

Glorious Gospel Publication



Editor: Jack Davis
796 N. St Paul * Wichita, Kansas 67203
316-943-4190 or 942-5468
www.gloriousgospel.org
Email: ggospel5@juno.com

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Scriptural Elevations



From the
Editor

NATHANAEL'S REVELATIONS HIGHER AND DEEPER

“Nathanael said to Jesus, thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel. Jesus answered unto him. Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou?” Thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see heaven open, and the angels of God *ascending* and *descending* upon the Son of man.” John 1:49-51. If Jesus is the ladder, His people, heavenly and earthly messengers are **ascending and descending in him.**

Oh what *gracious standing* there is for us on the highway or stairway to heaven? We have access by faith into this grace wherein we *stand* and *rejoice* in hope of the glory of God, and what glorious landing. Yet there are marvelous steps on the way that are realized through overcoming trials. Are there several?

In Amos 9:6 we are told of the Lord's stories, or ascensions in the heavens. In Gen. 6:16 we read of the ark having stories or levels. Israel was given wonderful illustrations, of things in Christ, and the tabernacle was to be built with compartments, of the outer court, the holy place, and the holiest of holies. There were compartments expressing drawing the nearer unto the Lord. When Israel traveled up toward Jerusalem to keep their yearly feasts, it is believed they chanted or sang the Songs of degrees (ascents) on the way, and even on the steps up into the temple. Psalms 120-134 contain powerful food for thought, it must have been most moving to many of them.

For us today to see through heaven's door, we must see through Jesus. As he is revealed to our hearts, He is always offering greater things to our faith. Is it not most enjoyable to be able to see Jesus as our door, and door opener? He is our only access to God and the stairway to heaven. The way, truth, and life is for those that will believe. The way out, the way on, the way up, over and the way in.

JACOB'S DREAM MOST REVEALING

Jacob dreamed of a ladder set up on earth, and the top reached unto heaven: and the angels of God ascending and descending on it, and the Lord stood above it, and renewed the promise of the inheritance to Jacob and his people. Oh what wealth of glory is offered to believing hearts. We reach higher and grow deeper by a heart revelation in Jesus. The Lord would deliver us from scriptural and spiritual shallowness. Most of us are lacking in depth of understanding. Our Lord patiently and graciously brings us along through trying experiences that are to be fruitful in deepening understanding of our Beloved. His higher and deeper purposes are grasped as we are receptive and responsive in faith. In some sense, the way up is down. I Pet. 5:5,6.

THE WAY HAS BEEN OPENED

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above); Or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.)” Rom. 10:6,7. We that have believed the gospel message are to understand by faith that we have been crucified and raised again to life with Him, and seated provisionally in heavenly places. Eph. 2:8. The Lord would make this practical in our life as we walk by faith in His Word. As we are receiving the truth spoken in love,

we are growing up into Him in all things. See Eph. 4:8-15, with I Pet. 3:18-22. He could tell those spirits in prison that the price had been paid and the way had been opened into the holiest of holies above.

Thanks be unto God which giveth unto us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. We, have spiritual rights to victory who have been “Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye (we) are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.” Col. 2:12-15. We have been quickened together with Him who has spoiled principalities and powers. He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” Our adversary is on hand to resist us taking our place in the heavenlies. We are armed for victory with the whole armor of God. Eph. 6:10-18. Our weaponry is not carnal but mighty through God. II Cor. 10:3-7. Greater is He in us than he that is in the world. I John 4:4.

His love for us brought Him all the way down so that our love for Him and faith in Him lifts us up. Thanks be unto God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. The victory has been won, it is ours for the taking.

SHALL HE SEND OR DESCEND?

What an interesting contrast in the different aspects our Lord’s return. Jesus said, as recorded in the gospels, “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.... Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great

glory. And He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Mt. 24:27-31. But we of this Church Age like this prospect better. For the **Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.**” Oh what a *shout* when the Lord himself **descends** and we shall **ascend** being caught up, to meet the Lord in the air. I Thess. 4:14-18. Wonderfully personal when our Lord Himself comes to claim His own!

