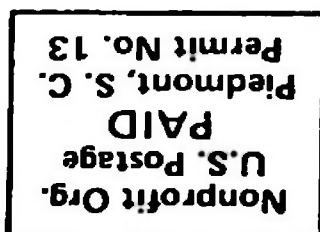
#### A doctrine developed

With the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish nation in 70 A.D., the Gentile church early developed the doctrine that God had given it a clear mandate, and none of the promises to Israel had any validity. They assumed all the prerogatives of Israel. All that the

prophets had spoken must now apply to the Gentile church. Christ was not to be considered the Messiah of Israel, but the Messiah of all nations, through the Gentile church. They conceived of no future for the Jewish nation, nor for the Jewish apostolic church.

It is to this view of a boasting, Gentile church that Paul further addressed himself in Romans 11, "So all Israel shall be saved: AS IT IS WRITTEN, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer [Messiah], and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (v. 26).

In another study I will hope to show the decline of the Jewish apostolic church, and the rise of the Gentile Christian church, with the changes in doctrine that occurred. □



The Honest Truth, Inc.  
Station A, Box 8933  
Greenville, SC 29604  
Address Correction Requested  
Return Postage Guaranteed

the  
honest  
truth

ISSUE EIGHTEEN

OREGON BIBLE COLLEGE  
OREGON



**READ:** THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS, page 4  
WHAT IS HELL?, page 12



# The voice of one

## In this issue

On page 4, J.W. McLain includes another study on the church. This installment deals with our spiritual roots in Orthodox Judaism.

Pastor Allan Greif shares his thoughts on the preeminence we owe to God, beginning on page 10. Our supreme God is being demoted by various methods.

On page 12, with the permission of the Church of God General Conference, we reprint the study tract on "hell," which has long been out of print. We are also bringing this out in tract form, because we believe it is needed. Watch for an announcement on availability.

## The Mideast

We have had several letters asking our views on the present situation in the Mideast.

At this writing, the peace talks between Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Menachem Begin of Israel have caught the world's attention. We have no prophetic gift, so cannot predict the outcome of the talks. Other than the exchange visits of these warring heads of state, which were historic in themselves, not much has changed in their positions on vital issues — the conquered lands and the Palestinians.

## Peace and security

We expect some type of agreement to be made between Israel and her neighbors, guaranteeing "peace and security" for Israel. Such a covenant is predicted in the Scriptures. Daniel 9:24-27 speaks of "a" covenant (v. 27, marg.) that shall be made with "many" in Israel by "the prince that shall come" (v. 26). This cannot be Messiah, because Messiah does not destroy Jerusalem and the temple. This is the same "beast" power that Israel has to contend with in the last days.

This covenant should be compared to the "covenant with death" in Isaiah 28:15, 18. The drunkards of Ephraim and the rulers of Jerusalem thought they would escape the overflowing scourge because of this false covenant.

This false covenant has its counterpart in the covenant of "unJewishness" in 1 Maccabees 1:10-15, between "wicked men" in Israel and Antiochus IV, a Seleucid king under the Greek Empire. It brought terrible tribulation to the true believers in Israel.

This final covenant which is evidently meant to insure Israel's "peace and safety [security]" (1 Thess. 5:3), will lead to desolation for Israel because such cov-



enants are an abomination to God (Deut. 7:2), and a sign that Israel is trusting in herself and not in her God.

In Isaiah 31:1, God said, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help," and trust in horses and chariots, "but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!"

#### No lasting peace now

Regardless of the outcome of present efforts for peace by Israel and her neighbors, no lasting peace can be expected. Daniel 11:27 tells of these last-days negotiators who "speak lies at one table, but it shall not prosper."

We are continually amazed that some Church of God and Christadelphian writers are saying that "the times of the Gentiles" have been fulfilled, and Jerusalem will never be trodden down again. And, that the Jews "will keep the land of Israel from now on. No Arab, no terrorist, no U.N. organization will succeed against Israel."

This does not tally with the predictions of Deuteronomy 32:35, 36; Zechariah 14:1-3; Luke 21:24. Has God's "stone" Kingdom smitten the Gentile image of Daniel 2?

Yes, we "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psa. 122:6), but we also pray, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. 32:29). But Israel still has blind eyes, and has not learned to look up! Until that happens, she cannot know the peace and security she is seeking to establish by her own means — apart from God. □

## the honest truth

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

It is mailed free of charge to all interested persons, as a work of faith. Gifts toward its support are solicited, and are tax deductible.

The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

#### CONTENTS

The voice of one . . . . .	2
The doctrine of Jesus, James W. McLain . . . . .	4
Giving God the pre- eminence, Allan Greif . . . . .	10
What is hell? . . . . .	12

# The doctrine of Jesus

By James W. McLain,  
Alliance, Nebraska

## Purpose

It is the objective of this article to indicate what Jesus and the apostles apparently believed, by reference to their training in Judaism; by their quotations in sermons, private conversations, and writings.

This will give us a base for comparison to show how radically the early Gentile church changed these doctrines, to develop what is called "orthodox" teaching.

## Judaism

We must remember that Jesus, the apostles, and the members of the early church were all Jews. They were raised in the strictest observance of Judaism. The only new doctrine that was added to what they already believed was that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, who was to redeem Israel.

Few of us really know what the strict, Orthodox Jews believe, and have historically believed through at least 2500 years of practice. The more vocal of the modern Jews tend to give us a false impression of what is believed. Some of the "Reformed" rabbis appear on televi-

sion, and sound like every other preacher of the popular "Christian denominations," talking about heaven and hell and the immortality of the soul. It is frustrating to attempt to discover what is the true belief of Judaism.

## What is a "Jew"?

To be a Jew requires no statement of faith, such as is required by modern churches of Christendom. A man is BORN a Jew. If he is circumcised, according to the Law of Moses, it is considered that his name is enrolled in God's Book of Life. He receives instruction in the Torah, in the keeping of the feast days, and in the ritual of the synagogue. At the age of thirteen, through a ceremony called *Bar-Mitzvah*, he is accepted as an adult member of the congregation, with full rights to participate in the rituals of Judaism.

Having fulfilled all these requirements of Judaism, he is not forbidden to enter into mental exercises concerning philosophy and various religious beliefs. This has given rise to many sects within the Jewish community, but this does not

prohibit them from working together in the synagogue services:

#### Pharisees and Sadducees

Two examples of the various sects are the Sadducees and the Pharisees. Their beliefs — beyond basic Judaism — were diametrically opposed, yet they were Jews together sitting on the same councils.

The Sadducees believed only in a present life. They did not believe in a resurrection of the dead. They did not believe in any spirit or spirits. They did not believe in miracles. Their views were ultramaterialistic.

The Pharisees believed in the immortality of the soul. They believed in the resurrection of the dead. They believed in spirits and demons. They believed in an immediate paradise for “departed souls.”

#### Middle-of-the-road

This leaves us with the question, was there no middle-of-the-road belief in Judaism that would agree with what we can discover from the Scriptures?

Within their own ranks down through history, eminent rabbis have commented on what middle-of-the-road Orthodox Jews believed. An outstanding example is Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon, commonly called Maimonides. Because of his stature in Orthodox Judaism he is called the second Moses.

Maimonides was born in Spain, and lived 1135-1204 A.D. Due to attempts by both Christians and Moslems to forcibly convert the Jews, he fled to Cairo with his family. There he

became Rabbi of Cairo. He published many works on the Orthodox Jewish faith, organizing it into thirteen articles.

Jesus and the apostles most often gave and used doctrines to which Maimonides agreed. In a recent work called *Judaism*, compiled by Arthur Hertzberg, views on the Orthodox Jewish faith by a variety of historical rabbis are recorded. It is refreshing to us that we can agree with most of the revelations of Orthodox Judaism.

#### Understanding needed

We need to understand some of the principles of Judaism. The Jews have always been secretive about their religion, due to the many terrible persecutions because of it.

For centuries their Hebrew Scriptures were secreted from Gentiles. The vowel sounds were learned by rote from other rabbis, passing this knowledge from one generation to another. The consonantal Hebrew text was unmarked. Being fearful that this knowledge would be lost through dispersions into many lands, they began to mark the Hebrew text with “jots and tittles,” that would indicate the vowel sounds.

Believing that the Torah is peculiarly their own, and never intended for Gentiles, they have published few doctrinal works for outside consumption. They do not evangelize. They do not proselyte. They will receive a convert who asks for it, but he must be circumcised and keep the Law, and observe the rituals of Judaism. (more)

**Doctrines of  
Orthodox Judaism**

1) **GOD.** God is incorporeal, having no body, and no parts. He is not a creature of time. No attempt to describe him in human words is adequate. He created all men, and is the God of all men.

Monotheism has been peculiarly the basic doctrine of all Jewish teaching throughout the ages. In a world of polytheism and idolatry, God revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob. Therefore, he is the God not only of Abraham, but of Isaac and Jacob as well.

It is not proper to speak of the **UNITY** of God, for this implies parts in unity. It always has been — and is — in every synagogue service, “Hear O Israel, the **LORD** our God, the **LORD** is one.”

2) **CREATION.** By God’s spoken Word he created the universe. It is not a product of chance or of natural development. It is not to be understood that it must stand forever, unless God wills it. He created it. He can destroy it.

3) **MAN.** Man was created out of the dust of the ground, in the image of God. Contrary to philosophy, God is not an invention of man, but man is an invention of God. Man was created solely for the pleasure and service of God. Man has but one obligation, that is to serve God.

**Messiah**

4) **MESSIAH.** Strong in Orthodox Judaism is the belief that Messiah must appear. When Messiah appears, Israel will be

redeemed. He must be of David’s line to sit on David’s throne.

5) **ISRAEL.** Israel was said to be less than the Ethiopians, few in number, appointed to suffering, yet ordained to priesthood, to bring the Gentiles to a knowledge of the true God. Many are the references to the promises made to Abraham, that in Abraham’s seed all families of the earth will be blessed. Isaiah 2 is quoted as showing all nations going up to Zion to worship the God of Israel.

6) **PROPHECY.** It is not the purpose of prophecy to provide a means of charting or dating future events. Its purpose is to inform those who watch, so that an event may be recognized when it is fulfilled.

7) **THE LAND OF ISRAEL.** Israel belongs to the Land, and the Land to Israel. The redemption of Israel cannot take place without Israel being a nation, occupying the Land.

Historically, the Jews pray toward Jerusalem. They wail at the temple wall. They say, “Next year in Jerusalem.” Even those who have become assimilated into Gentile communities are strong supporters of Zionism, of those who feel it their burden to return to the Land.

8) **THE WORLD TO COME.** No millennial doctrine appears in the writings of the Orthodox rabbis. The future is always described as, “the world to come.” In the world to come Messiah will appear. The dead will be raised. Israel will be restored. The nations will be led into service to God.

9) RESURRECTION. It is argued that if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are to receive what God promised to them, there must be a resurrection of the dead. When Messiah appears there will be a resurrection of the dead. They will be judged according to their works, and according to what is written in the books. It will then be determined who shall have a part in the Kingdom of God.

10) THE TORAH (Book of Moses, or the first five books of our Bible). The Torah was given personally to Moses by God. It is the only revelation of God given to man. It will never pass away. It will never be superceded by another revelation. Man cannot please God except by adhering to its precepts.

Down through time, rabbis have sought to state the essence of the teachings of the Torah. After many discourses on the subject, the conclusion is that the Torah contains but two great principles: man's relationship to God, and man's relationship to man.

11) MAN'S FUTURE STATE. There is much speculation as to the nature of man in the state of redemption. There are those who believe that men will be purely "spirits." Strong, however, is the belief that the dead will be raised bodily, and will be healed of all infirmities — all weaknesses, all injuries, and will die no more. As man was created a little lower than the angels, in redemption he will be so much better than the angels. He will have powers that are not subject to natural law.

#### Rabbi Jesus

Can you visualize Jesus as an Orthodox Jewish Rabbi? Yet, so he was. John the Baptist's disciples called him Rabbi, "They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?" (John 1:38). The word "rabbi" means "a great man, teacher" (Y.C.). Webster notes that it means "master, teacher," and adds that a rabbi is "a Jew qualified to expound and apply the halakah (the body of Jewish law supplementing the scriptural law) and other Jewish law."

Nathaniel called Jesus "Rabbi" (John 1:49), as did Nicodemus, the people, and Mary Magdalene. (3:2; 6:25; 20:16.)

No rabbi was better prepared for his ministry than was Jesus. Even at the age of twelve he confounded the learned doctors of the temple with his questions and his answers. When he began his ministry at the age of thirty, he was so well prepared with all the rabbinical lore he was able to refute the doctrines and practices of the Sadducees and Pharisees. His statements of faith and practice were those of Orthodox Judaism, without sectarian partisanship.

Jesus refuted the Sadducees concerning their disbelief in the resurrection of the dead. (Matt. 22:23-33.) On many occasions he discomfited the Pharisees with his parables that exposed their superficial religious practices. The classic example, directed at the Pharisees, was the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, in which he portrayed them as

the Rich Man, whose belief in the immortality of the soul and an immediate entrance into paradise, he proved to be without validity. (Luke 16:14-31.)

So conditioned are we by the "Roman interpretation," that we are not likely to remember Jesus as an Orthodox Jew, at home and in the synagogue. Can you visualize him at home, wearing the traditional black cap, offering prayer before and after meals?

#### In the synagogue

Can you visualize him participating in the reverence to the Torah, as the scroll is carried in a procession through the synagogue? Can you visualize him in the synagogue, his head covered with a prayer shawl, standing at the reader's desk and reading the prescribed text for the day, and then giving his interpretation of the text? It was on such an occasion that he startled them with the statement, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:14-21).

#### Orthodox quotations in the New Testament

1) Concerning God. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24). "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all" (10:29). "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (17:3). "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews (4:22). Stephen quoted, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Acts 7:32).

2) Concerning Israel. Zacharias said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham" (Luke 1:68-73).

3) Concerning prophecy. Jesus said, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7). Again, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36).

4) Concerning the Land. Jesus said, "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:34).

5) Concerning the world to come. Paul said, "Not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21b). In Hebrews it is said, "Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come" (2:5).

Jesus said, "In the world to come life everlasting" (Luke 18:30). "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are

given in marriage" (20:35). "So shall it be in the end of this world" (Matt. 13:40). "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

Peter said, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13).

6) Concerning the resurrection of the dead. Jesus said, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29). "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:31, 32).

Paul said, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

#### The Torah

7) Concerning the Torah — the Law. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17, 18).

Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:34-40).

8) Concerning the nature of the redeemed. The previously given quotation — Luke 20:35, under 5) The world to come, is the clearest.

John said, "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2b). Jesus said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). Paul said, "The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:52b).

#### Roots of our faith

It shall be increasingly evident that the roots of our faith must stand or fall with the faith of Jesus, the apostles, and the Jewish Apostolic Church.

We are on safe ground, as Gentiles, only so long as we embrace the revelations God gave to Abraham and to Israel, as contained in the Torah and the prophets.

There will never be another revelation concerning the creation, the nature of man, the covenants, the Messiah, the world to come, the hope of Israel, and the resurrection of the dead. Also, "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4). □

#### SOURCES:

*Great Religions of Modern Man: Judaism.*

*Judaism*, edited by Arthur Hertzberg; George Braziller, Inc., New York.

