

The Advocate of Truth

When the Waters Move

"It is Finished"

Many Antichrists

God's Looking

Melchizedek



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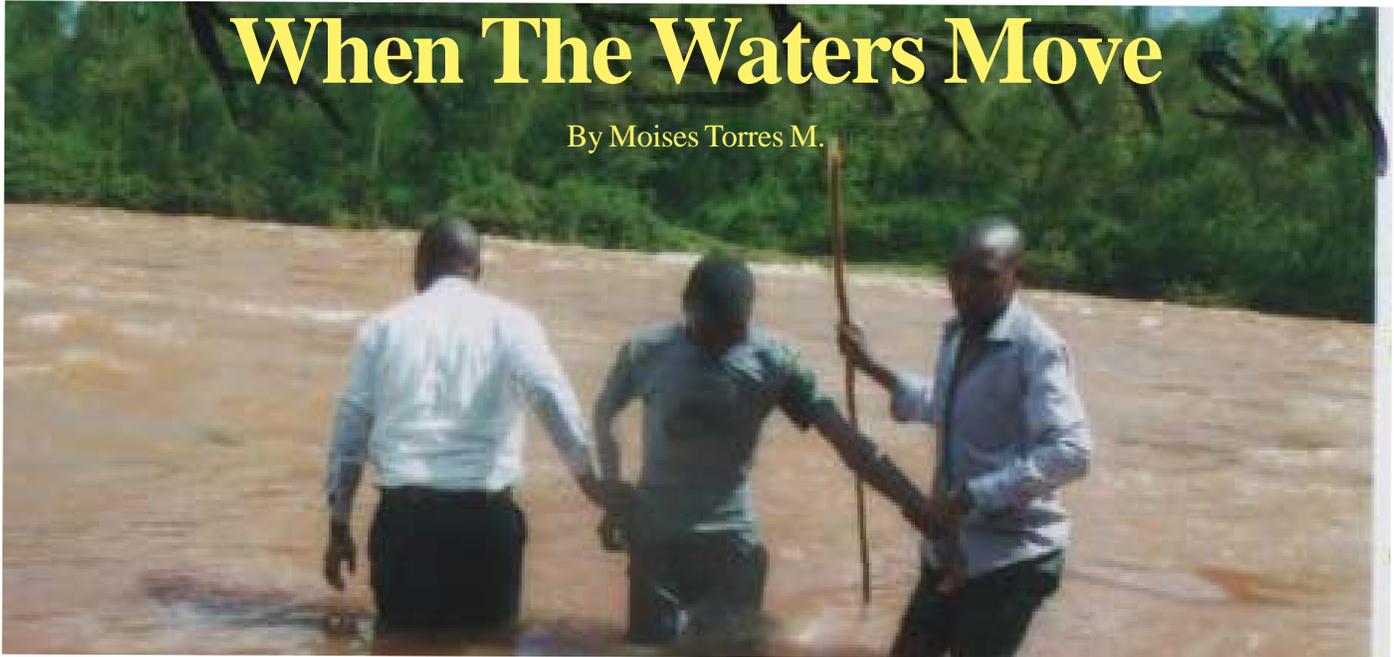
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When The Waters Move

By Moises Torres M.



History records that in Jerusalem by the sheep market was a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, *Bethesda*. It had five porches, and on these lay a great multitude of impotent folk who were blind, halt and withered. They were waiting for the troubling of the water. An angel went down at certain times into the pool and troubled the water. The first person to get into the pool after the troubling of the water was made whole of whatever disease he had.

“And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath” (John 5:5-9). (It is a good deed to heal on the Sabbath).

The desire of that man, and everyone else around that pool, was to step down after the troubling of the water by the angel to be made whole. Jesus noticed the necessity of that and made him whole. This type of healing manifests the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophet Isaiah said, “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall

the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” (Isaiah 35:5-6).

When in prison, John the Baptist requested more information about Jesus. The answer of the Lord was, “...Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matthew 11:4-5). In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecy. He was sent by God to fulfill all these signs and miracles.

The lame man at the pool of *Bethesda* had his infirmity for thirty-eight years. This was longer than the age of Jesus. He was probably helpless because of his own fault, or because of his parents, or just to display in him the mercy of God and the prophecies about Jesus, the Son of God.

However, this story about the lame man of *Bethesda* gives us a reflection on how God in a way extends His mercy to men at every moment. The thing is to be aware of His mercy, and wait for the moment of the “troubling of the waters” of the blessings from God. In those days, the Lord allowed an angel to trouble the waters of the pool of *Bethesda*, so the ill people only had to wait for the opportunity and seize it.

In our day, there are many people who are sin sick.