Not Here

***He is not here, the angel said
Lo! He is risen from the dead.
He rose all glorious. Go and tell.
Proclaim the News wher'er men dwell.***

***He is not here, the angel said.
Lo! He is risen from the dead.
Thou didst not think that He could stay
In death's cold shroud amidst the clay.
It was not possible. Nay, nay!***

***He is not here, the angel said.
Lo! He is risen from the dead.
He tore away the bars of night;
His soul triumphant, took its flight
To realms above of love and light.***

– Selected

THE LAST DAYS

Anita Clark



“The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired Him that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” Matt. 16:1-3

In Luke 21:11, Jesus says, “...great signs shall there be from heaven.” And in verse 25, “And there shall be signs in the sun, and moon, and in the stars.” As Jesus said, often times we are better at predicting the weather than we are at discerning the times we live in. This is the end time and the Lord is giving us signs to warn us and awaken us in these last days of the Church Age. The news is full of signs that warn of the coming of the Lord and His judgment.

EARTH ALMOST PUT ON IMPACT ALERT - “Astronomers have revealed how they came within minutes of alerting the world to a potential asteroid strike last month (January ‘04’)” (BBC News Online science editor). It was thought that an asteroid, about 30m wide would be likely to hit in the Northern Hemisphere. Scientists believed that “...it had a one-in-four chance of hitting the planet within 36 hours.” According to the scientists, it was a “cosmic small fry” but could have been devastating enough to cause considerable damage after exploding in the atmosphere. President Bush was not advised of this, as scientists struggled in deciding if it was

advisable to inform the president, who would perhaps warn the public and potentially cause panic. The asteroid passed the Earth at a distance of about 12 million km - 32 times the Earth-Moon distance, and posed no danger. If it had hit the earth it would have caused local devastation, and potential loss of life.

The earth has been hit by asteroids in the past causing varying degrees of destruction, and there are many more asteroids which could pose a threat in the future. God did not allow that to happen this time. He is guiding this little earth ball through space, protecting its inhabitants until the hour of judgment He has ordained. During the tribulation Revelation 6:13 tells us, "And the stars of heaven fell unto earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken in a mighty wind. The heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." Sun's Massive Explosion Upgraded - Dr. David Whitehouse, BBC Science Editor, said recently, "The massive solar flare that erupted from the sun last November was far bigger than scientists first thought." At the time, scientists using satellite detectors were not able to record it's size correctly because they were blinded by its radiation. University of Otago physicists have now estimated the probable scale of the huge explosion by studying how x-rays hit the Earth's atmosphere. This explosion set a mark in immensity compared to previous sun flares, making it twice as large as any previous flare. The article says the earth is fortunate that it did not receive a damaging direct hit from this immense blast of radiation and matter, which plunged toward earth. The flare's x-ray radiation can affect transmission of radio waves, damage satellite and electrical networks, doing damage to power grids.

Scientists tell us that as a star (which our sun is) is beginning to burn out, it begins to have more and more explosions of this sort. We know that during the tribulation the sun will scorch men with terrible heat. (Rev. 16:8,9.) Men will not seek after

God in repentance, but rather they will “blaspheme the name of God, which has power over the plagues; and they repented not to give Him glory.” The end is at hand. Let us heed the signs God has allowed to awaken us.

ENLARGEMENT TO HELP EU CATCH US ON PRODUCTIVITY - In May ten more nations will join the EU. This is expected to boost EU productivity to levels just below that of the US, according to a new report by an influential US business group, called New York Conference Board. “The event has been hailed as an historic unification of the continent,” according to Roger Wilkison Report, Brussels. The Lisbon Agenda says, “Productivity growth is a key measure of economic success and a boost in productivity from new member states will go a long way to help the EU fulfil its goal to be the most competitive, knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010.” The ten new member states have far higher productivity growth levels, and are expected to help the EU fulfil its goal. This entry of the 10 states, mostly former communist nations, while bringing about unification of the European continent, will add 75 million people to the EU population, which is stated to be a desirable feature. “The incoming members have gone to great lengths to transform themselves from centrally planned (communist) economies to free markets in barely a decade, and to incorporate hundreds of thousands of pages of EU law and rules onto their own statute books.” (Roger Wilkison Report, Brussels).