# Giving God the preeminence

By Pastor Allan Greif, Mentor, Ohio

**T**HE LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him." Thus expounded the Prophet Habakkuk, as he extolled God's majesty. (Ch. 2:20.)

There is little doubt that man is unable to conceive in his finite mind the majesty of his Creator. When we consider the grace of God in offering us the great salvation we must feel as Micah, "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (6:6, 7).

How can mere man, whose heart is continually set to do evil, whose mind is ever prone to the desires of the flesh, whose lips ever speak perverse things, even dare to come before "the most High," the all-powerful Creator?

## Growing irreverence

And yet, on every hand we see a growing irreverence toward the Creator. As an example of the decline of respect for sacred things in this modern sophisti-

cated society, allow me to quote a few comments from prominent people who seem to find it "smart" to belittle the majesty of our Almighty God, the supreme ruler of the universe. In *Modern Screen* magazine, in an article entitled, "How the Stars Found Faith," Piper Laurie relates an account of her experiences while entertaining the GI's with Bob Hope. This is her comment: "I felt wonderful because I knew there were not four of us but five going back in that jeep. And guess who the fifth passenger was — it was good old God."

This from Jane Russell: "I love God. When you get to know him you find he's a living doll." On Jack Parr's program, Tallulah Bankhead rejoiced in a statement by a renowned orchestra leader concerning his attitude toward prayer. She thought it wonderful when he said, "I talk to that 'cat' every night."

Such nauseating irreverence in the name of religion is blasphemy!

And what is alarming and of utmost concern to us is that this facetious vulgarity is contagious! In an unthinking moment I have heard some of us refer to God as "the Man upstairs." Beloved, when we reduce the King of the



universe to such belittling terms, how close may we be to losing our priceless heritage!

#### **Putting God second**

There comes a tendency when we begin to reduce God to make him take second place even to Jesus. Beloved, this must never be!

There is no reckoning of how much we owe Jesus. God wants us to acknowledge his Son as preeminent in our lives. In fact, we cannot approach God in any way except through his Son. But, I have noticed with some misgivings that a few of our songs are slanted as prayers to Jesus.

We often exhort one another to become aware that Jesus is present at our services. This is correct, as Jesus himself said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

But let us also remember that it is God's grace that made this arrangement in the first place. It is God who so loved his creation that he gave his Son. The Kingdom that Christ will set up upon the earth is God's Kingdom.

#### **Preeminence in worship**

So, although we must give Christ the preeminence in our lives, we must give God the preeminence in our worship! It is by God's grace that we shall be saved through his Son.

When Moses talked with God at the burning bush, he removed his shoes because that spot was holy. (Ex. 3:5.) Out in the middle of the barren desert, Jacob received the same promise given to Abraham and Isaac. With a

pile of stones as an altar he said, "This is the house of God" (Gen. 28:16-19). That spot became holy.

Our church building is much more than a structure of wood, or brick and mortar. Because of the use we make of it, this building is holy. It is sanctified as a house of prayer, a house dedicated to the worship of God, and therefore holy.

It is not this building that brings glory to God, but how he is worshiped therein! If he is worshiped in spirit and in truth, giving him the preeminence in our worship, all the reverence due his great and holy name shall be manifested in those who worship here.

#### **God commands respect**

When the almighty Jehovah brought his people out of their bondage, "the angel of death" walked throughout all Egypt and took the firstborn of the Egyptians, passing over Israel's children by the command of God. When Israel reached the Red Sea, with the armies of Egypt closing in about them so there was no escape, Moses held up his arm, and Israel passed over in safety.

Later, when Israel stood before the mount while Moses received the law, the fire and thunderings and earthquake made the people tremble. (Ex. 19:16-18.) How many of those people do you suppose who witnessed this awesome power of God could call him "the old man," "a living doll," or "the man upstairs"?

How dare we who are re-deemed by the grace of such a

God not give him the preeminence in our worship?

We thus glorify God

When we love God with all our heart, all our mind, and all our strength, our fear of God becomes reverence for him. We show him respect when our lives are governed by his precepts, when we embrace the gospel of his Son, when we bury our old

way of life in the waters of baptism, and when we honor his Son at the Communion.

When we give God's Son the preeminence in our lives, we give God the preeminence in our worship, for we thus manifest our concern for his glory when we honor his Son. If we thus glorify God, he will remember and glorify us! □



## What is hell?

"He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31).

**T**HE subject of "hell," as understood by the majority of people called Christians, is one that deserves prayerful study by every person. It seems relatively certain that the usually accepted view of this subject is wholly contrary to God's teachings regarding it. As any such contrary view gives one a false vision of the Creator himself, the reader is urged to carefully study every Bible text using this word, either in the original languages or in the English.

"Hell" in the Old Testament

The English reader reads the English word "hell" with the usual thought that custom has associated with the word. But

the Bible was written in ancient language — the Old Testament largely in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, and it is the thought conveyed by those original words that were chosen by inspiration that all readers should see.

By the use of any good concordance — Young's or Strong's, for instance — the reader will soon see that the word "hell" in the Old Testament is always (thirty-one times) translated from the Hebrew word *sheol*. He will also learn that the same Hebrew word *sheol* is in thirty-one instances translated by the English words "the grave," and in three instances by the English word "pit." Thus, if *sheol* means the one and same thing throughout, then "pit," "hell," and "the grave," when translated from *sheol*, mean one and the same thing.

That the reader may have all of these texts grouped before his eye, they are printed herewith. He is asked to study the texts with a view to discover the BIBLE meaning in the use of the words.

The word "hell" — Hebrew *sheol* — is printed in capital letters; "the grave" — Hebrew *sheol* — is printed in bold-faced type, and "pit" — Hebrew *sheol* — is printed in plain-faced type. Together these are all the occurrences of the Hebrew word *sheol*, and they are as follows:

1. Gen. 37:35, "I will go down into the grave."
2. Gen. 42:38, "Bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."
3. Gen. 44:29, "With sorrow to the grave."
4. Gen. 44:31, "With sorrow to the grave."
5. Num. 16:30, "They go down quick into the pit."
6. Num. 16:33, "They . . . went down alive into the pit."
7. Deut. 32:22, "Shall burn unto the lowest HELL."
8. 1 Sam. 2:6, "He bringeth down to the grave."
9. 2 Sam. 22:6, "The sorrows [cords, marg.] of HELL compassed me."
10. 1 Kings 2:6, "Let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace."
11. 1 Kings 2:9, "His hoar head bring thou down to the grave."
12. Job 7:9, "He that goeth down to the grave."
13. Job 11:8, "Deeper than HELL; what canst thou know?"
14. Job 14:13, "Wouldest hide me in the grave."
15. Job 17:13, "The grave is mine house."
16. Job 17:16, "They shall go down to the bars of the pit."
17. Job 21:13, "In a moment go down to the grave."
18. Job 24:19, "So doth the grave those which have sinned."
19. Job 26:6, "HELL is naked before him."
20. Psalm 6:5, "In the grave who shall give thee thanks?"
21. Psalm 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned [returned, R.V.] into HELL."
22. Psalm 16:10, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in HELL."
23. Psalm 18:5, "The sorrows [cords, marg.] of HELL compassed me."
24. Psalm 30:3, "Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave."
25. Psalm 31:17, "Let them be silent in the grave."
26. Psalm 49:14, "Like sheep they are laid in the grave."
27. Psalm 49:14, "Their beauty shall consume in the grave."
28. Psalm 49:15, "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave [HELL, marg.]."
29. Psalm 55:15, "Let them go down quick into HELL [the grave, marg.]."
30. Psalm 86:13, "Hast delivered my soul from the lowest HELL [the grave, marg.]."
31. Psalm 88:3, "My life draweth nigh unto the grave."
32. Psalm 89:48, "Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?"

33. Psalm 116:3, "Pains of HELL gat hold upon me."
34. Psalm 139:8, "If I make my bed in HELL, behold, thou art there."
35. Psalm 141:7, "Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth."
36. Prov. 1:12, "Let us swallow them up alive, as the grave."
37. Prov. 5:5, "Her steps take hold on HELL."
38. Prov. 7:27, "Her house is the way to HELL."
39. Prov. 9:18, "Her guests are in the depths of HELL."
40. Prov. 15:11, "HELL and destruction are before the LORD."
41. Prov. 15:24, "That he may depart from HELL beneath."
42. Prov. 23:14, "Shalt deliver his soul from HELL."
43. Prov. 27:20, "HELL and destruction are never full."
44. Prov. 30:16, "The grave; and the barren womb."
45. Eccl. 9:10, "No work . . . in the grave."
46. Song of Sol. 8:6, "Jealousy is cruel as the grave."
47. Isa. 5:14, "HELL hath enlarged herself."
48. Isa. 14:9, "HELL [the grave, marg.] from beneath is moved for thee."
49. Isa. 14:11, "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave."
50. Isa. 14:15, "Thou shalt be brought down to HELL."
51. Isa. 28:15, "With HELL are we at agreement."
52. Isa. 28:18, "Your agreement with HELL shall not stand."
53. Isa. 38:10, "I shall go to the gates of the grave."
54. Isa. 38:18, "The grave cannot praise thee."
55. Isa. 57:9, "Didst debase thyself even unto HELL."
56. Ezek. 31:15, "He went down to the grave."
57. Ezek. 31:16, "Cast him down to HELL."
58. Ezek. 31:17, "They also went down into HELL."
59. Ezek. 32:21, "Shall speak to him out of the midst of HELL."
60. Ezek. 32:27, "Are gone down to HELL."
61. Hosea 13:14, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave."
62. Hosea 13:14, "O grave, I will be thy destruction."
63. Amos 9:2, "Though they dig into HELL."
64. Jonah 2:2, "Out of the belly of HELL [the grave, marg.] cried I."
65. Hab. 2:5, "Who enlargeth his desire as HELL."

On careful examination of the foregoing list, a few facts stand out clearly:

1. It will be observed that in a majority of cases *sheol* is rendered "the grave." The grave, therefore, stands out in the face of the list as the best and most common rendering.

2. With regard to the word "pit," it will be observed that in each of these cases, the grave is so evidently meant that we may at once substitute that word, and banish "pit" from our consideration as a rendering of *sheol*.

3. As to the word "hell," it does not represent *sheol* because, by colloquial usage, hell means the place of punishment. *Sheol*

has no such meaning, but denotes the present state of death.

4. The student will find that the grave, taken literally as well as figuratively, will meet all the requirements of the Hebrew *sheol*.

5. If we inquire of it in the foregoing list of occurrences of the word *sheol*, it will teach:

- a. As to direction, it is down.
- b. As to place, it is the earth.
- c. As to nature, it is the state of death, or the state of the dead, of which the grave is a tangible evidence.
- d. As to relation, it is in contrast with the state of the living. It is not once connected with the living except by contrast.
- e. As to duration, the dominion of *sheol*, or the grave, or HELL, will continue until, and end only with, resurrection. (Hosea 13:14. Cp. Psalm 16:10 with Acts 2:27, 31; 13:35.)

#### "Hell" in the New Testament

##### Hades

The Greek word *hades* is found eleven times in the New Testament. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew *sheol*, and is invariably connected with death, never with life. All in *hades* will not live again until they are raised from the dead. (Rev. 20:5.) The English word "hell," as it is used today, by no means represents the Greek *hades*; as we have seen,

it does not give a correct idea of its Hebrew equivalent, *sheol*.

*Hades* can mean only and exactly what *sheol* means, viz., the place where corruption is (Acts 2:31; 13:34-37), and from which resurrection is the only exit.

All the occurrences of the Greek word *hades* are as follows. In each instance the word is rendered "hell," excepting in 1 Corinthians 15:55, where it is "the grave."

1. Matt. 11:23
2. Matt. 16:18
3. Luke 10:15
4. Luke 16:23
5. Acts 2:27
6. Acts 2:31
7. 1 Cor. 15:55
8. Rev. 1:18
9. Rev. 6:8
10. Rev. 20:13
11. Rev. 20:14

##### Gehenna

The English word "Gehenna" is the equivalent of the Hebrew *Gi-Hinnom*, or Valley of Hinnom (Josh. 15:8) where was the scene of Moloch worship. The name was not derived from that worship, but from the later use of the burning of carrion by means of ever-burning fire. (Jer. 31:40; Isa. 66:24.) The English words "hell fire," also from *Gehenna*, are found in three instances: Matthew 5:22; 18:9; and Mark 9:47. All other occurrences of the word *Gehenna* are as follows:

1. Matt. 5:29, 30
2. Matt. 10:28
3. Matt. 23:15, 33
4. Mark 9:43, 45

5. Luke 12:5

6. James 3:6

#### Tartaros

The word "hell" — Greek *tartaros* — as found in 2 Peter 2:4, is not *sheol* or *hades*, where all men go in death, nor is it where the wicked are to be consumed or destroyed, which is *Gehenna*. It is used here, and here only of the "messengers that sinned" (Rotherham & Diag. interlinear) who were considered worthy of "the lowest hell" until the day of judgment. (Cp. Jude 6; Num. 13:2, 31-33; 14:11, 12, 31; 15:2; Jas. 2:25.) — Adapted from *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance*, Bullinger.

#### Summary

Thus, it will be seen that throughout the Bible, excepting in twelve instances, "hell" has reference to, and is one and the same thing as, the grave condition. It is not a place of excruciating and unending torture as is

so commonly taught. Nor is there any other word or phrase in the Bible that presents the thought usually understood by the modern use of the word "hell."

In eleven instances the word "hell" originates from the Greek word *geenna*, which referred to a city dump outside the wall of Jerusalem where fire was kept burning continually for the consuming of carcasses and all kinds of refuse.

God has ordained that "the wages of sin is death," and that this death is a cessation of life. This death condition, sometimes called "hell," will yield to the call of Jesus, who is "the resurrection, and the life." God is not a God of endless torment, and he does ill who so pictures the God of truth and righteousness and love. □

(Published by Church of God General Conference, Oregon, Illinois. Used by permission.)