Many are tormented in their spirit, heart and mind. There are moments when the waters of the gospel are troubled, scattered and extended to the people. We must seize them and be submerged into them. There are special moments in the Church of God when baptisms may be performed. These are special moments in which we may be submerged into the waters of baptism and be forgiven. This will make our spirit whole through a personal repentance, and we are reconciled with God. The thought

is to be vigilant and seize the moment. There are still moments today when the angel of the Lord troubles the waters and the waves which announce the good news of salvation. Again, let us seize those moments! The Lord knows the faith and the persistence of those who wish to be made whole.

Bethesda means “House of Mercy.” Therefore, come and be submerged in this pool of mercy while there is an opportunity to be saved and made whole.



“It Is Finished”

What do these words of Jesus entail?

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19:30).

“It is finished” is one of the seven sayings of Jesus while upon the cross. When we think about it, “It is finished” is more significant and meaningful than the other six. He had completed His ministry, and His ministry was a crying voice in a hostile world.

His work included His preaching, His practice, and His power. He only preached the words that came from His Father. In practice, He showed many compassion, helpfulness, and humility. He had power to perform miracles of healings, casting out devils, raising the dead, and relieving the oppressed. “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38). However, He reached His highest peak when He cried out, “It is finished.” Children of God can never forget

these words! Let us consider some thoughts about the words, “It is finished.”

It was a cry of completion. Accusations and persecutions that were made against Him would be no more. The sinners stripped Him, and they shamed Him. Finally they crucified Him between two thieves. Now it was over! He had completed the task of manifesting His Father in the world. Jesus told Philip, “...Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:9) II Corinthians 4:4 tells us that Christ is the image of God.

He had fulfilled all the prophecies about Himself. “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be” (Genesis 49:10). “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon

him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

He lived a sinless life. He was the example to His followers and all men. “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (I Peter 2:22). “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (verse 21).

Jesus fully met the demand of God at this time. “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4). “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word” (John 17:6). “Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God” (Hebrews 10:7). “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

It was a cry of conquest. It may have seemed to be a cry of total defeat and utter failure, but it really was a cry of conquest and victory. Jesus had overcome all oppositions. He had been victorious over the world, the flesh and the devil. The devil tried to give Him the kingdoms of the world and detour Him from His mission. But He would not accept the devil’s invitation because He was on the way to the cross to suffer, bleed and die for sinners. “Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (I Corinthians 2:8). “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 2:13-15).

It was a cry of consecration. Jesus is saying, “I have faithfully followed My Father’s directions. Always I have remained true to My task even though He offered Me on the altar of sacrifice.”

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death

of the cross” (Philippians 2:7-8). “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9). “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8).

“It is finished” was also a cry of challenge. Even though His voice was being silenced on earth, He challenged His followers on earth to remember His commandment and His promise. “...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world...” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus gave His followers a warning in John 16:33, “...In the world ye shall have tribulation...” Then in the same verse He adds, “...but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Jesus’ challenge to His followers requires suffering. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us” (II Timothy 2:12).

Jesus’ challenge to His followers requires suffering if necessary for truth and right (“partakers of Christ’s suffering”). “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (I Peter 4:16).

Jesus challenges His followers to lay down their lives for Him. “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

Jesus challenges His followers to do His will at all times. “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17). “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (I John 2:17).

Jesus challenges His followers to be faithful unto the end. He said, “...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). Jesus said, “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

--Bond Tennant



Guard Against Many Antichrists

By David DeLong

In the early Church of God, perverse individuals and groups infiltrated the churches of the true believers just as the Apostle Paul had predicted. He said: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). Some of the many groups to infiltrate the early church were the Gnostics who believed that they had a more advanced form of christianity. This of course was not true, but they nevertheless drew away some of the believers from the Church of God who were deceived into thinking that the Gnostic groups were more enlightened than those who followed only the Scriptures. Sound familiar? It should, because we have a similar situation today. And the Bible even predicted that such would be the case.

But before we proceed with this article, we need to study into history to see who the Gnostics were and what they believed. (The following history on gnosticism is adapted from the book, "Primitive Christianity in Crisis", by Alan Knight). Much has come to light in recent years concerning gnosticism with texts such as the Nag Hammadi, a group of heretical writings found in Egypt. Actually, there was no single group within gnosticism. As one would expect, there were numerous beliefs among the Gnostics, and many of these heretics would even debate one another about their particular beliefs. Often, they would mix some of the teachings of the New Testament with pagan Greek (Hellenistic) religion.

The Gnostics did not call themselves by this name. They

believed themselves to be Christians who had a more "advanced spirituality" which they felt must be taught to the "primitive" believers within the churches of God. They felt that "gnosis" (the Greek word for "knowledge") was the most important aspect of one's spirituality. Therefore, they infiltrated the true churches to make disciples of their various teachings and doctrines. In the book of Jude we find reference to true believers having fellowship with deviant believers (possibly Gnostics), and Jude's warning concerning this situation. "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear:..." (Jude 12).