This success and enlargement of the European Union is a fulfillment of Scripture, and shows that we are living in the end times. Daniel 2 foretells that the Roman Empire would revive in the last days. For centuries the Roman Empire was in ruins, but now, it is rising up joining all Europe together into to one mighty group capable of ruling the world. The prediction is that the EU will continue to expand, and grow in might. This

coincides with Scripture, as the AntiChrist will be revealed, coming out of this revived Roman Empire, during the tribulation, and will become ruler of the whole earth.

NATO is moving close to making a deal with the EU about letting the EU to takeover peace-keeping operations in Bosnia. The US wants to retain control of the operation, which has not gone over well with Brussels. The EU is moving rapidly to deploying its own army, made up of member states soldier's. For example in Bosnia, the UK (United Kingdom) will supply 7,000 man army that will be under EU control. Everything is falling in place for the AntiChrist, who will have the power to rule and subjugate all the people of the earth by the force of his armies. Soon there will not be any need for NATO. It may well be dissolved before long. Times are changing right before our eyes. Those who have ears to hear and eyes to see understand what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

According to the EU Observer, "A poll in Israel has shown that 85 percent of Israelis want to join the EU, but the majority believe the union to be anti-Semitic." Israel will make a covenant with the AntiChrist before the tribulation, that will last 7 years. How close we are to that event! It's amazing! We are living at the crossroads of time, when Christ could come for His overcomers at any time. We must heed the signs and be awake, watching for our Lord's return.

HAMAS LEADER KILLED - PROMPTS THREATS AGAINST ISRAEL - The killing of Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin by Israeli helicopter missile strike, has stirred up as hornet's nest. He was founder of the terrorists organization, Hamas in 1987. His assassination is considered a major escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian struggle. Revenge is being declared against Israel and the U.S.

Yassin was the mastermind of Palestinian terror, and was a mass murderer, who was among Israel's greatest enemies. Hamas has been building a "popular army" in the Gaza Strip. A plan had been uncovered recently, that showed that Hamas was waiting to take over the Gaza Strip the moment Israel gave it up, and were going to declare a terrorist state for Hamas.

Sheik Yassin was actually an enemy of Yasser Arafat. Arafat, however, was very careful not to confront Hamas previously, and added a prayer as a memorial for Yassin. With this man out of the way, it may be easier for the Palestinians to make peace with Israel.

Many nations have condemned this assassination action. Israel is getting into more and more trouble, which will finally push her to rely on the nations greater than ever for her protection. Circumstances will become so hard that Israel will be willing to sign a pact with the AntiChrist for seven years. It may happen any day now.

REPLICA TEMPLE BUILT TO TEACH PRIESTS - Israel Today reports, "For several months Jewish experts have been working on a replica of the Third Temple in the blazing heat of the Dead Sea." Rabbi Kruser is overseeing the construction of the model, which is 1:1 scale (over 269,000 sq. ft. It is being built as a training site to prepare priests (Kohanim) for service in the Third temple in Jerusalem. "Backers of the project say the Jewish people are waiting for the Redemption and must prepare themselves for the coming of the Messiah."

According to the Scripture, II Thess. 2:4, there will be a temple in Jerusalem during the tribulation of seven years. The AntiChrist will sit in that temple, "...he as God sits in the temple of God, showing Himself that he is God." No doubt the

priests being trained today in Mitzpe Yericho will be some of those who will be doing their duties in the tribulation temple. The times we live in are exciting. This is certainly another sign to us that Christ will soon appear to catch His bride away. “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by letter as from us, as that the Day Of the Lord is at hand.” II Thess. 2:1,2. Satan is trying to “shake” the minds of the saints. Let us continue to believe and watch for the soon appearing of Christ. He is calling us to Him in love to come and dedicate our lives to Him as a living sacrifice. Very soon He will rapture the overcomers of this age into His presence. Let us trust and pray that our heart attitudes will be right and ready for that moment when He calls. Praise the Lord!



Are You ready?