Eugene Stillson  
Box 100  
Oregon, IL. 61061

GRAND CENTRAL  
LIBRARY  
CHURCH OF GOD  
GREENVILLE, ILLINOIS

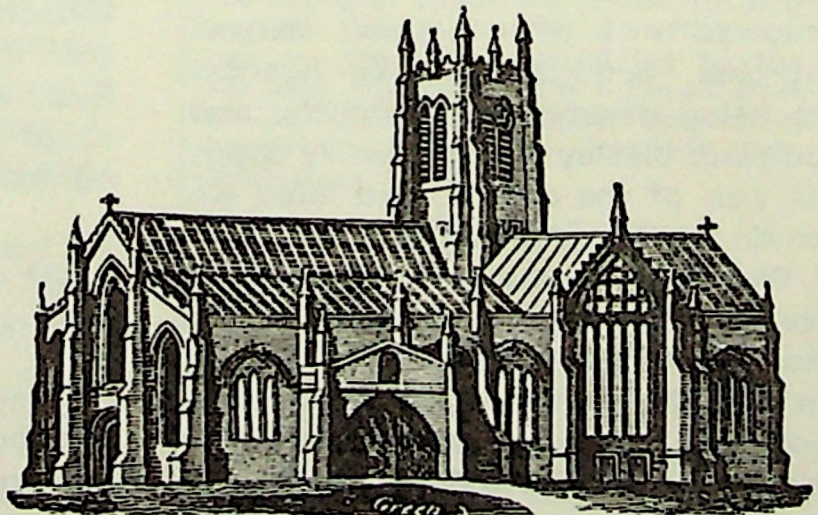
Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Piedmont, S. C.  
Permit No. 13

The Honest Truth, Inc.  
Station A, Box 8933  
Greenville, SC 29604  
Address Correction Requested  
Return Postage Guaranteed

# the honest truth

ISSUE NINETEEN

Oregon Bible College  
Oregon, Illinois



**READ:** CHURCH GROWTH, page 2  
THE GENTILE CHURCH, page 4



# The voice of one

## In issue nineteen

On page 4 J. W. McLain presents an important study on the Gentile Church. This is a continuation of his study of the church, and is vital in understanding who we are, and where we stand as a church.

On page 8 Pastor Arnold T. Johns presents a thought-provoking article on the dilemma of the "devil" question. Few people bother to question how their stand on a certain subject relates to other revealed truth in God's Word. We think this is especially true of the topic of this article.

On page 14 we include an installment of Sr. Beth Briggs' "Promises of God." Many are being blessed by her devotional thoughts.

## Church growth

Are you aware of the great amount of concern being shown toward the subject of church growth? Midweek classes are studying books on the "success" of the nation's largest churches. Seminars and conferences are being devoted to it. Articles and addresses display outright worry about the size of the church, and what we can do to make it grow.

We are not happy that the comparative few choose to be part of the church of the living God. On the surface, the world's popular churches look like Goliath compared to the young upstart of a David—the Church of God. However, we do not share the view of the current leadership as to what is wrong, and what is needed to cure the "sick" church.

## "Success"

"Success" has almost become to us a dirty word. There is almost an endless harangue by the leadership about the "success" of this and that church or "denomination." Just look at the size of their buildings, membership, and budget, and then look at ours, they say. The same leaders want us to see the church as a "business"; if you advertise enough, make enough calls, and get the "product" out you can expect "x" number of "buyers."

The analogy of the David-and-Goliath churches should be carried a little further. Certainly, Goliath *was* bigger than David, but that didn't make him an automatic success. Is God *really* interested in bigness? If so, why did David win? Because he was with God, and God was with him.

The same truth is reiterated in the story of Noah's "few" (1 Pet. 3:20), Gideon's little band of men (Judges 7), and Elijah against 850 prophets of Baal and the groves [*asherah*]. (1 Kings 18.) God isn't as interested in numbers as man is!

## Methods

At least since the General Conference of 1955, when several "guest-perts" were brought in from outside our faith, we have been deluged with methods, and "how-to" seminars and conferences. Yet, by the admission of the leadership, the membership rolls are smaller now than they were then. Methods aren't as important as we've been led to believe.



# the honest truth

Two of the largest churches of our faith—Brush Creek in Ohio, and Guthrie Grove in South Carolina—grew to their size without the mention of the word “method.” It should be noted that they have also been strong in doctrinal emphasis.

Contrary to expectations, the liberal churches of the world are not growing as fast as those which stress their doctrine—however repugnant to us.

## Worry doesn't help

Why worry about church growth, it doesn't help. The church is called a “body” in Scripture. (1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:4-16.) We don't consciously worry about the growth of our human body. Jesus said, “Which of you by taking thought [being over-anxious, Y.C.] can add one cubit unto his stature?” (Matt. 6:27). We can't, and the church can't.

Our main concern in regard to growth *should be* relative to proper nutrition for growth; feeding on the Word of God, the only source of healthy growth.

## Doubting God

To worry about church growth, or to state that one does not know what God wants us to do, is to doubt God and denigrate his name. We can't make seeds grow, but God can. He is the one who gives the increase in the church. (1 Cor. 3:6.) He is the one who adds to the church. (Acts 2:4.)

In Isaiah 55:11, God promised his Word would not return to him void, but would accomplish what he pleased, and prosper in the thing whereto he had sent it. Do we believe that?

The grand motive of the church is not church growth, but to make God and his plan known. If we are faithful, he will reward our labor for him with increase. He has no other plan! □

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

It is mailed free of charge to all interested persons, as a work of faith. Gifts toward its support are solicited, and are tax deductible.

The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

## CONTENTS

The voice of one .....	2
The Gentile Church, James W. McLain .....	4
The dilemma of the Devil question, A.T. Johns .....	8
The promises of God, Beth Briggs .....	14

# The Gentile Church

By James W. McLain, Alliance, Nebraska

## Transition

The era of the Jewish Apostolic Church began to decline rapidly after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and the flight to Pella. There they maintained a colony for a time. Not much information is available beyond what is in the Book of Acts, and gleaned from the letters of Paul.

After the conversion of Cornelius there is evidence of strong evangelistic activity on the part of the Jewish Apostolic Church beyond the borders of Israel, among the Gentiles.

A recent article in *The Restitution Herald* listed the places visited by the apostles and disciples. They "went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). In this they fulfilled the commission given to them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15, 16).

This command was not understood by them to be applied beyond the borders of Israel, until the convention at Jerusalem (Acts 15), to determine the status of Gentile believers.

As Jews, they gave no thought to a systematized doctrine. The only doctrine was the hope of Israel, as given in the covenants. Beyond that, they needed only to recognize and believe that Jesus was the long-awaited

Messiah, who would redeem Israel.

## Their worship services

They had no church organization. They had no churches. As Jews, they worshiped in the synagogue. As Christian believers, they met in homes with others who accepted Jesus as Messiah.

Their services were simple. They had no preachers as we understand it. If they were privileged to have among them—or to have as a visitor—one of the disciples who had heard Jesus teach, they listened to the first-hand account.

They joined in singing hymns and psalms. These they probably learned in the synagogues, and were sung with reverence and dignity. They had prayers and Scripture readings.

Their special research in Scripture concerned the promises and proofs of the Messiahship of Jesus; that he must die and be raised again from the dead.

Letters were frequently carried from group to group, narrating the contact with Jesus, and what he had said. (In the fourth century, by the order of Constantine, Athanasius helped canonize these letters and records into our so-called "New Testament.")

### **In the Greek world**

All the world into which the gospel was carried, beyond Israel, was Grecian in character. The Roman empire was in power, but the Alexandrian influence remained from Africa to China.

The people of these former Greek colonies were polytheistic by nature; they worshiped many gods. Great cathedral-like temples stood in every city, dedicated to various gods. Idols were in every home. The whole populace joined in the festivals and ceremonies honoring certain gods on their holidays.

### **Greek philosophy**

To all these people there was no greater wisdom than Greek philosophy. They were inclined to investigate every matter in heaven and earth as to its nature, and to express it in a systematic formula.

This was to have a profound influence in the rapidly growing Gentile church. They were not content with the simple doctrine of Jewish Christians, but were prone to investigate such things as the nature of God, the nature of Christ, the doctrine of man, the destiny of the righteous, and of the wicked.

These philosophical investigations probably began with the Docetists at Ephesus. They continued until—under the Emperor Constantine—the conclusions were formalized into “orthodox doctrine.” From that time on, all who disagreed with orthodox doctrine were branded as heretics. Many who disagreed were persecuted, banished, or put to death.

### **Israelitish era ended?**

The fall of Jerusalem, the scattering of the Jewish nation, and the flight of the Jewish Christians, was accepted as a sign that the Israelitish era had come to an end.

The expanding Gentile Church considered it the beginning of a new era, the era of the church. They believed they had a clear mandate to abandon the Old Testament, with its promises to Israel, and the covenants of God with Israel. The Gentile Church now assumed God had made the new covenant with the church.

This left a great vacuum concerning doctrine. No longer was there the hope of Israel, the land promised to Abraham, and the reign of Messiah over the house of Israel.

### **Turning away**

Having turned away from Israel, the Gentile Church began with only the name of Christ. To this they added a vision of a world become entirely Christian, and all nations under the reign of Christ sitting on David's throne in heaven. To them a Christian world was only a phase, a stepping stone, for the true land of promise, the true Holy City, was somewhere apart from this earth.

The length to which Gentiles went to erase every vestige of Jewish tradition and influence in the church is well illustrated by Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper. No Jew ever ate with his head uncovered; especially not at Passover. Da Vinci depicted the Jewish apostles partaking of the Passover, all with uncovered heads, as Gentiles.

### Controversies

Many controversies arose in the Gentile Church. The most notable concerned the nature of God, the nature of Christ, and the nature of the Holy Spirit. This persisted until the doctrine of a triune God was developed, embracing all three in one person, called "the trinity."

Constantine, acting in his role as supreme pope (Pontifex Maximus) of all pagan and Christian religion in Rome, called a council at Nicea in 325 A.D. The church was ordered to accept as orthodox doctrine the teaching of Athanasius concerning the trinity. Until our day this has been the cardinal doctrine of not only the Roman Church, but of all its protestant offspring.

No other doctrine has been so offensive to Jews, who are monotheists. It has been the one great roadblock to Jews accepting the Gentile version of Christianity. They still chant in the synagogue, as did the apostles, "The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4).

### Constantine

Great credit has been given to the Roman Emperor Constantine for making Christianity a state religion. The only real credit that should be given, is that he ended 200 years of bitter persecution of the Christians by the Romans.

The sincerity of Constantine as a Christian will not bear too close scrutiny. His primary purpose in accepting Christianity may have been just taking on one more of Rome's many religions, which he proposed to control as the pope of all Roman religions. As pope, he sat at the Council of

Nicea determining the doctrine of the church. He was still unbaptized. He was baptized just before his death.

He never abandoned his position of pope over the pagan religions of Rome, but continued to officiate at all public religious festivals, and offer the sacrifices to the gods of Rome. The images of Romans gods were on his coins until his death, and throughout the reigns of the emperors who followed him.

He was a murderer at the time he professed Christianity, having put to death his wife, son, and nephew for plotting against him.

### Christianizing Rome

Constantine did encourage the Romans to become Christians. In order to encourage them he instituted many things to please them, that were foreign to the early church. History indicates he made many compromises, and brought into the church many pagan practices to cater to the customs of the Romans.

Former pagan temples were now given over to Christian worship. Christians, who formerly met in homes, now had access to the most beautiful cathedrals, thus establishing the pattern that temples and cathedral-like places are essential to Christian worship.

Constantine changed the organization to include various ranks of responsibility in the clergy. Formerly simple services were now made theatrical in character, using all the arts to enhance the services.

The genius of Constantine must be recognized, in that the

organization, the practices, and the doctrines he established have stood for more than 1600 years with very little change.

He was pontiff and he exercised his authority to the fullest extent to make the church what he wanted it to be.

Arius, who opposed Athanasius' doctrine of the trinity (the Nicene Creed), was publicly condemned. He was banished, and his books were publicly burned.

Constantine's work was purely Roman at the time. All around Rome, in southern Europe, the Goths and Visigoths were followers of Arius.

#### Church fathers

One contributing factor in the development of the Roman Church was the work of the ten "church fathers." They were scholars and writers, contributing to the expanding doctrine of the Roman Church.

Examples are: Tertullian (160-240 A.D.), who introduced the doctrine of the millennium; Origen (185-254 A.D.), who introduced the doctrine of "the preexistence of souls"; and Augustine (354-430 A.D.), "the predestination of every human."

#### Protestants

Protestants like to believe they have nothing in common with, and bear little resemblance to, the Roman Church. This is hardly true. Having come out of the Roman, mother Church, they cannot erase the genetic imprints. They may differ regarding priesthood, organization, and practices, but the differences are slight.

The important issue is one of doctrine. All Protestants believe the "orthodox" doctrines established by Constantine. These are: the Nicene Creed, concerning the trinity; the immortality of the soul; the kingdom in heaven; the New Jerusalem in heaven; and Christ on David's throne in heaven.

Protestants have the same appetite as the Romans for grandiose churches, services, and programs.

Having little belief in, or necessity for, the imminent return of Christ, they build and plan as though this age will go on forever.

#### Precept

Our three previous articles (issues 16, 17, and 18) in THE HONEST TRUTH, have been prepared to be used together as a complete study on the church as it was first established, and as it was changed.

Our sources of material are authentic. They are: a twelve-volume library of *Universal World History*; a library of *Funk and Wagnall's Encyclopedia*; Hurlbut's *Story of the Christian Church*; Arthur Hertzberger's *Judaism*; and the New Testament.

#### The Church of God

With the weight of evidence, one cannot escape the conclusion that all our churches are more Roman than apostolic.

Our clergy has the professionalism of Constantine's clergy. They are more concerned with dramatic church services, large congregations, fine church buildings, politics, social programs,

and psychiatric counseling, than the simple study and teaching of the Word.

Success seems to be measured by the assumed success of the great, theatrical, Romanist evangelists of our time. Busy running all over the world "to win the

world for Christ," they, apparently, are unaware that the house at home is falling down.

We need a renewal of the simple faith and practices that characterized Jesus Christ, his disciples and apostles, and the established apostolic church. □



# The dilemma of the devil question

By Pastor Arnold T. Johns,  
Lafayette, Indiana

**T**HERE ARE two doctrines presently being taught among the churches, and both are commonly accepted as being true. However, when brought under investigation, we can see they are in direct opposition and contradictory to each other. God's Word does not contradict itself, for God is not the author of confusion.

The first doctrine is: "There is one supreme, personal God, whose name is Jehovah, who is the Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them, and who is holy, perfect, infinite, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and eternal."

The second doctrine is: "There is one supreme, personal power of evil, called the Devil or Satan, who has the power to tempt people to sin, and who can do evil in all parts of the world at the same time."

Hold both premises?

The question is, Can rational Bible theology accept the premise of each of these doctrines? Is it possible for one to correctly hold both views? If we accept the truth of the first, do we deny the validity of the second? Does the power of the first in any way limit the power of the second?

It is very important that we accept no doctrine that blasphemes or dishonors our holy and righteous Creator. God's holiness is his supreme moral purity. His righteous and holy laws reveal his attitude toward sin. If God were in any way to approve or condone sin, he would thereby cease to be holy.

If God created a "personal Devil," God would then cease to be holy. God cannot sin or do evil. His righteous judgments are "evil" to evil people. It would be blasphemy for us to make God the author of sin.

Since God created the heavens and earth—and all that is in them—and pronounced them “very good” (Gen. 1:31), where did this “monster” of evil called the “Devil” or “Satan” come from? If he is a “fallen angel” as some affirm, who or what in God’s holy heaven tempted him to sin and caused him to fall?

#### Mortal or immortal?

Common reason tells us if there is such a being as a “personal Devil” he must be either mortal or immortal. If he is a mortal being, then he is a sinner and subject to death. Since Christ died to save sinners, then Christ died to save the “Devil.” Now why should that sound so ridiculous?

If the “Devil” is a mortal being, then he has existed for at least six thousand years, and survived the Flood that God sent in the days of Noah to destroy wicked sinners from the earth.