The Scriptures give constant testimony to the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ will come again. If you take your Bible and read through from the beginning you will be amazed at the reiterated truth of the Second Advent. If we were to take out of the Bible every reference to the second coming of the Lord we would have a terribly mutilated Book! This is no “pet theory” accepted by a few “cranks;” it is a major doctrine of the Word of God. It has been said by scholars that the second coming of Christ is mentioned no less than 1,200 times in the Old Testament and 300 times in the New Testament. If we read our Bible and believe our Bible we cannot do other than be certain that our Savior is coming again. The fact of His return is clearly and emphatically stated, in prediction, type, parable and promise.

– F. W. D.

ROMANS

W. J. Franklin



Chapter 6:1-10

THE BELIEVER, DEAD TO SIN

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?”—V. 1. Paul continues his question-answer method of teaching, and this with a question that had probably been asked him many times.

Romans six is pointedly the New Testament chapter on sanctification. Our English word “Sanctification” occurs five times in the King James version of the Bible. It is the same word translated “Holiness” in Vs. 19 & 22. We learn in this chapter that sanctification is not suppression, nor eradication but identification. Not only did my sins go to the cross, but I went to the cross and there died in Christ’s death.

In the preceding chapter Paul stated that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Some would conclude that the more sin, the more grace there would be. In this first verse, he brings up the question of continuing in sin. Shall we abuse our Christian liberty and use it selfishly? Many people are afraid to be completely free from law. They feel that they must have some rules, laws and regulations to guide them. Some may have abused their privileges in Christ—Gal. 5:13; I Pet. 2:16; Jude 4. Still, this did not change the teaching that salvation is entirely by grace in its initial phase and in its development and maturity. It is strange to what conclusions people can come. Yet not strange. Flesh would always seek reason or excuse to wallow in the sin it loves.

“God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we yet live in it?”—V. 2 Greek. Paul’s answer to it is, “May it not be.” His

argument against it is that we died to sin. In the references to our death with Christ the tense is in the aorist or past tense. It is a once-for-all tense. It is not the present as in some versions. We died with Christ and that ended our relation with sin, in the reckoning of God. Christ was made sin for us—II Cor. 5:21. He was made a curse for us—Gal. 3:23. He took our whole being and all our sin into death with Him. Most Christians look within and examine their feeling, instead of looking into the Word of God and believing what it says. They cannot believe that in God’s thought, they were crucified when Christ was crucified because they believe their feelings and experiences instead of what God says.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?”—V. 2. The word “Know” occurs twice in our chapter—Vs. 3 & 16. Also, the form “Knowing” occurs twice—Vs. 6 & 9. Three things are fully necessary for victory. The Christian must know. He must reckon—V. 11. He must yield—Vs. 13 & 19.

“Baptized into Jesus Christ,” The Greek work translated “Into” would have been better translated “Unto.” See the same word used in I Cor. 10:2, there translated “Baptized unto Moses.” It is evident that the children of Israel were baptized unto, and not into Moses. No one would say that they entered into Moses by being baptized in the cloud and the sea. The same word is translated “At” in Matt. 12:41. The people repented “At” the preaching of Jonah. Baptism speaks of death, not of life, neither as a means of life. It is an answer (or demand) of a good conscience toward God according to Peter. The good conscience had already been obtained, and was not being sought after. Baptism is for saved people. It is an owning of our death with Christ.

“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”—V. 4. Paul teaches that our death with Christ, our death to

sin, took place at the cross. This is shown out in water baptism. The believer submits himself to the baptizer who buries him in the water. He is also raised from the water by the same hand, to walk in newness of life. He is clearly a new creation—II Cor. 5:17.

In this verse Paul is not exhorting us, but in showing the nature of things. We did not die to sin in order to live in it. This is a continuation of the answer to the question, “Shall we continue in sin?”

Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. It was required, and was to the glory of the Father that He should raise Him from the dead. God could not allow that His Son be held in death. All His being required Jesus’ resurrection. It was due to Christ on the part of God. The plan of salvation could not be completed without it. If God’s glory in grace, mercy and peace was to be fully known and manifested, the resurrection was a necessity.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection”—V. 5. The words “Planted together” mean grown together, closely entwined, or united. This is the only place this Greek word is used in the New Testament. Since Christ’s death and resurrection are inseparably united, if we share one, we must share the other.

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin”—V. 6. “Our old man was crucified? Says the Greek. This is the language of faith. We were not at the cross personally, but in God’s counting, the whole Adamic creation, the man of old, the man who became completely corrupt through the fall in the garden, was nailed to the cross. We sing so freely, “They were nailed to the cross,” referring to our sins, but whoever sings, “I was nailed to the cross?” Yet this is as vital as the other, if there is to be victory in our lives. The old man is the same in all of us, though he may manifest

himself differently. He cannot be made acceptable to God. One may make him religious, give him the ten commandments, refine and educate him, but he is still just Adam with no ability to be accepted of God.

“That the body of sin might be destroyed.” We read later of the body of the sins of the flesh, body of this death, mortify the deeds of the body. The body is dead because of sin. The “Body of sin” refers to the body with sin in it, or sin incorporated in the body. The word “Destroyed” means, done away, to make empty and unmeaning, to render unproductive. This is made good in our lives as we learn to truth, and let the Holy Spirit possess us. For we do “Know that our old man was crucified.”

“That henceforth we should not serve sin.” There is no other way known to Scripture than that herein is set forth, to be free from sin in its tyrannical demands. Sin is a force in our being that makes demands through desires over which no man can gain the ascendancy in his own power. Only the Holy Spirit through the truth can cause man to be able to rise over it that it should not reign as a lord, king and master over him. The Holy Spirit teaches us to know the truth, reckon with God, and yield our members to God. May we recognize and appropriate the fact that God has designed a plan whereby we can have complete victory in our daily lives.

“For he that is dead is freed from sin”—V. 7. Or He that hath died has been justified from sin. We died in God’s plan. We were fit for death only. A man having had the death sentence passed on him and also executed, is freed, justified, acquitted or cleared from the sin. No charge can be filed against a dead man. We died in our Substitute, hence are gloriously free from our former master, sin. Every claim that held us in bondage to sin has been dissolved. We are released from sin that reigned as a king over us.

“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him”—V. 8, Greek. We did die. This is not

experience, but in the language of faith. It is not an experience that we should seek after, but something that is true for every child of God. It took place at the cross. God states it. All we should do is believe it and act upon it. Let us not question the fact or reality of it. Although we are at liberty to seek for a full understanding as well as the full benefits that flow from it.

“Live together” is one word in the Greek. It means, to live with, to continue in life with anyone, to co-exist in life with another. This we do in and with Christ. Since we died, we must have life from another, even from Him who was raised from the dead.

“For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God”—V.10. Christ’s death unto sin, the sin that He took of us, was a once-for-all operation. He lives unto God. He is delivered forever from our sin which He took in His body on the tree. Also, from the death that temporarily held Him as a result of that sin.



The Cross of Calvary

*The Cross of Calvary
Was verily the key
By which our Brother Christ
Unlocked the door
Of immortality
To you and me;
And, passing through Himself before,
He set it wide
Forevermore,
That we, by His grace justified
And by His great love fortified,
Might enter into all fearlessly,
And dwell forever by His side.*

– J. O.

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

By Arthur Eggers

2 Corinthians 5

Chapter five pertains to the “Sin Offering” and corresponds with Mark which shows Christ as a servant of God even unto death. He was the one willing to die, giving Himself as a sin offering. Six times we read that Jesus gave Himself. Death is the results of sin (Romans 6:23). Adam plunged man into sin and eternal death but God’s gift of His Son brought us into eternal life. Christ atoned for sinful man and through death delivered him from eternal death; that is separation from God. Christ rose from the dead in righteousness and God imputed it to believers. In doing so He redeemed man from the power of sin that controlled the spirit, soul, and body, this is the finished work in the complete man.

Romans 5:21, “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” In the past sin did reign but now grace reigns in righteousness which is the bases of our new life in Christ. What does this mean to us as priests of Christ?