If the “Devil” is immortal, he cannot die and is equal to God, Jesus, and the heavenly angels. He would be a partaker of the divine nature. To say God is omnipotent or all-powerful would make the power of the “Devil” subject to God’s approval and consent. This is a blasphemous doctrine, because it makes God the author of sin. God does not bestow immortality on his adversaries!

#### The serpent

“The serpent” is introduced into the inspired record in Genesis 3:1 as one who “was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.” God made snakes and

other creeping things on the sixth day of creation, and “God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). Since this serpent was “more subtil” than any beast of the field that God had made, it becomes evident that God did not make this one. It is likewise evident that this was not a literal serpent.

The conversation between Eve and the serpent in Genesis 3:1-5 was actually in Eve’s conscience, between her lower, carnal nature and her spiritual nature. There is that dual nature in every person who is trying to serve God.

#### The lower nature

This base, lower nature in Eve prevailed over her spiritual nature. This base nature is often personified as “he,” and called “the serpent,” “the Devil,” or “Satan,” and is the principle of evil in every one of us.

Jeremiah the prophet verified the fact that we have a lower, carnal nature when he said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9). Our base, lower nature is like “a snake in the grass,” because it does not resist temptation, and therefore is most deadly.

#### Lust of the flesh

All of our temptations come through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and are of the world (1 John 2:16), and taking priority in our lives, make it impossible for us to become overcomers.

When we crucify the flesh, repent of our sins, and keep our bodies under control and bring

them into subjection to the power and influence of God, we, too, can be overcomers.

The Apostle Paul recognized this same conflict of the flesh against the spirit in his own life when he said, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:22-25).

Again, "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6). And again, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (v. 9).

#### Power of death

In Hebrews 2:14 we read that Christ was a partaker of flesh and blood, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Now let us reason with God's Word. Just what is it that has the power of death? Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 6:23a says, "For the wages of sin is death." So, we see that it is SIN that has the power of death. It is

SIN that Jesus is coming to destroy.

#### "Lucifer"

God does not violate his own principles. The reason he drove Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden was to keep man in his sinful condition from putting forth his hand, taking of the tree of life, and living forever. God did not want man to become an eternal sinner.

Yet it is this very principle of God that is violated by pagan, orthodox Christianity with its doctrine of a "personal Devil." That doctrine teaches the "Devil" is a "fallen angel" named "Lucifer," who led a rebellion against God and was cast out of heaven with his followers. In this way a divine being became an everlasting sinner.

Who was "Lucifer"; The fact of the matter is that the name "Lucifer" is a spiritual title that Isaiah applied to the KING OF BABYLON. (Ch. 14:4, 12.) His fall had reference to the fall of Babylon. It is inconceivable to think that educated persons could so twist and misapply the sacred Scriptures!

#### The angels that sinned

"The angels that sinned," mentioned in 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6, might seem to lend support to the theory of a "fallen angel 'Devil,'" until the text is brought under investigation.

The Greek word *aggelos*, here translated "angels," means "messenger," "agent," or "one sent." It is translated "angel" 181 times, and "messenger" 7 times. One of the places it is translated "messengers" is in James 2:25,



where the spies sent into Jericho are mentioned.

The twelve spies Moses sent into the Promised Land were made "messengers," and "sent" to spy out and search the land. They were carefully selected as representative, intelligent men from each tribe of Israel; "every one a ruler among them" (Num. 13:2).

#### An evil report

But, ten of the spies "sinned" by bringing back an evil report about that holy land. These were the angels that sinned. Their report pictured that land as worthless, and so poor it couldn't support them. They contradicted their report by bringing back some of the fruit, and telling of men who grew to giant size.

So, these ten unfaithful spies discouraged the hearts of the children of Israel, and turned their backs on the Promised Land. They forsook it, and "left their own habitation," or "their first estate" that God had planned for them. (Cp. Jude 6; Num. 13:2; 14:31; 15:2.) The children of Israel were condemned to wander forty years and die in the wilderness.

The ten unfaithful messengers were to be "cast . . . down to hell," and delivered "into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4). The word "hell" in this text comes from the Greek word *tartarus*. "Tartarus in Homer (850 B.C.) is the dark abyss, as deep beneath Hades as heaven is high above earth, into which Zeus cast Kronos and the Titans. Later it is

used of the nether world (world of the dead) generally or of that section of it to which the grossest offenders were consigned."—S.D.F. Salmond. It means figuratively, "the lower hell."—*Cath. Ency.* The ten spies are in their graves.

#### Jesus' temptations

Jesus' temptations, recorded in Matthew 4:1-11, came very shortly after he was baptized. He was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (v. 1). Did God's Holy Spirit cooperate with a "personal Devil" for this purpose? If we say "yes," would it not be blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

These temptations came to Jesus after he had fasted for forty days and nights, so naturally he was hungry. He knew he was the Son of God, as he had just heard God say at his baptism, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (3:17).

#### The first temptation

In the first temptation Jesus knew all he had to do was to speak the word and these stones could be turned into bread to satisfy his hunger.

Since "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (Jas. 1:14), we can understand how Jesus had a strong desire for food, which is a lust of the flesh.

Jesus was no different from other people in this respect. He was tempted through the same three avenues of temptation as everyone else; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (1 John 2:16.) Jesus was "in all points tempted

like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Therefore all his desires, thoughts, and imaginations were like ours.

From the foregoing thoughts, we know "the Devil" that tempted Jesus was not a "foreign agent," because all our temptations come from within. This temptation was of his own mind.

Jesus could have turned stones into bread, but he refused to use this God-given power to satisfy the lust of his own flesh. He answered his own desire, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Jesus overcame this temptation, and remained true to his heavenly Father, and to his own higher spiritual nature.

#### The second temptation

The second temptation concerned Jesus' jumping off the pinnacle of the temple. In his imagination he was transported from the wilderness back to the temple at Jerusalem, otherwise, the temple would literally have to be taken to the wilderness.

This temptation consisted of Jesus' desire to reveal himself to the world as the Son of God. He thought to himself, jumping off the pinnacle of the temple, which would kill the ordinary person, wouldn't even hurt him, because it is written, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (v. 6, cp. Psa. 91:11, 12).

This temptation appealed to his "pride of life." Jesus over-

came this temptation by saying, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (v. 7). He knew it was possible for God to remove his protection—if he jumped from the pinnacle, and also that people tempt God to destroy them when they act foolishly and disobey his laws.

#### The third temptation

In the third temptation Jesus was transported to an exceedingly high mountain; high enough to see all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. Since there is no such mountain on the face of the earth, we suggest it can only be "the mountain of imagination."

Since the glory of kingdoms is their gold, silver, precious things, and their position of power and authority, this temptation appealed to "the lust of the eyes." "Fall down and worship me."

All Jesus would need to do was to serve himself. Since he was the Son of God he could have anything he wanted. He could serve himself and have this world's glory now. Jesus knew of the "deceitfulness of riches." He knew also that serving self is self-worship, and a form of idolatry.

So, Jesus rejected this world's fame and glory and answered this temptation by resisting those adverse evil thoughts, and said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (v. 10).

#### Dragon, Devil, Satan, etc.

In Revelation 12:7-13 we read about "the great dragon . . . that old serpent, called the Devil, and

Satan," being cast out with his angels.

We must remember that the Book of Revelation is written in highly symbolic language, where some of the things named are given to represent other things or conditions.

We should point out here that Jesus was informing John on the Isle of Patmos of "things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1), and describe things that were to happen AFTER the days of John. This fact is evident when John was told, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (4:1). Therefore it is ridiculous for anyone to quote any of these texts as descriptive of an event that is alleged to have taken place before the days of the creation.

#### Time element

Further, let us notice the TIME ELEMENT given for these events recorded in Revelation 12:10. "I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." This makes it clear that these things are to take place just prior to, or at, the second coming of Christ, and the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth.

#### The weapons

Notice also the weapons used by "our brethren" to overcome "the Devil." "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (v. 11).

It is only after we hear the gospel, believe it, and are bap-

tized (immersed) in water in the name of Jesus Christ, that we are symbolically washed in the blood of the Lamb for the forgiveness of our sins. Our sins keep us from being reconciled to God. It is sin in our lives that we need to overcome, not a personal "Devil"!

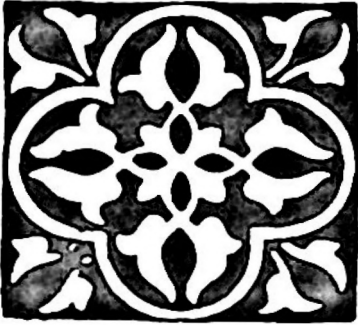
#### Facing up

Since "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin" (Jas. 1:14, 15), it makes it clear that there is no outside influence to cause us to sin.

If a "personal Devil" made us sin, we would NOT be guilty of sin, and would need no forgiveness of sin. But WE are the guilty ones, and the full guilt of sin lies squarely on our shoulders! Why pass the buck and blame "the Devil"?

Therefore, because the doctrine of a "personal Devil" absolves man of the blame for sin, it makes Christ's atonement sacrifice on the cross a vain gesture. Too, baptism in the name of Christ for the forgiveness of sins becomes totally invalid, and the Communion service is made meaningless and void!

Is it not high time that members of the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith free themselves from the shackles of pagan mythology? Only when we come to recognize that we are free moral agents, and able to choose between right and wrong, obedience and disobedience, sin and righteousness, can we face up squarely to the problem of sin and guilt. □



# The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Downey, Calif.

## 47. DEAR TO THE FATHER

**MATTHEW 10:29-31** — “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

What a consoling thought it is that the Almighty God who set the sun, moon, and stars in their courses and created this universe with its untold wonders and beauty will yet watch tenderly over a fallen sparrow and care so much for his children that even the hairs of their heads are numbered!

How vast, how marvelous, how deep is the love of the Father! There is never a tear that falls unnoticed, nor a sigh that is not recorded. No prayer is uttered that is not kept in his Book of Remembrance, to answer if he sees that it will be of benefit to us, or to restrain if such action will eventually bring us a greater blessing.

Some day we shall behold his handiwork in the pattern of our lives, and will discover that the threads of sorrow and disappointment mingling with those of happiness and joy have made it far more beautiful than otherwise would have been. The Master Weaver knew just what to choose to make it surpassingly lovely, and we will bow our heads and acknowledge that in his wisdom “He hath done all things well” (Mark 7:37).

*God loves the little sparrows,  
He heeds them when they fall,  
Will he not hear his children's prayers,  
And answer when they call?*

*We are worth much more than sparrows,  
To him we are so dear,  
That our hairs have all been numbered,  
So we need never fear.*

## 48. NO SERVICE TOO SMALL

**MATTHEW 10:42** — “Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”

Some of us often feel sad and “left out of things” because there seems to be no way whereby we may do some outstanding work in

God's service. But in this text Jesus tells those encumbered with home or other cares that even the least service given in his name always brings a commensurate reward.

We can tell the busy, weary clerk that we appreciate her service. We can speak a kind word to the overburdened housekeeper or cook, or the man or woman working in the office beside us. Our neighbor may be sick. We can take her something for dinner, straighten the disordered house, wash the dishes, or look after the children for a time. We will receive no earthly acclaim for these acts; they will not be written up in the newspaper, or change the course of nations. These things may seem unimportant to us, but they will be commended by the Lord: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

Let us never overlook the little things we can do, and they will be accounted to us for righteousness in God's sight.

*Do you seek to serve the Master  
In some great and noble way?  
Look and see, for all about you  
Is the work to do today.*

*For the cup of water given,  
Or a cheerful word and smile  
Lift your heart, and help another,  
Making all of life worthwhile.*

## The Promises of God

Beth Briggs



THE PROMISES OF GOD are the hope of the believer for God's great tomorrow. But, they can be a daily source of blessing and strength NOW! Here is help for the troubled, the discouraged, and the bereaved. Order a copy for yourself, and an extra for a friend!

Here is my order for Beth Briggs' PROMISES OF GOD:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, state & zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please find enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ copies @ \$1.50 including postage.

Mail this coupon to:

THE HONEST TRUTH, INC.  
Box 8933  
Greenville, S.C. 29604

## 49. REST FOR THE HEAVY LADEN

**MATTHEW 11:28-30** — “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

These verses tell us that Christ’s yoke is easy and his burden is light. “Oh, no,” we are apt to protest, “our burdens are so heavy it is almost impossible to bear them.” If this is true, then it is because we are endeavoring to bear them alone, in which case they are indeed too heavy for our frail, human strength.

But those who serve God need never suffer under an unbearable yoke, when there is Christ who will bear the heaviest part of the burden with them. In his strength it will become light, and they will have the rest that has been promised. Why not find rest unto our souls when Jesus is so willing to give it to us?

*If our lives are heavy laden,  
We are precious in his sight  
Let us take his yoke upon us,  
And our burdens will be light.*

*If we cast our cares upon him,  
And the Master’s hand controls,  
We will find his yoke is easy,  
And have rest unto our souls.*

□

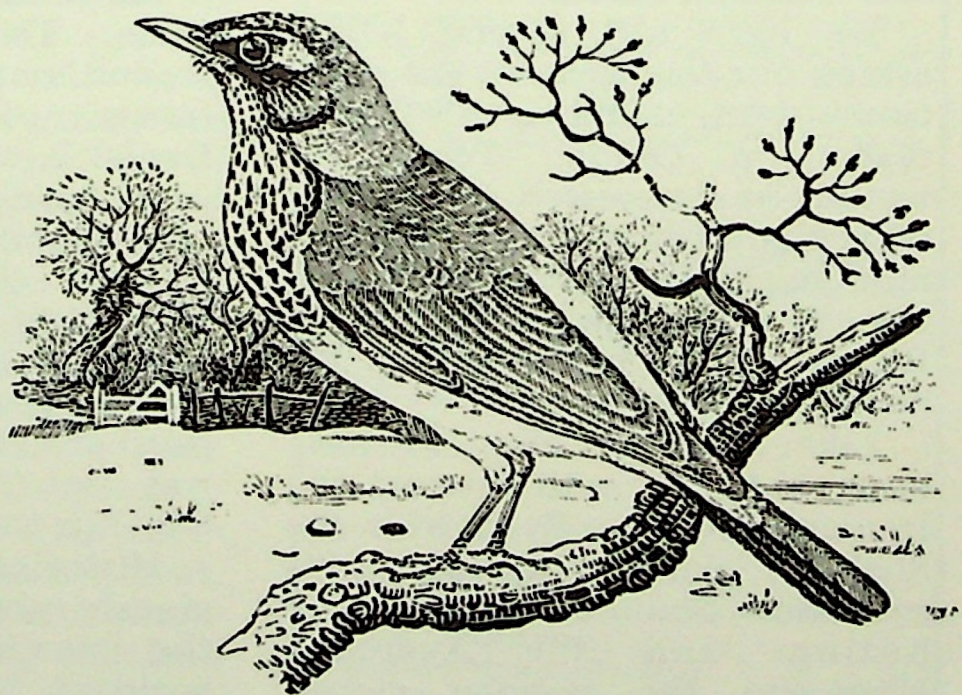
John Lewis  
Box 100  
Oregon, IL. 61061

The Honest Truth, Inc.  
Box 8933  
Greenville, SC 29604  
Address Correction Requested  
Return Postage Guaranteed

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Piedmont, S. C.  
Permit No. 13

# the honest truth

ISSUE TWENTY



**READ:** FAITHFUL MEN  
AND GROWING CHURCHES, page 4



# The voice of one

## In this issue

On page 4 we present an excellent article by C. Jesse Pestle, "Faithful Men and Growing Churches." He has fully developed what we only introduced in our editorial on "Church Growth" in issue 19.

On page 7 is an interesting study on "the millennium," by Harry A. Whittaker. This is not an issue we're trying to force on our readers. We just want you to read, study, and think about his interpretation.

On page 14 we offer another installment of Beth Briggs' "Promises of God." She was 94 on March 29!

## The Iranian situation

We have had several letters asking our thoughts on the situation in Iran, including this from a reader in Ohio: "Terry, we would be interested in hearing what significance the Iranian turmoil might be leading the world into. It would appear to me that Russia may be having a very 'big hand' in it."

Like everyone else, we have been watching with interest the Iranian situation. Even with the Shah in exile in Morocco, his successor Shahpur Bakhtiar in hiding, and the Ayatollah Khomeini the popular victor, conditions are far from settled. Revolutions are often harder to stop than start. They attract fol-

lowers with different motives, and different political persuasions.

While the religious followers of Khomeini may be satisfied, the left-wing and Communist factions don't want the revolution to stop yet. Also, there is a backlash being felt from those who liked the worldly advancements under the Shah, and don't want to return to a 7th century Moslem state.

## Ancient Persia

We have to remember that Iran is ancient Persia. Though their name is changed they are the same people. They are Moslem, though not Arab. Persia is mentioned many times in the Bible. The Persians were the second empire represented in the image of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2, as Gentiles bearing rule over Israel in the dominion.

Anciently, the empire comprised the Persians, Medes, Elamites, Carmanians, and Parthians—plus a few more. Even the ancient "Ethiopia" was in southern Persian territory, and was not the present Ethiopia, which is the ancient Cush.

Historically—and now religiously—the Persians have been the enemies of Israel. It is no accident they are in the list of Mideast nations coming against Israel in the last days. (Ezek. 38:5.)



### Division

A key word in the Mideast is "division." There are several Moslem sects fighting amongst themselves—as they have for centuries. There are power struggles everywhere. The feet and toes of the image show the nations in the area of the dominion mixing and mingling, but not cleaving to one another. (Dan. 2:41-44.) Like their ancient predecessors, they are of "one consent" on only one thing: "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (Psa. 83:4ff).

While the Russians may be backing certain ones in the Mideast—as is the U.S., the Moslems don't really like the Russians. So, we see the Arab countries as the real enemies of Israel.

### Oil and politics

The U.S.—and the rest of the Western-aligned nations—is deathly afraid of being cut off again from Mideast oil. As a result, the present administration is committed to the politics of convenience in aligning itself with any unholy power to gain an immediate advantage.

The drawback to this present policy is that God has promised blessing or cursing for those who bless or curse Abraham's seed. (Gen. 12:3.) Israel will certainly be punished for making covenants with the nations (Deut. 7:2; etc.), but the present direction the U.S. is taking can lead only to the status of a second-rate power, because it is not really FOR Israel.

Watch and pray!

## the honest truth

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

It is mailed free of charge to all interested persons, as a work of faith. Gifts toward its support are solicited, and are tax deductible.

The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

### CONTENTS

The voice of one . . . . .	2
Faithful men and growing churches, C. Jesse Pestle . . . . .	4
A literal thousand years? Harry A. Whittaker . . . . .	7
Letters to the editor . . . . .	13
The promises of God, Beth Briggs . . . . .	14

# Faithful men and growing churches

By C. Jesse Pestle, Good Hope, Illinois

**T**HE Apostle Paul's example of preaching *compliments* conservative Christians who communicate gospel truths without fanfare, but it *criticizes* aggressive churchmen whose ministries depend upon programs and gimmicks.

His words in 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5 are needed desperately in our time when leaders will try anything to increase attendance. Paul's example and words are: "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

## Enticing words

I am weary of enticing words from silver-tongued radio and television evangelists who beg for money and plead for instant decisions. It grieves me when Sunday school teachers avoid serious Bible study and adequate preparation and cover up their ignorance by dispensing catchy sayings of men and by asking their adult classes to play games with the lesson. I'm disappointed when ministers manipulate people by *methods* instead of *motivating* them by the message of God.

Why must the gospel, of all things, go forth with enticing

words? Can't God's Word accomplish its own purpose (Isa. 55:11) without man's wisdom? Why must we use persuasive language when relating that which is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword" (Heb. 4:12)?

Why should a man's words be followed by a public confession of faith when it is "by the [incorruptible] word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" that people are "begotten again" (1 Pet. 1:23, Diag. inter-linear)?

Why do we search high and low for ways to MAKE our church grow when it is the Lord who adds "to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47)? Why are we considered a failure if our group's growth doesn't match that on Pentecost? Does the word of faith really depend upon human cleverness to survive?

## Foolishness and folly

A little foolishness among the faithful often leads to great folly. The preacher who will swallow a goldfish, eat from the church roof, accept a pie in the face, or jump into the lake when a goal is reached, will probably draw a crowd the day he jumps from the steeple. But, for whose glory is all this nonsense?

When church attendance is built or maintained upon elephants and clowns, leaders are always searching for the next "act," and people nourished upon such attractions come expecting the sensational more than the spiritual. Clever contests are short-lived and habit-forming, and while strange antics of leaders do attract some, others are repulsed and lose all respect.

Many a church has ruined a good reputation and brought reproach on the cause of Christ by using the latest attendance-building fad. Some "unique" ideas used to pack the pews require half the study time to explain their connection with Christ.

#### Not the time

Pastor X, in his book, *How to Murder a Minister* (Revell, 1970, p. 87), says, "Eleven o'clock . . . is not the time for gimmicks and campaigns for attendance in the church school. These cheap attendance campaigns typified by the silliest of all, 'Be one of the Bunch,' displaying a string of paper bananas each bearing a person's name, has sounded taps for the church unless its mentality rises above this level. Could it possibly be that the pastors who promote attendance with such senseless means have that level of mentality? May God help the recruit if the general is drunk on that wine!"

Gimmicks attract gullible people, and those brought into the church by enticing words or wrong motives have greater difficulty learning truth. Thinking people of the community can usually see through the facade.

When a knowledge of God is presented through the teaching and preaching of the Word, attendance will take care of itself. Paul was simply saying that subtle arguments, persuasive language, and enticement of all types are unnecessary when God's Word is spoken effectively. The impetus is self-contained.

#### Spirit demonstrated

E. W. Bullinger once said, "How small and worthless are all the schemes, tricks, and contrivances of present-day evangelists and mission preachers with their ever-new fashions and modern methods, when we see what a high and dignified place God has given to the preached Word" (*How to Enjoy the Bible*, p. 8).

Paul's power was in his message of truth, not in the manner of his presentation. He was not an experienced orator or an eloquent speaker. What he spoke about Christ was true, and his life supported the message. This demonstration of the Spirit was found in "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). It was "the conviction by spiritual power" (1 Cor. 2:4, N.E.B.).

Matthew Henry says of Paul, "He preached the truths of Christ in their native dress, with plainness of speech." Paul educated his audience with the greatest power on earth—the Word of truth. No pulpit man is more powerful than when he preaches God's truth about Christ and the coming Kingdom. How vain when truth is abandoned in favor of persuasive words of man's wisdom.

This demonstration of the Spirit, so often missing in church ministries today, is further described in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."

When a servant of God proclaims truth and lives accordingly, his effectiveness as a witness is at its peak—regardless of the response of others. God asks no more of his witnesses. He does not *require* them to make converts—only to speak truth and walk in it.

#### Numbers mean success?

Success is often equated with numbers instead of faithful witnessing and singleness of purpose. Why must we trouble ourselves keeping up with other groups whose messages lack divine truth and whose methods are questionable even by standards of the world? Does a listener who refuses to believe nullify the truth of a faithful witness?

The beauty of the godly life resides not in the number of people influenced but rather in the devotion to God and truth. Numerically speaking, the disciples of Jesus enjoyed greater success than did Jesus himself. But, while some plant and some water, it is God who gives the increase through the power of his Word.

When the power of God's Word resides in the lives of his people, there exists a demonstration of power sufficient to convert others.

#### Your faith

Does your faith stand in the wisdom of men or in the power of God? Do you attend church when you like the preacher and stay home when you don't like him? Or, do you attend because of the truth he preaches? Do you go because you like the people, or because you love the Lord? Do you believe as a result of what others say about truth, or because you have discovered it for yourself from the Word?

Paul knew that faith in man's wisdom is always disappointing, and that only faith in the power of God will bring salvation. For this reason he made no effort to attract attention for himself. His main goal was to preach Christ who said, "I have given them thy [God's] word" (John 17:14). Powerful preaching makes frequent use of "Thus saith the LORD."

#### The motivating force

Nothing will convict men of sin and convert them to Christ like the pure Word of God understood correctly. Faith in God's plan of salvation and the power of the resurrection is the motivating force in the Christian life.

If God's plan of salvation as explained by the preaching of the Word fails to bring people to life in Christ, then we fool ourselves and others by using the wisdom of men. The programs of men will all soon fail, but God's eternal Word will remain as his most effective means of reaching men.

Churches which experience real spiritual growth are made up of faithful people who proclaim

truth and who practice it in their daily living. God will always bless the harmonious life patterned

after his Son. Those who see and understand such a life will desire what God has to offer. □



# A literal thousand years?

By Harry A. Whittaker  
Lichfield, Staffordshire, England

**T**HERE IS something grotesquely familiar about the main events in the visions of Revelation 19:19-20:3, concerning the powers of evil. The dragon is brought to naught and buried in the abyss, where he is chained and sealed. Nevertheless, after a time he comes forth again and manifests himself to his disciples who are as the sand of the sea for multitude! But there are, happily, significant differences—it is not *his* disciples who are seen enthroned and blessed, neither does *he* ascend up to heaven; instead, he is cast into a Gehenna of fire.

\* \* \* \* \*

## A literal thousand years?

The heavenly kingdom which now takes over the realm of “the serpent” is called in Revelation, “the thousand years.” This phrase has been almost universally read with a dogmatic literalism which is somewhat surprising in a community which has just as dogmatically insisted that the Book of Revelation is given in a multi-

licity of signs and symbols requiring to be given a proper Biblical interpretation.

Occasionally the question has been heard: “If prophetic periods in the Bible have to be interpreted on the basis of a day representing a year, why is it that the thousand years is given such a literal meaning?” But no answer to this inconsistency is ever supplied. Perhaps the idea of a Messianic reign of 360,000 years is deemed to be self-confuting.

### Seven divine epochs

More positively, the argument from the symbolism of the Genesis week of creation is considered adequate support: six thousand years of the rule of man, to be followed by a thousand years of rule by God’s Messiah.

Quite apart from the fact that the most conservative archeologists are convinced that Adam was created more than six thousand years ago, there is something a trifle unsatisfactory about this analogy of Genesis 1. Is not the *correspondence* be-

of the character of a "first principle" of the faith.

#### Big difficulties

Nevertheless, there are big difficulties about such a conception. For instance:

a) The prophecies of lasting peace in the kingdom of Christ are quite explicit: "they shall learn war no more."

b) Also, there is to be lasting godliness: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer. 3:17). "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders" (Isa. 60:18). "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (9:7).

c) Rebellion against *immortals* is so palpably silly. By comparison, modern nuclear armament—which every Bible reader can see to be a lunatic policy—has calm reason on its side. For, armed with big bombs, there is always a thin chance that you will devastate the other half of the world before it does the same to you.

But, for nations that have had a thousand years' experience of divine power and immortality, to calculate that their puny strength can win against God presupposes a mental deterioration to kindergarten level during the millennium.

#### A practical problem

d) The practical problem insists on obtruding itself—where will these rebel nations get their

weapons? Swords will have been turned into plowshares.

e) "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:25). The words imply a steady progress towards complete godliness. The idea of a great boil-up of rebellion at the end is surely most difficult to reconcile with this.

#### Christ's reign a failure?

f) A massive rebellion at the end of a thousand years would stamp the reign of Christ as a failure. To think that the end of all his efforts in teaching, guidance, personal influence, and benign rule—to say nothing of the immortal aid of men like Moses and Paul—is to be "We will not have this man to reign over us." This is just incredible to any who settle down to consider it seriously.

Jesus accomplished his work as Prophet, Sacrifice, and High Priest perfectly. Can anyone be happy that his work as King is to end in failure? For, can a long, long reign which ends in turbulent rebellion be reckoned as a success?

#### Rebellion plans secret?

g) A rebellion such as is described in Revelation 20 does not arise in five minutes. Even a triviality like the Suez episode in 1957 called for weeks of detailed organization which could not be kept secret from the rest of the world. Nevertheless, one is asked to believe that Christ and his immortals will know nothing at all of this mighty Gog-Magog uprising until it bursts upon the world. The only alternative seems to be that, knowing all

tween the two ideas somewhat thin?

#### A more probable idea

A more probable and more satisfying development of this idea of a week of creation emphasizes the covenants of God, rather than a rigid chronological timetable.

To the Almighty, people are more important than calendars. Certainly it is remarkable that God's covenants of promise mark off human history into six epochs:

1. Adam to Noah.
2. Noah to Abraham.
3. Abraham to Moses.
4. Moses to David.
5. David to Jesus.
6. Jesus to Christ (the Second Coming).

The Kingdom now comes in as the appropriate climax of the sequence.

7. Christ to God (1 Corinthians 15:28).

The symbolism of a thousand years now takes on a special appropriateness. The Revelation is very largely expressed in terms of the symbolism of the sanctuary. All the visions introducing the seven-fold sections and much else besides, have this basis. In harmony with this the thousand suggests a link with 10x10x10 cubits, the dimensions of the Holy of Holies, which are again alluded to in the description of the new Jerusalem: "The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal" (Rev. 21:16).

#### Synonym for the Kingdom

Considerations such as these suggest that the "Millennium" of Revelation 20 is an apocalyptic

phrase for the Kingdom, rather than a hard-and-fast chronological period of precisely one thousand years. (This is not to say that the reign of Christ will not last for precisely one thousand years. There *may* be a literal fulfillment also, but this should not be insisted on.) At first it will be a holy Kingdom in a world not fully consecrated.

Another detail suggesting the same conclusion is the expression: "they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." It is understandable that "they lived" should be a Greek aorist, for this phrase indicates the instantaneous gift of immortality. But the verb "reigned" also is in aorist tense where the continuous form of the verb would surely be expected if emphasis on the long duration of the Millennium was intended. Here the meaning appears to be: "they were made immortal, and became kings to reign in the kingdom."

#### Rebellion, when?

For the sake of continuity, it is desirable to resume this exposition with a consideration here of the ultimate fate of the Dragon and his allies. (Rev. 20:7-10.) The section which follows is reprinted from chapter 13 of *The Last Days*, by this writer.

At the end of the millennial reign of Christ there will be a mighty rebellion against his authority. Such a conclusion seems to be perfectly clear and obvious from either a casual or a careful reading of Revelation 20. And for that reason in the minds of many it has taken on something

of the character of a "first principle" of the faith.