2 Cor. 5:1-4, we read of the results of sin that has been paid. “We have” a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Our desire to experience the fullness of Christ’s work is so great we groan to leave this sinful fleshly body. In verse 5 - God did it, verse 6 – we know it, verse 7 – we take it by faith, verse 8 – we desire it, verse 9 – we run after it, verse 10 – we obtain it, verses 11-13 – we tell it and trust it will be received though it is not understood by the natural mind. Verses 17-21 are the results of the sin offering preached by the priests today. Oh, the message we have concerning the new

birth (verse 17), the truth of reconciliation and imputed righteousness (verse 18).

Verses 20-21, “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

The word for “ambassadors” comes from PRESBEUO usually an older one well experienced and knowing how to represent Christ’s people on earth. Everyone cannot have this place; they must know the Word and be faithful to it. It is also true with priests. They exhort others in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God. The message we have to preach is in verse 21. To represent Him we must be like Him. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Therefore, we tell the world (setting ourselves as an example) of our home land.

Romans 12:1-2, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” God’s representatives have a great responsibility to set the example of one whose sins have been forgiven. Hebrews 13:16, “But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

One day diplomatic relations will be severed from the earth. Christ will take His servants home and there we will be judged for our faithfulness.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10, “Wherefore we labour, (endeavor) that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him (as servants). For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” The good is walking in the character of Christ the High Priest that is in the flesh. (Romans 12:2).

Jeremiah 29



Part 21 (vs 17)

Debra Isenbletter

Vs 17: Judgment begins in this verse, continues in vs 18 and is justified in vs 19. Vs 17 shows the *Lord's tools for judgment* and *How He views His people*.

His Tools for Judgment: “*thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine and the pestilence...*” Notice who it is who pronounces this judgment, it is the “Lord of hosts,” He is the Lord of “armies” and this includes the armies of Babylon. The tools the Lord uses are three-fold, *sword, famine, pestilence*. He is telling His people that are already in Babylon that they are safe from these judgments, for these judgments are meant for those remaining in Jerusalem. He would have them see that in submitting to one trial (captivity) they are preserved from an even greater trial (death). In these three judgments are seen the penalty promised for disobedience, they were the judgments that came from disobedience to the law. (Deut 28:21-24; Lev 26:25-26). There is both a present fulfillment in Jeremiah’s day and there will be a future fulfillment when the whole earth will be affected.

All three of these judgments (sword, famine, pestilence) cause death, either a swift death or a slow, lingering death. The sword (war) leads to famine, which leads to disease (pestilence). These are three links in a chain; one follows the other. The sword is the instrument used to bring about destruction and comes from a word meaning “to desolate or destroy.” The first thing seen is the instrument that kills and next is seen what follows in the wake of that destruction. When Nebuchadnezzar came down to Jerusalem the final time he “*slew their young men*” (2 Chron 3 6:17) and he “*slew the sons of Zedekiah*” (Jer 39:1-6), he did this

with the “sword.” Those that first died by the “sword” are the men that went into battle.

Following the sword is famine and this began with the siege of Jerusalem which lasted almost two years. During that time there was “no bread” (2 Ki 25:1-3) and “no water” (Jer 14:1-6). All suffered from this judgment, from the very young to the very old. Here the innocent began to suffer because of the rebellion of the leaders. Jeremiah tells us in Lamentations that the “*children and the sucklings swoon in the streets*” (Lam 2:11-12) and the “*tongue of the suckling child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst*” (Lam 4:4). Eventually there was a terrible result from this judgment that shows to what depths the people sank to during this time (Deut 28:53; Lam 2:20; 4:10).

Following the famine and probably occurring almost at the same time is pestilence. Pestilence is that which destroys, it is a plague or a disease. It was a disease that affected both man and beast and plants. When pestilence affected their crops it added to the famine that already existed because of the siege. When pestilence affected man it became “consumption” and “fever” and “inflammation” which is spoken of in Deut 28:22. When those young men who fought in battle died by the sword and were left unburied, pestilence began. The Lord would have those who remain in Babylon see just how terrible the conditions will be back in Jerusalem. If they can see this then there will be a willingness on their part to stay where they are.