#### Big difficulties

Nevertheless, there are big difficulties about such a conception. For instance:

a) The prophecies of lasting peace in the kingdom of Christ are quite explicit: "they shall learn war no more."

b) Also, there is to be lasting godliness: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer. 3:17). "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders" (Isa. 60:18). "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (9:7).

c) Rebellion against *immortals* is so palpably silly. By comparison, modern nuclear armament—which every Bible reader can see to be a lunatic policy—has calm reason on its side. For, armed with big bombs, there is always a thin chance that you will devastate the other half of the world before it does the same to you.

But, for nations that have had a thousand years' experience of divine power and immortality, to calculate that their puny strength can win against God presupposes a mental deterioration to kindergarten level during the millennium.

#### A practical problem

d) The practical problem insists on obtruding itself—where will these rebel nations get their

weapons? Swords will have been turned into plowshares.

e) "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:25). The words imply a steady progress towards complete godliness. The idea of a great boil-up of rebellion at the end is surely most difficult to reconcile with this.

#### Christ's reign a failure?

f) A massive rebellion at the end of a thousand years would stamp the reign of Christ as a failure. To think that the end of all his efforts in teaching, guidance, personal influence, and benign rule—to say nothing of the immortal aid of men like Moses and Paul—is to be "We will not have this man to reign over us." This is just incredible to any who settle down to consider it seriously.

Jesus accomplished his work as Prophet, Sacrifice, and High Priest perfectly. Can anyone be happy that his work as King is to end in failure? For, can a long, long reign which ends in turbulent rebellion be reckoned as a success?

#### Rebellion plans secret?

g) A rebellion such as is described in Revelation 20 does not arise in five minutes. Even a triviality like the Suez episode in 1957 called for weeks of detailed organization which could not be kept secret from the rest of the world. Nevertheless, one is asked to believe that Christ and his immortals will know nothing at all of this mighty Gog-Magog uprising until it bursts upon the world. The only alternative seems to be that, knowing all



that is being secretly concocted, they will pretend to ignore it, so the rebels may be lured to their own destruction. Would any reader be happy about the morality of such a proceeding?

h) It is sometimes postulated that if the visible authority of Christ were to be withdrawn for a time, then—human nature being what it is—rebellion would be almost certain to ensue within a short while.

But does Scripture speak of any such withdrawal of the Messiah's authority? This seems to have been invented specially to cope with a big difficulty. On the other hand, Isaiah is explicit that "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light" (60:20).

#### Gog-Magog, coincidence?

The coincidence of the names Gog and Magog in Revelation 20 with that of the leader of the great confederacy of Ezekiel 38 does not seem to have been given its proper weight. With any other Bible problem such a coincidence would shout for the two to be equated with each other.

May it not be said that any interpretation which does line up these two prophecies as having the same fulfillment has a much stronger claim to acceptance than one which severs all connection between them and instead inserts a gap of a thousand years? Or, is "Interpret Scripture by Scripture" to stand as a sound principle everywhere except Revelation 20?

j) Revelation 15:1 RV. The Vials are described as the "seven

plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God." The logical conclusion from these words is that the judgment of the Gog-Magog rebellion takes place before the outpouring of the Vials is concluded.

#### One place only

Has the difficulty ever been properly faced that this amazing uprising against all that is good and beneficent is spoken of in Scripture *in one place only*? Are we to copy Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and such, in their disreputable habit of confidently basing major beliefs on *one* passage of Scripture? Have we, the people of the Book, not yet learned the elementary lesson of mistrust in our own powers of Bible interpretation?

We believe what we believe about our "First Principles" not because of one text of Scripture, but because of the massive overall testimony of many passages. Shall we then go back on this thoroughly sound attitude here, and this, concerning verses in the Book of Revelation, of all places, the book about the interpretation of which there is less room for dogmatism than any other in the Bible?

#### A serious problem

To sum up so far, the position regarding the Gog-Magog rebellion of Revelation 20 is this:

1) On the one hand, the text is explicit that "when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations . . . Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle:

... and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city [Jerusalem]" (vv. 7-9). Apparently nothing could be plainer.

2) Nevertheless, on the other hand, there are copious scriptures (already quoted), and various associated problems and difficulties which seem to rule out the possibility of such a rebellion.

Can it be, then, that Scripture contradicts itself? God forbid!

#### A contradiction harmonized

The only alternative, therefore, is that a re-scrutiny of the evidence will reveal a reconciliation between the two. A harmonization *must* be possible. No Bible student worth his salt should be content to affirm adherence to either view without being prepared to give fair consideration to the other. Such a synthesis, the present writer believes, is possible by a reinterpretation of certain details in Revelation 20.

Familiarity with the phrases of the beloved King James Version often has the effect of hiding from students of Scripture the fact that quite a number of words in the original text have perfectly valid alternatives. "Exhortation" is also "consolation"; "hell" is "the grave"; "spirit" is "breath"; "tribe" in the Old Testament is also "rod"; "boy" is also "servant" (like the French "garçon"). The list is a long one.

In this Gog-Magog passage no less than three of these ambiguities occur. "Earth" may also be "the Land (of Israel)." This

double meaning is common in both Old and New Testaments. And "saints" may be "angels" or "Israel, the holy people." Also—and most important of all—the word translated "expired," "finished," "fulfilled" (vv. 3, 5, 7), may also carry the sense of "accomplished," or "achieved," thus giving this key phrase the meaning: "when Christ's millennial kingdom has become fully established."

#### Other examples

This last point is so important that it is not to be accepted without substantial evidence. Here, then, are examples of the use of *the same Greek word* elsewhere in the New Testament or in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament.

a) Luke 22:37: "This that is written must yet be accomplished in me."

b) Galatians 5:16: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." To read "finish" here is to make nonsense of the passage.

c) James 2:8: "If ye fulfil the royal law . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well." Again, the substitution of "finish" makes the meaning ludicrous.

d) Romans 2:27: "Shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil [finish?] the law, judge thee, who . . . dost transgress the law?"

e) Ruth 3:18: Boaz "will not be in rest, until he have finished [i.e., accomplished, achieved] the thing this day."

f) Isaiah 55:11: "My word . . . shall not return unto me void,

but it shall accomplish [but not 'finish'] that which I please."

g) Daniel 4:30: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built"—here "achieved, fully established" are both appropriate. "Finished" also is suitable in the sense of "finished building," but certainly not in the sense of "ended."

#### Possible meaning

Coming back to Revelation 20, a possible meaning is now seen to be this: The power of Sin is restrained during the period (seven years? forty years?) of the establishment of the Kingdom. Then comes the great Gog-Magog rebellion.

Here Revelation 20 is strictly parallel with Psalm 2: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us [cp. the 'great chain' of Rev. 20:1] . . . . Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion [the beloved city, Rev. 20:9]."

#### Other scriptures

Other psalms besides Psalm 2 suggest submission to Christ only until forces can be rallied to make effective resistance to this resented King of the Jews. "As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall yield themselves unto me" (Psa. 18:44). Note the margin: "shall yield feigned obedience." (See also Psa. 66:3; 81:15.)

A further suggestion may be advanced here in harmony with the foregoing. The only passage in the Bible with any sort of

resemblance to the words of Revelation 20 about "Satan" being shut up in the abyss is to be found in Isaiah 24:21-23. "It shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."

This comes at the end of a vivid prophecy of divine judgment in the last days.

If the two passages do actually describe the same thing, then here is further evidence that the "Satanic" rebellion of Revelation 20 comes immediately after the beginning of the millennium and not at its close.

#### Ezekiel 38

Ezekiel 38 also can now be read as the precise equivalent of Revelation 20. In an earlier chapter (Chapter 37, *Revelation: a Biblical Approach*), Biblical reasons were advanced for applying the Gog-Magog invasion to a time *after* the enthronement of the Messiah. The details of Revelation 20:9 correspond exactly with those in Ezekiel: "They went up on the breadth of the earth ['land,' Ezek. 38:9], and compassed the camp of the saints ['my people of Israel' that 'dwelleth safely,' Ezek. 38:14] about, and the beloved city: and

fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them [precisely as in Ezek. 38:22].”

#### Harmonization

This easy harmonization with other prophetic scriptures provides additional confirmation of the validity of the interpretation proposed.

Also, the picture now presented is entirely according to what might be expected. When a war-shattered world has licked its wounds and begins to realize that

the Land of Israel is the headquarters of a new Power which now proclaims the hated Jews as the head of the nations, and not the tail, there will be no great lapse of time before the authority of this King of the Jews is challenged.

Ezekiel 38 and Revelation 20 tell of the fate of this last attempt—early in Christ’s reign—to proclaim “Glory to Man in the highest!”—From *REVELATION: A Biblical Approach*, copyright © 1973. □



# LETTERS

## THE DEVIL QUESTION

Dear Terry,

Just received the nineteenth issue of your paper this week. . . . I appreciated Arnold’s thoughts on the devil question, because his conclusions are mine, for the most part. There was a time when I made allowances for the orthodox devil idea, but not so any more. The arguments of Thomas Williams in *The World’s Redemption* helped me arrive at a much more harmonious and logical understanding. Most who accept the personality of satan go on to embrace the personality of the Spirit. Church of God people do stop short of the trinity, but confusion about the source of evil often spills over into the spiritual realm as well.—C.J.P., Ill.

Terry, I’ve just put off long enough sending for these books, and may I say the article on the “devil” was one I’d like to shout about, and I do, only some think I’m stubborn. I do honestly believe we should be stubborn in our beliefs in God’s Word.—M.K.P., Ohio.

I especially enjoyed the last issue. The article on the devil was especially interesting, as that has been my belief on the subject. But, no one else seems to believe so, and I have been searching for proof that I am right.—Mrs. R.K., Texas.

■ Thanks for your letters. We were brought up in a church where no one taught or believed in a personal tempter. When we started working with General Conference churches 39 years ago the large majority of our people were of this persuasion. There were a few in “pockets” around the country—mainly because of a different religious background, who believed in a personal devil.

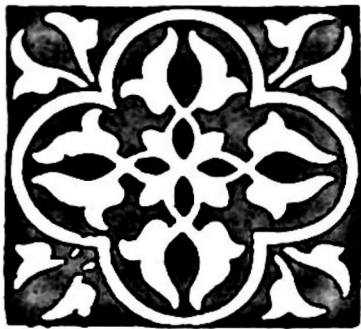
We remember when the subject was freely discussed in the pages of *The Restitution Herald*, and at various conferences. Then, because it was considered “controversial,” it could no longer be discussed. But, the advocates of the personal devil view have gone on preaching and teaching it, until today those of us who maintain the original Church of God position are made to feel like heretics!

*The Mystery of Iniquity Explained* by Lyman Booth, published by the General Conference in 1929, is a fine

book of 200+ pages on the Biblical view. The remaining stock of this book was destroyed in the 1950's, as an unwanted stepchild. Some have asked us to consider reprinting it. We do make available to our readers the 39-page booklet, "The Devil: his Ori-

gin and End" by Thomas Williams, an earlier Christadelphian writer. It is chapter 18 of his well-known book, *The World's Redemption*. Write us if you are interested in either of these.

We are not ashamed to stand up and be counted on this subject.—Ed. □



# The promises of God

By Beth Briggs, Downey, Calif.

## 50. NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE WITH FAITH

**MATTHEW 17:20** — "Jesus said unto them, . . . If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

This is the same theme again, faith and the reward of faith. Jesus had just healed an epileptic child after his disciples had failed to do so. Then he rebuked his followers for their lack of faith.

We may argue that our faith is too weak to perform great deeds. The mustard seed is a tiny seed, but it grows into a mighty tree. So may our faith grow into a mighty faith that will remove the mountainous obstructions in our way. One of the greatest of these is illness.

We know that in the time of future blessedness in the Kingdom of God, the "eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped"; "the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isa. 35:5, 6). We may not be able to accomplish ALL of these things now, but why not take advantage of prayer to do the things that we CAN do today?

If faith as small as a grain of mustard seed can perform the things this text tells us can be done, how much more could a GREAT faith accomplish! At least some of the "mountains" of pain, sorrow, grief, and poverty would remove "to yonder place" and we would have a preview of the marvelous things to come. Let us ask God to increase our faith, and it will be increased in proportion as we believe.

*A microscopic mustard seed  
Will grow into a tree  
Whose branches form a resting place  
Of shade for you and me.*

*Our faith, just like the mustard seed  
Must grow until we bear  
The fruits of grace that may be ours  
Through loving works and prayer.*

## 51. GOD CAN DO ANYTHING

**MATTHEW 19:26** — "Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

Many things in these days have become possible to man. He has created instruments of destruction so fearful that the inhabitants of the world tremble when they allow themselves to think what might happen if somebody should become "trigger happy," and inadvertently or wilfully "press the button" that would spread desolation and death over a vast portion of the earth. They have produced planes faster than the speed of sound, machines that can perform many of the difficult feats formerly performed by man, and have brought into being mighty space ships which they think can one day conquer at least a portion of outer space.

But there is one thing that, with all his might, man cannot do. He cannot give life to even the smallest creature. He has perseveringly endeavored to do this, and thinks he may still accomplish it, but this is God's province and he will never be able to invade it. *(more)*

---

At last, real help on the Book of Revelation! This 304-page book by

Harry A. Whittaker is deep, yet easy to read. Ministers and laymen will appreciate the sound scholarship, and Biblical approach. Attractive paper binding. Order an extra copy to share with a friend or loved one!

# REVELATION



Here is my order for Whittaker's REVELATION: A Biblical Approach:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, & zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please find enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_  
copies @ \$2.50 plus 30¢ postage.

Mail this coupon to:

**THE HONEST TRUTH, INC.**  
Station A, Box 8933  
Greenville, S.C. 29604

Many people today have left God out of their calculations. But they should remember that God gave them their marvelous minds, and in an instant he can take those same minds away. Even the most skilful physician is often helpless in such cases, and their knowledge and power perish with them. They had not learned as others have learned that "in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28), and they, as well as we, are entirely dependent upon him.

While man has accomplished seemingly great things, they are infinitesimal in comparison to the mysteries of the universe which are still impossible to him. God has accomplished all things from the beginning of creation, and at some time in the future he will finish his work as he tells us in Revelation 21:5: "Behold, I make all things new."

*God, infinite, accomplishes  
What man can never do,  
So may we know in him today  
A life that is made new.*

*He can and often operates  
With over-ruling skill  
To bring about what can't be done,  
His purpose to fulfill.*

□

---

David Krogh  
Box 100  
Oregon, IL. 61061

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Piedmont, S. C.  
Permit No. 13

The Honest Truth, Inc.  
Box 8933  
Greenville, SC 29604  
Address Correction Requested  
Return Postage Guaranteed

# the honest truth

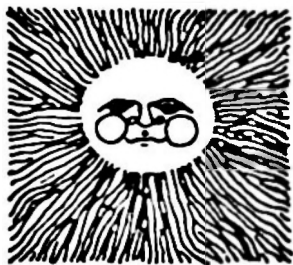
OREGON BIBLE COLLEGE  
OREGON, ILLINOIS

ISSUE TWENTY-ONE



**READ:** THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE, page 4  
A NEEDED REFORMATION, page 7





# The voice of one

## In this issue

On page 4 we present a message by Pastor Allan Greif on "The importance of doctrine"; an old-fashioned—according to some—view of the importance of the one gospel.

On page 7 Harry A. Whittaker presents a study of the reformation under King Josiah, with a pointed appeal for a reformation in our day.

On page 12 we reprint the introduction and first chapter of *The Two Natures in the Child of God*, a 52-page booklet by the late E. W. Bullinger. This fine study is out of print and in the public domain. We are proceeding with plans to republish it at an early date. Watch for an announcement of availability and price.

## Alternatives to a strong theological position

In an editorial in *The Restitution Herald* of September, 1971, this writer explored the alternatives to a strong theological position. We made reference to a book, *Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology*, by Philip E. Hughes, in which he argued the cause of a living theology in today's church.

The alternatives he suggested fortified our own thinking on the subject. Either the church takes a strong theological position, or it will do one of two other things—

or both. Turning its eyes from the importance of truth, it will become engrossed in churchology—studying ways to promote and advance the growth of the church. Or, turning from the body of truth—the Bible—as the basis for faith, it will turn to experiential faith.

At the time we wrote that editorial we could see a change in progress, in which the emphasis was passing from the message to the method.

## Churchology

It is evident the church at large has lost interest in Bible study and theology, and has opted for churchology. How can we make the church grow?

The message coming out of headquarters is churchology. We are urged on one hand to attend an "Advanced Growth Seminar for Professionals." On another, the ministers are to give up a week of work for the Lord to attend a ministerial conference on church growth, where the featured speaker is a Bob Jones U. graduate—therefore a trinitarian, etc.—and an "expert" on church growth at Fuller in Pasadena. We hear he was also expensive.

Local churches across the country are attending seminars on church growth, studying such books as *Your Church Has Real Possibilities*—instead of the

Bible—on Wednesday nights, and taking part in programs and drives calculated to make the church grow.

Brethren, WHAT are you trying to grow? If you want another popular church, just abandon the truth. But, if you want a true Church of God, get off of churchology, and get back to the theology that made us a people of the Bible.

#### Experiential faith

When the church moves from its strong theological position to methodology for church growth, it is easy to move from the Word of God as the basis for faith to experience as that basis.

Experiential or empirical faith is the basis for the charismatic movement, and is also growing in the Church of God. In any number of our national publications we can cite instances where the experiences of certain ones are held high as examples of what we should be and do, and some are not even of the faith.

When experience is accepted as a basis of faith, everyone's faith must become acceptable. If by empirical faith I tell you I have visions you must accept it. By the same token I must believe you if you tell me you have the power to raise the dead. We may both be charlatans and opposers of the Word of God, but we'd both be acceptable in an experiential church. We're more apt to be back at "square one" with the false prophets of Jeremiah 23:16, who "speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD." (*more*)

## the honest truth

The Honest Truth is owned and published by The Honest Truth, Inc., Station A, Box 8933, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, a nonprofit religious corporation, in the interest of the ancient gospel advocated by the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

It is mailed free of charge to all interested persons, as a work of faith. Gifts toward its support are solicited, and are tax deductible.

The Honest Truth advocates the following truths: the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16); there is one God, the Father (1 Cor. 8:6); Jesus is the Son of God, and did not exist before he was born (Luke 1:30-35); the Holy Spirit is God's power, and is not a person (Acts 1:9); man is wholly mortal, and at death goes unconscious to the grave (Eccl. 9:5, 10); Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind, was buried, and arose the third day (1 Cor. 15:3, 4); Jesus will return to the earth literally, visibly, and personally to raise the dead, change the living saints to immortality, and reign on the throne of David at Jerusalem (1 Thess. 4:13-18); the Abrahamic covenant will be literally fulfilled in Christ, Abraham's Seed, and the land of promise will be the eternal inheritance of God's people (Gal. 3:16-29); future rewards are either eternal life or destruction (Rom. 6:23); the nation of Israel will be restored as the Kingdom of God and head of the nations (Ezek. 36:16-28); the source of temptation is from within man himself (Jas. 1:13-15); the Christian should refrain from taking part in war, strife, or conflict leading to the taking of human life (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and the conditions for salvation are: hearing the gospel pertaining to the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, belief, repentance, confession, immersion, and leading a holy life (Acts 8:12; Rom. 10:8-17).

T. M. Ferrell, Editor and Publisher

#### CONTENTS

The voice of one . . . . .	2
The importance of doctrine, Allan Greif . . . . .	4
A needed reformation, Harry A. Whittaker . . . . .	7
Two natures in the child of God, E. W. Bullinger . . . . .	12

### The answer

The answer to these dangerous excursions—these deadly alternatives—is a strong, viable theologi-

cal position based upon the Word of God, and the real study and belief of the Bible as the basis for faith and work. □



# The importance of doctrine

By Pastor Allan P. Greif, Mentor, Ohio

**T**HE BASIC difference between the mass of religious isms in the world today and the small nucleus of believers in “the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12) preached by the disciples of Christ in the first century, is the importance of doctrine.

Most religions of the world contend that *what* is believed is less important than the quality of faith, that is, the sincerity and commitment of the believer. But, when we look back at that first century we find a constant theme of the importance of doctrine stressed by Christ and his disciples.

### Examples

Jesus, in John 5:39, tells us to “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” Paul continually preached, “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doc-

trine” (1 Tim. 4:13), and “Preach the word; . . . exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine . . . make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

To the churches of Galatia he wrote: “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8, 9).

The Apostle John stressed the importance of keeping the doctrine pure. “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth

him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

The Church of the Blessed Hope, therefore, and others like us, who base our faith on God's promises to Abraham and David, have a solid foundation for our faith. By comparing scripture with scripture we become rooted and grounded in the gospel of Christ.

#### **An essential ingredient**

In every walk of life confidence is an essential ingredient to success. Success in business is assured if we believe in our product or service, and our belief is founded on proven facts.

Marriages can succeed only when two people know and trust each other fully.

The only way for true religion to become meaningful in our life is to know God's plans and purposes, as revealed to us in the Scriptures; through the prophets, his Son, and his disciples. And so doctrine—the principle of God's plan of salvation for mankind—is important.

For this reason Jesus began his ministry with the message, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). In other words, turn from your own way of thinking. Put aside all thoughts contrary to God's, and let him direct your new way of life.

#### **Important to salvation**

What we believe becomes very important to salvation. As an illustration of this premise we have the record of Cornelius. He was a devout, religious man, prone to be charitable and concerned for the welfare of mankind. Yet, he was outside of the

way to salvation. It was needful for Peter to teach Cornelius what he ought to do; the requirements God has ordained for salvation. (Acts 10:1-6, 48.)

All through the Scriptures God has revealed the necessity of believing his precepts only. Through the mouth of Ezekiel, God denounced those who were teaching error. "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!" (Ch. 13: 1-9, 22, 23). (See also 1 Cor. 1:10-31; Rev. 22:18, 19.)

Beloved and friends, doctrine is of grave importance! No wonder Paul said in Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

#### **A call to all**

The gospel Christ preached produces salvation in the believer. It is a call to select a people out of all nations; a people who will believe in God and follow his precepts fully. It is a call to ALL of humanity. Yet, as Jesus said, "Many be called, but few chosen" (Matt. 20:16), and, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: . . . because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (7:13, 14). There can be no deviation. The way is narrow, so narrow that "no man cometh

unto the Father, but by [him]" (John 14:6).

#### The gospel unchanged

The gospel of Jesus Christ, that is so essential to salvation, must be kept unchanged in all its parts. It reaches back to Abraham, when "the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gen. 13:14, 15).

This gospel reaches back to David, when God said to him, "When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (2 Sam. 7:12, 13).

When Jesus began to preach, "He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43). He commissioned his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16).

#### Kingdom and King

Yes, doctrine is important! God's requirement for salvation demands a belief in his plans and purposes to set his Kingdom upon the earth, with his Son as King. The gospel as the scribes

and Pharisees taught it, consisted solely of the restoration of their kingdom, without accepting Christ as their King.

The gospel preached in most churches today consists merely of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, without mention of his function as King in the future Kingdom of God on the earth.

#### The grand purpose of God

Doctrine is important, for it ties together the Old Testament and the New, the Jew and the Gentile, giving all mankind great and precious promises. By belief and obedience we may have a part in the grand purpose of God to bring peace, joy, and righteousness to all the earth. Thus, through the foolishness of preaching doctrine, God is picking out a people through his name to have a part in the Kingdom of God on the earth!

It is because of our full knowledge of the gospel that we stand in confident assurance of our high calling to the salvation of God. This is truly a blessed hope to us, for we are fully persuaded that God is faithful in his promises. The oath to Abraham will be fulfilled. David's Kingdom will be restored upon the earth. Jesus will come again and reign upon that throne. Those who have complied with God's requirement, and have put on his Son's name in baptism, and bear the name worthily, shall inherit Christ's inheritance, even life for evermore.

Beloved, and friends, there is nothing more important in this life than this doctrine which has given us a blessed and sure hope. □

# A needed reformation

By Harry A. Whittaker  
Lichfield, Staffordshire, England

**T**HERE WAS a need for reformation. Spiritually, the kingdom of Judah was in a bad way. Hezekiah's burning faith and zeal for the LORD had brought the nation through the nerve-wracking experience of Assyrian invasion. Then, with Manasseh on the throne, the morale of the people took a steep nose dive. Could anything or anybody pull them out of it?

## Man for the occasion

Against all expectations of the distressed, godly remnant, the occasion produced the man. The grace of God gave them Josiah and a final opportunity for repentance.

What filled Josiah, at an early age, with eagerness to reassert the authority of God over Israel? Was it the influence of a godly mother, or a good wife, or the warning provided by the life of his father? He probably had to wait patiently during years of co-regency before the opportunity came to this zealous, impetuous young man of twenty to go into action with absolute power.

Then there was no hesitation. With a full-blooded iconoclasm, which took people's breath away—many disliking his policy, he set about cleaning up all the clutter of corruption; high places, graven images, molten images, sun-images, altars of

Baal, and foul, sexy *Asherim*. Josiah and his men went through the land like a tornado and swept the lot into limbo.

## On into Israel

Nor did Josiah call a halt at the borders of Judah. Moving on into the territory of the derelict northern ten tribes of Israel, he gave an imperious, irresistible lead to a similar movement there. It was a powerful appeal to the estranged brethren to forge once again the bonds of unity in loyalty to Jehovah.

Back in Jerusalem another urgent task awaited his reforming zeal. Temple buildings and temple services had fallen into a deplorable state of decrepitude. Soon the place swarmed with workmen busily restoring its pristine glories. Faithful worshipers made their personal contributions to the great spring-cleaning with generous donations to Hilkiyah's special fund. And, a new Levitical choir was trained to sing the psalms of David as they deserved to be sung.

## Copy of the law found

All this toning up of the spiritual life of the people received a tremendous fillip when the high priest brought to the king an ancient copy of the law, found in a remote part of the temple. Eagerly Josiah listened to its words. Then, greatly moved by

the shattering contrast between those high precepts and his nation's wilfulness, he rent his garments, and prayed to the LORD for forgiveness.

Speedily a deputation was sent to Huldah the prophetess for counsel in this dire situation. They brought back only a message of impending judgment.

#### Redoubled efforts

Thereupon, Josiah redoubled his efforts. He called a great open-air meeting in the temple court. Priests and princes, elders and prophets, and an immense multitude of the common people assembled there before him. He read that book of God to them, from beginning to end.

Then Josiah called them to renew their covenant with the LORD their God, and to keep the Passover afresh; that superb, eloquent reminder of God's gracious deliverance in ancient times.

You can read about all this in 2 Kings 22, 23 and 2 Chronicles 34, 35.

#### Disturbing comparisons

All that was a long time ago. Today one reads of the fine unalloyed enthusiasm of that energetic young Josiah, and inevitably comparisons arise in the mind. It is more than 120 years since the resurgence of truth under such men as Dr. John Thomas, Joseph Marsh, H. V. Reed, Benjamin Wilson, J. M. Stephenson, and others. Would anyone care to say that in all that time the faith has been kept in purity? No, *no one* would.

Yet, the devastating decline and decay so often foretold—al-

most with relish, it sometimes seems—has quite emphatically not happened. It never will, for the coming of the Lord is too near to allow time for the lump to be completely leavened.

#### Reformation unneeded now?

But, would anyone care to say that, even so, a Josiah and a Josiah-type reformation are not needed? That is a mighty different question, and it calls for a mighty different answer.

Of *course* rot has set in! From the start, the simple facts of human nature made it inevitable. Did any human movement, especially of a religious character, ever run for 120 years without the eroding of ideals and the flagging of faith?

The chariot of the LORD has been savagely braked in its progress more than once by violent internal disagreement.

Serious as these features may be, there are others a good deal worse. Self-criticism can all too easily have wrong results. But, if the reaction is positive and personal, as happened quite violently in Josiah's day, much good will accrue.

Here, then is a bald catalog of items badly in need of attention:

- 1) The impact of materialism and a worldly outlook.
- 2) Our perceptibly decreasing Bible-mindedness.
- 3) The almost total disappearance of personal witness for the faith.
- 4) The rising generation.

#### The first is worst

The first of these is the worst. This is a generation dedicated to getting more and yet more

money, in order to spend it on more and yet more selfishness; fine houses, fine food, far-flung travel, and the worship of car and garden and one's own well-adorned person. All of these have been taken over with hardly a question about the pagan standard set by worldlings.

This infection has hit all age groups. The older folk take over from the world its aspirations to a congenial retirement. They look forward to ten or more years of comfortable lounging in a country cottage, or in a bungalow by the sea. But, God himself has said: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground" (Gen. 3:19a). A man should work till he drops—not necessarily at the same occupation, but in service to God and the community, not for himself.

#### Worldly standards

Worldly standards likewise dominate the brother in Christ when he makes his last will and testament. For those in the truth, the only justification for leaving thousands—few or many—to one's children is that they have *need* of them. But, in most cases that is not true. Then where is sense in adding to the worldly temptations of the next generation? That money is the Lord's and should be directed to reinforce his work and service.

Again, does anyone—*anyone*—ever stop to put a question mark against the world's complete dependence on insurance? The world has no faith in God. It does have faith in insurance. This is its Baal, Melkart, or Hercules.

Yet how often do servants of Christ stop to ask themselves questions about this proclivity? At a conservative estimate there must be millions a year of the Lord's money going to Baal's insurance companies.

These items are only examples. There is no lack of others.

#### Decline in Biblical emphasis

Next, the sorry decline in Biblical emphasis. This shows up in the trend of our public speaking; fluency and oratory become more important than emphasis on the straight authority of the Bible message.

Agreed, the old-style Sunday evening with its twenty or thirty Bible passages was hardly the best method. Now the pendulum has swung the other way. Bible expositors—those who can do the job so the vivid power of the Word itself shines out—have always been rare, but now are rarer.