There is a future fulfillment of all these judgments and when this occurs it is not just Jerusalem that is affected, it is the world. In the last days it is “wars” and “famines” and “pestilences,” not “war,” “famine” and “pestilence,” the judgments are multiplied and world wide. (Mt 24:5-8).

How the Lord views His People: “*and will make them like vile figs that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.*” The Lord has already shown Jeremiah these figs in a vision in chapter 24.

There He showed Jeremiah the true spiritual condition of the people. In that chapter two groups of figs are seen, “*very good figs*” and “*very naughty (evil) figs.*” The “*very good figs*” have been taken to Babylon in order that they might be preserved, the “*very naughty figs*” are those left in Jerusalem. The Lord shows to those in captivity the spiritual condition of those that remain in Jerusalem, and these are those that the captives want to return to. The Lord reveals their true spiritual condition and shows what will be the outcome. How much better if they see themselves as being preserved from greater judgment because the Lord has found some fruit in their lives! The word “*make*” means “*to bring forth*” in other words, the Lord will use judgment to “*bring forth*” or show up their true character and spiritual condition. He doesn’t make them into something they are not, *He makes them see what is already there*, what they have already become.

For those in captivity the Lord will “*bring forth*” their true character and at the end of 70 years there will be a Remnant ready to return, bearing more fruit because they have been pruned by those years of suffering. The Lord uses these three tools (*sword, famine, pestilence*) to destroy this bad fruit that cannot be salvaged or used. Fruit is not enough, it must be good fruit, it must be His fruit; all other fruit is “*vile.*” The trials they experience will either bring forth repentance, which produces “*good fruit*” or rebellion, which produces “*bad fruit.*” The Lord looks ahead to the outcome of these trials and sees that as far as those that are left that have not gone into captivity, they will respond to those “*tools of judgment*” with “*bad fruit.*”

Those that were in Jerusalem had produced fruit but it was “*evil*” fruit. This is fruit that is so bad it cannot be kept, it is so bad that it cannot be salvaged. Their lives were so “*evil*” and so “*vile*” that there was nothing the Lord could do but judge them. It was their attitude toward the Lord and Jeremiah, their rejection of both that produced this bad fruit. Allowing chastisement brings forth fruit, even though *something* is destroyed in the process, but rejecting chastisement brings

judgment and there *everything* is destroyed. The Lord wanted them to look to Him, even in judgment and to turn to Him; He wanted to see the fruits of repentance and faith. (Mt 3:8). The Lord could find nothing in their lives to satisfy Him. It will be those in captivity that will finally be able to produce the fruit that He desires. Eventually they will say they will “bear the indignation of the Lord” and in the process find the Lord is a light unto them. (Mic 7:7-9) This is the fruit he is looking for.

The “figs” picture God’s people and their fruitfulness or lack of fruitfulness. When Jesus came and looked for fruit, He saw none (Mt 21:9). What Jesus found was a profession of life but no fruit. Jesus in a parable described their condition saying, “A certain man (God had a fig tree (Judah...he came and sought fruit thereon and found none...” (Lk 13:6-9). There can be no real fruit until they realize their fruitfulness must come from Him and does not rest upon their own efforts. The Lord says, “From me is thy fruit found” (Hos 14:8).

It is from the Lord Jesus that we derive our life and it is from His life that fruit is produced. He is the True Vine and we are the branches and it is our connection to Him that produces fruit that satisfies the heart of the Father, it is our dependence upon Him, our abiding in Him that brings forth that which He can take pleasure in. The Lord is waiting for His people in captivity to learn that they must be dependent upon Him to bring forth any fruit at all.



*Wait then upon the Lord: yea, wait
Till earthly doubts grow dim;
Yea, mount above the clouds of care
And fellowship with Him.
There He will train thee for the task
Where common duties call,
And in the strength renewed by Him
Thou shalt not faint or fall.*

Light Shining Out Of Darkness

Bob Briner

Proverbs 19:21 (Good News translation): *“People may plan all kinds of things, but **the Lord’s will is going to be done.** Jer. 29:11, “I know the plans (intentions) I have for you.”*

In John 21:20-23 Peter asks, “What is your plan for this man?” Jesus might answer “Is that any of your business?” “Your business is to follow me.” “That is my plan for you.” Jesus says often, *“Follow me.”* “Give heed to my plan.” God says, “Hear ye Him.” We should not fall into the trap as Peter did and say, “What about so and so?”

See how the Psalmist did this in Psa. 73. We might call this Psalm, “Why do good things happen to bad people?” Vs. 3, *“I was envious when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”* Vs. 5, *“They are not in trouble as other men.”* Vs. 12, These are the ungodly. They increase in riches. Vs. 13, *“I have cleansed my heart in vain.”*

We see victory in Vs’s 16 & 17, *“When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.”*

We learn again from Peter not to get our eyes on others than the Lord who does our planning. Isn’t it strange that God doesn’t choose those who want to be a part of His plans, but He sometimes chooses the ones who don’t.

How about Moses. He never sent God a resume. In Ex. 3:11 he says, “Who am I?” Vs. 13, “What shall I say to them?” In Ex. 4:10, “I am not eloquent. I am slow of speech.”

How about Naaman in 2 Kings 5:11-12. The leper didn't like the plans God had for him. He wanted to be cured but his way.

What about Phillip. What a success he was having at Samaria (Acts 8:5). The people listened when he spoke, he did miracles among them and there **was great joy in that city**. Then God informs Phillip that His plan is for him to go south. I'm sure he would have rather stayed there. Surely this was the right plan. But then in vs. 27 we read that *"he arose and went."* We read of his encounter with the Ethiopian and know that this was God's plan.

Those the Lord pick, responds. Matthew 4:18, He meets Peter and Andrew. He says, *"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."* Vs. 20, *"They left their nets and followed Him."* No questions asked. Amazing!

If a man in that day approached the Lord Jesus and asked him questions about the salvation plan of humanity, he might ask: How do you propose to redeem mankind. Jesus might say, "I will suffer physical death on a cross and my blood will be poured out there." And the man might ask, "What if that plan doesn't work?" Jesus might answer, "I have no other plan."

The man then might ask Jesus, "How do you plan to make all this known to mankind?" Jesus could answer, "I will pick 12 men and they will accomplish my plan." "What if that doesn't work." "I have no other plan." In John 20, Jesus commissions His disciples. Vs. 21, *"As my Father has sent me, so send I you."* His disciples are all gone, of course, but He has more going out today. 2 Tim. 2:1-2, *"The things you've heard me say, commit to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also."* And so, the plan goes on. (no other plan). He continues to equip those today who carry out His plan.

Matthew 10:16-20, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.” “Take no thought how or what ye shall speak.” “It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father.”

Eph. 4:13, “And He gave some Apostles, some prophet, and some evangelists and some pastors and teacher.” It’s His plan!
1 Thess. 5:24, “Faithful is He that calleth you who will also do it.”

We attended a wedding recently. The young couple have planned their lives around the Lord Jesus. They truly want His leading in their lives. They plan on being teachers, but they know also that He may have other plans for them. They might like to live in a model city somewhere in a nice neighborhood. It may be His plan to send them to some poverty stricken place around the globe far from their family and friends.

We know by God’s Word that we shouldn’t plan too far ahead. He may have something else as James tells us in James 4:13-15. “For ye know not what shall be on the morrow.” “For ye ought to say, if the Lord will.”

The parable of the rich man. Luke 12:16-21, “I will pull down my barns and build greater.” “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

In Acts 2:22 Peter tells of the Lord’s work in redemption and the proof that He is truly Lord. Vs. 23, “Him, being delivered by the **determinate council** and foreknowledge of God.” (ASV) “In accordance with God’s definite plan.” (NEB) “By the deliberate will and plan of God.”

Romans 8:28, (Beck) “And are called according to His plan.”
Eph. 3:11, “He has done in His kindness, what He planned to do.”

LIGHT SHINING OUT OF DARKNESS

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sov'reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
And big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding ev'ry hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

—William Cowper
(1731-1800)