In this respect, the worst feature of all is the decline of good Bible talk on *informal* occasions. Listen to the conversation around you at the refreshment table at a church gathering. Note the topics which fill any social hour spent with half-a-dozen members of your congregation. What do you talk about in the car going home from the meeting? Are Josiah and his nonstop Bible readings needed in the courts of the Lord today?

The younger generation, with all the temptations of their age to frivolousness and flippancy, especially need to ask themselves a few questions of this sort.



### The field of evangelism

Next, in the field of our evangelism the world is winning hands down. It has an ace of trumps which somehow wins every trick in devastating fashion—the television.

Not only does this godless entertainment make our most alluring message seem colorless, it has also taught millions how to stay at home and drink cans of beer in an armchair, rather than go to some unfamiliar place and sit on a hard chair listening to unfamiliar, unexciting Bible.

Bravely we have tried to swim against this tide of paganization, using the wrong stroke. The day of the “four special lectures” is long past. The newspaper ad is highly expensive and, today, highly ineffective. Millions of letterbox leaflets and the tramping of thousands of man-miles are completely without effect. So, now it is films and exhibitions, further devices for doing the Lord’s work secondhand, instead of the person-to-person witness which the Lord wanted from the beginning.

### Shame on us!

The horrid, reproachful fact may as well be faced. We have mostly lost the knack, the will, or the courage—or all three—to make and use opportunities for *telling* others the good things we know. Shame on us that it should be so. Yet, without controversy, great is the effectiveness of this mode of preaching compared with all the rest. Indeed, strictly, the rest do not merit the description: “preaching.”

There is only one thing left to us—to turn all believers into talking believers. The people of the Lord must go through the routine of life *looking for and using* opportunities for personal witness concerning the faith. In so doing we shall most certainly save ourselves, as well as some of those who hear us.

### The rising generation.

Lastly, for the present, there is the problem of the rising generation. In some congregations, alas, there is no rising generation. The world, with all its garish, superficial attractiveness, has won them for its own. Yet, in the main it can be said that—compared to the popular churches—we have been splendidly successful in holding the young folk.

Youth gatherings leave this middle-aged “square” with an impression of fine, clean(!), alert youngsters; an impressive reservoir of educated ability. Never mind about their clothes and hair. If they develop a wholesome attitude to the truth of Christ, these lesser problems will take care of themselves.

### Worse headaches

There are much worse headaches, and their elders have only themselves to blame. A generation gap has been subsidized. The young people have been encouraged to segregate themselves into youth groups and all that. Of course, this is precisely what they *want* to do. But is it good for them? Is it good for the body of believers to which they belong?

In all these things they have been lavishly provided for; the

most feather-bedded section of a feather-bedded community. And—here's the rub—nothing, or almost nothing, has been demanded of them in the name of Christ in the way of service and self-dedication!

Our Bible missions could have a constant stream of eager, dedicated workers, but they don't. Our hospitals and homes for the aged could have an endless supply of devoted help of the finest kind, but they don't. The blame for these deficiencies lies at the door of the parents. They have not inculcated any sort of idealism into their children, but only the world's self-centered philosophy: "You must be all right, Jack. Pass your exams. Make your career. The Lord will be

thankful for the fag end of your life and energies."

Our last chance!

Where is the single-minded Josiah to save our Christian ideals from foundering altogether? Where is the inspiration to send today's priests and Levites to their task of glorifying God with the skills and talents he has given them?

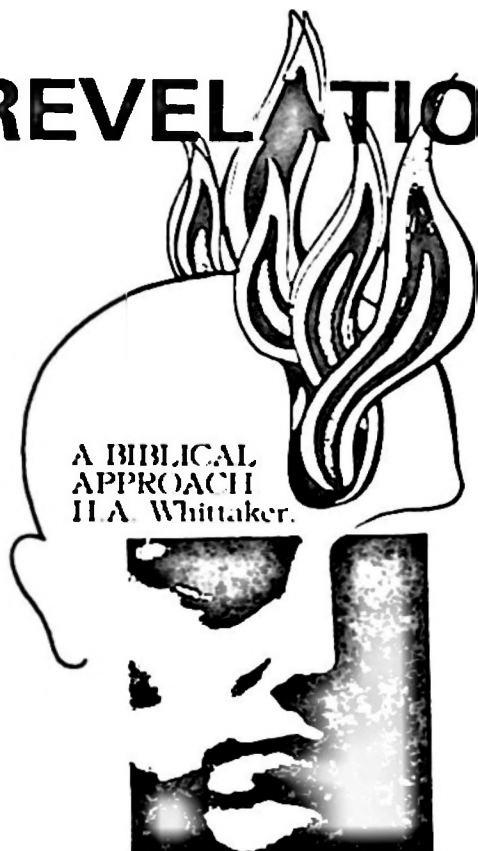
There is plenty of evidence in Jeremiah's early prophecies that for most of the nation Josiah's reformation was little more than skin-deep. Their last chance! It was not in them to seize and use it. In less than a generation they were in the abyss.

Somebody once quipped: "A word to the wise is as good as a nod to a blind horse." Is it?

At last, real help on the Book of Revelation! This 304-page book by

Harry A. Whittaker is deep, yet easy to read. Ministers and laymen will appreciate the sound scholarship, and Biblical approach. Attractive paper binding. Order an extra copy to share with a friend or loved one!

# REVELATION



Here is my order for Whittaker's  
**REVELATION: A Biblical Ap-  
 proach:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, & zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please find enclosed \$\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_  
 copies @ \$2.50 plus 30¢ postage.

Mail this coupon to:

**THE HONEST TRUTH, INC.**  
 Station A, Box 8933  
 Greenville, S.C. 29604

# The TWO NATURES in the child of God

By the late E. W. Bullinger, D.D.

## INTRODUCTORY

*“That which is born of the flesh is flesh ;  
And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”—John iii. 6.*

**W**E hear much in the present day about what is called “the teaching of Jesus” ; and an attempt is made to set it above and against the teaching of Paul, overlooking the fact that both Gospels and Epistles are given by the Inspiration of the same Holy Spirit. Men talk thus, not because they desire to know or to obey the teaching of the Lord Jesus, but because they wish to lower the authority of the teaching of God by Paul, and to get rid of what they call Pauline Theology. Bring them face to face with the actual teaching of the Lord Jesus, and they will have none of it. They will turn back, and walk no more with Him (John vi. 66) ; or they will be “filled with wrath”, and seek to do away with Him (Luke iv. 28, 29). In John iii. 6, we have the teaching of the Lord Jesus on a fundamental doctrine. It states an eternal truth. But it is the one truth which the natural man will not have. It declares that, by nature, we are descended from fallen Adam ; are begotten in his likeness (Gen. v. 3) ; and are partakers of his fallen nature. Born of the flesh, we possess the nature of the begetter, and *are* flesh. This flesh, “the teaching of Jesus” declares, “profiteth nothing” (John vi. 63) ; and in it “dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. vii. 18). But, as we have said, this is the teaching which man will not receive. Pulpit, platform, and press, with one voice proclaim the opposite ; and declare that there *is* some good thing in man, and that all we have to do is to discover and improve it.

It is against this lie of the devil, that the axe of Divine truth is laid when the Lord Jesus declares that “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” that “The flesh profiteth nothing” ; and that in it dwelleth “No good thing”. If any good thing is to be found in man, it must be first put in by God. It must be “born of the Spirit” : and, when that “good thing” is thus born and found in a man, then it is seen to partake of the nature of the begetter. It is spirit. It is Divine. Now these two natures are so opposite in their origin, nature, and character, that they each have several names ; and each name reveals some fresh trait and some additional truth. Let us first look at the names by which man, by nature, is spoken of.

## CHAPTER I

### THE NAMES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLD NATURE

I. **THE FLESH**; as we have it in John iii. 6. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." It comes by birth as generated by a fallen begetter. Concerning this Flesh, we are told: it "cannot please God." (Rom. viii. 8); it "profiteth nothing:" (John vi. 63); there is in it "no good thing:" (Rom. vii. 18).

Now this is vital and fundamental truth. The question is: Do we believe it? Do we believe God or man? If we believe God, we shall see that the great bulk of what goes by the name of "public worship" is vanity. True worship must be wholly that of the spirit, or the new nature. We must be able to say with Mary: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

It is only as saved ones that we can truly worship. If the flesh of itself "profiteth nothing", then it is clear that we cannot worship God with any of the senses (which all pertain to the flesh). We cannot worship with our eyes by gazing at a sacrament. We cannot worship with our noses by the smelling of incense. We cannot worship with our ears by listening to music; no, nor can we worship with our throats by singing. All that comes from the flesh "profiteth nothing". God has "no respect to it", and it is labour in vain. Protestant Christians will agree with us in what we say about gazing on sacraments, or the smelling of incense; but what about the other senses of the flesh? What about the ears and the throats? The churches all seem to be "music mad"; and, what with choirs "1,000 strong", and "string bands", "solos", and "choruses", and "anthems", and the new "Gospel of Song", we have come upon a time when the "flesh" seems to hold universal sway in what still retains the name of worship. But alas for it all! it "profiteth nothing". This flood is advancing side by side with another, of which the cry is "Be filled with the Spirit." But the "Word of truth" is *wrongly* divided. For a full stop is put after the word Spirit: and thus it is not noticed that, if we are filled by the Spirit, it will be seen in the effect: viz., "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts (not in your throats merely: and this, not to any audience or congregation, but) to the Lord." It is not an "ear for music" that is wanted, but a heart for music. From this title of the old nature we learn that "the flesh profiteth nothing". This solemn truth is fundamental to Christianity: while the opposite is fundamental to religion. Religion has to do with the flesh: Christianity

## THE NAMES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLD NATURE

has to do with Christ and the new nature (which is *pneuma-Christou* or Christ-spirit). But we shall have more to say on this later.

This old nature is further called

2. "THE NATURAL MAN." And we are told that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he get to know them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

In the structure of this portion of 1 Corinthians, verse 14 stands in correspondence with verse 8; which tells us that "none of the princes of this world knew the wisdom of God", *i.e.*, the great Secret—the Mystery—for it was "hidden" in God (Eph. iii. 9), and no eye had ever seen it, or ear heard it. And even when now it is "revealed" (1 Cor. ii. 10), the natural man cannot get to know it, because it is only discerned by the spirit, or the new nature within us, created and enlightened by the Holy Ghost. This is conclusive as to the character, power, inclination and condition of "the natural man"; which means man by nature, as he is born into the world. Then further, he is called

3. "THE OLD MAN." And what about him? He, we are told "is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv. 22). The old man is full of desires or lusts. These lusts are deceitful and deceiving. They are in all things contrary to God, contrary to His Spirit, and His Word; and to the new nature, the spirit, when it is once implanted within us. In this connection, it is called

4. "THE OUTWARD MAN"; as being that which is seen, and that which actually perishes (2 Cor. iv. 16), and this is "day by day". This tells us that as long as we are in the flesh, we must suffer this "burden": and that no ordinance connected with that which perishes, can be of any avail in that domain where all is, and must be spiritual; *i.e.*, of the Spirit.

5. "THE HEART", *i.e.*, the natural heart, which is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. xvii. 9), so deceitful that it constantly deceives and betrays us: so deceitful that none but God can really know it. The Lord Jesus has some "teaching about the heart" of the natural man in Matthew xv. 19. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

The churches may talk about "a change of heart"; but, it is never changed. A "new heart" must be given. They may talk about improving man's heart (or nature): but the old heart cannot be improved; and the new heart needs no improvement. Spiritists and Theosophists may talk about "the divine in man"; and show how this "old thought of the East, the cradle of all philosophy, is permeating the religions of the West". This is too true, as a fact: but it is Satan's lie, against which we oppose God's truth. Even man at

## THE TWO NATURES IN THE CHILD OF GOD

times is compelled to confess it; and to own that all his efforts to improve "the heart" of man end in failure.

Another name given to the old nature in the Word of God is

6. "THE CARNAL MIND." This aspect of the old nature is even more serious than the others. They relate rather to acts, and conditions, and character; but this relates to thoughts; to the mental activities, and reasonings and imaginations of the natural man (Rom. viii. 7). That these are the opposite of God's thoughts was manifested of old. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. vi. 5). And God has declared, even of this mind of the flesh, that "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways" (Isa. lv. 8). "The carnal mind" means, as is shown in the margin of Romans viii. 7, "the mind of the flesh" (*phronema sarkos*), as it is called in the ninth Article of the Church of England,<sup>1</sup> which declares that "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians<sup>2</sup> do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far<sup>3</sup> gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek *phronema sarkos* which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God . . ." The Article thus agrees with the categorical declarations of the Word of God, which declares (Rom. viii. 7, 8) that this "*mind of the flesh*" is "Enmity against God." "Not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And "cannot please God."

The "mind"<sup>4</sup> is the source of the thoughts: and thoughts are the source of actions. "The mind of the flesh", therefore, is that part of the flesh which thinks—and its thoughts are always contrary to God, and have, as the concluding words of the Article (quoted above) declare, "the nature of sin".

7. This brings us to the last of the names given to the old nature in Scripture, "SIN". We must distinguish between "sin", and "sins". "Sin" is the root, "sins" are the fruit. In Romans, from i. 16 to chapter v. 11, it is "sins", considered as the outcome of the old

---

<sup>1</sup> Which every minister of that Church not only signs on his ordination, but has to declare his belief in, every time he enters on a new sphere of service.

<sup>2</sup> So called after *Pelagius* (died about 400 A. D.), the early preacher of this *Pelagian* heresy; as the same are called in our days, *Arminians* from the teachings of the more recent Jacob Harmensen (Latinized *Arminius*) 1560-1609.

<sup>3</sup> The Thirty-nine Articles were originally written in Latin: and the Latin, translated "very far" is *quam longissime*, i.e., as far as possible.

<sup>4</sup> The "mind" here is *phronema*, not *nous*, which is used of the new nature in Romans vii. 23, 25. The English word "mind" is used also of the old nature in Eph. ii. 3, but there is *dianoia*, thoughts.

## THE NAMES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLD NATURE

nature, which are dealt with; and we are shown how they are put away, and how God can be just, and yet be Justifier of the sinner who is saved on faith-principle instead of law-principle. From Romans v. 12 to viii. 39, it is "Sin" that is dealt with: the old nature. For, though the sinner is justified in Christ, he still feels the working of the old nature, and experiences the conflict between that and the new nature. The object of this section is to teach us that though we still see the fruits, we are to regard the old tree as though it had died, and to reckon that we died in Christ's death. No change has taken place. The root still remains. The change is in our standing before God. We now stand on a different plane: "we walk by faith"; and by faith we reckon that, though the flesh is in us, we are "not in the flesh"; and, in spite of the fruits which we see from time to time, we believe God when He tells us that the tree, in His sight, is condemned. A new graft has been put in, which can only produce "fruit unto God"; while all that is produced from the old stock (below the graft) is worthless, and is cut away as such by the great Gardener's hand. We are His "husbandry". He grafts in us the new nature; and we believe Him when He tells us of all the wonders of the work which He hath wrought.

---

Eugene Stillson  
Box 100  
Oregon, IL. 61061

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Piedmont, S. C.  
Permit No. 13

The Honest Truth, Inc.  
Station A, Box 8933  
Greenville, SC 29604  
Address Correction Requested  
Return Postage Guaranteed