Though there were many different beliefs which the Gnostics held, there were also some core beliefs which a number of them shared. Practically all of them believed in immortal souls which came from heaven to be placed within the mortal bodies of people on earth. Some believed that individual souls came from the stars in the heaven and that each soul was made up of the same substance as heaven, called "ether". The starry heaven was considered to be a perfect place of peace, while the earth was considered in many cases to be chaotic and evil. In between heaven and earth, they believed in seven so-called planets (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon) which were considered as intermediary stages between good and evil. For Gnostics, their main goal was to ensure that their "immortal souls" went back to heaven at death. This, they believed, was attained through an inner spirituality that could disregard rules, regulations, or laws (antinomianism).

Many Gnostics weren't intentionally immoral. They believed that their inner spirituality would automatically make them more spiritual than believers who lived according to Scriptural laws. However, without following God's laws as a guide, many Gnostics invariably fell into sin, including fornication. For example, in the book of Revelation chapter 2, we find the Lord addressing two churches, one in Ephesus and the other in Pergamos, concerning the Nicolaitanes (believed to be a Gnostic group). To the church of Ephesus the Lord says: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate" (Revelation 2:6). To the church in Pergamos He says: "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (verse 15). According to historical records the Nicolaitanes, who were led by a man named Nicolas, had members who were involved in fornication.

Sunday was the day chosen by Gnostics for worship. Many believed that the number 8 was significant and that it was associated with the starry heaven. The reasoning went like this. Since material creation, including the earth and the rest of the so-called seven planets, was considered inferior to the starry heaven, then the days 1 through 7 associated with the Creation week were also considered inferior. This actually was a major reason why the Gnostics rejected the seventh-day Sabbath. Now, the first day of the week was also a day within Creation week. To get around this dilemma the Gnostics, instead, chose Sunday the eighth day (the day after the seventh-day Sabbath) as their day of worship.

Sunday, the first day or Sunday, the eighth day is still Sunday, but it was the numerology that was significant to the Gnostics. Also, since they believed that the so-called seven planets (the seven realms) were inferior to the starry heaven (the eighth realm), then the number 8 took on even more significance. In any event, the Gnostics rejected the seventh-day Sabbath with a vengeance. This had a certain impact upon the early Church of God.

Again, let us turn to the book of Jude to see a situation where heretical Christians (possibly Gnostics) had infiltrated the Church of God, and Jude's dire warning to the church. Verses 3-4 read: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once

delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

These verses are warning the members of the Church of God that they must keep the pure faith as it was delivered to them by Jesus and the apostles. Ungodly men had "crept in unawares" into the church and were teaching perverse things. Notice that antinomian (lawless) practices were being advocated by these ungodly men: "...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,..." They were denying God and Jesus by breaking the Ten Commandments, including the seventh one.

Jude gives examples of God's punishment upon those who break God's commandments. "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (verses 5-7).

Jude continues his denunciation of these ungodly men in verses 8-10. "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves."

These verses particularly sound as if Jude is denouncing gnostic doctrine. He writes of those who "despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." One of the beliefs of gnosticism was that a person should insult angels who were believed to have had a part in material creation and who helped in ordaining the Mosaic law. This last thought, angels ordaining the Mosaic law, is actually Scriptural. Galatians 3:19 reads: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was or-

dained by angels in the hand of a mediator." Therefore, by insulting angels, some Gnostics did speak evil of dignities. However, Jude warns that such should not be the case. He even uses Michael the archangel as a good example of not speaking evil of another person.

Verse 13 appears to be another strike that Jude gives against Gnostic doctrine. He called these ungodly men, "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." The Gnostics viewed the so-called seven planets as being "wandering stars" because their motions seemed more erratic in comparison with the motions of the celestial stars. Jude, however, describes these people as being wandering stars because their lives were erratic, and not according to the Scriptures.

The Apostle John gives a warning concerning those who had been within the Church of God but had left. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (I John 2:18-19). He identifies who these antichrists are in verse 22: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."

In I John 4:1-3, John clarifies the teachings of these antichrists. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

These verses appear to be addressing classic gnosticism which John is warning against. Some Gnostics believed that Jesus Christ was composed of two beings: Jesus, a man who was in the flesh and Christ, a spirit (possibly an angel) who merged with Jesus. Jesus, they believed, was not spiritual and thus His teachings were deficient. Christ, they believed, was the spiritual part of Jesus who brought more advanced teachings after His

resurrection. Incidentally, this belief is somewhat being taught in christendom today by those who say that Jesus' earthly ministry was largely to fulfill the Old Covenant. After Jesus was resurrected, they believe, He brought new teachings through the Apostle Paul and other of the apostles which are for believers under the New Covenant. Thus, they believe that Jesus' teachings on the Sabbath and some other of His doctrines were only for the Jews.

John rejected the teaching that Jesus Christ was composed of two beings when he wrote: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" And, "...every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God". Therefore, Jesus' teachings in the Gospels are just as spiritual and relevant as the teachings He brought through Paul and other of the apostles after His resurrection, including keeping the Sabbath.

The Apostle Paul had to contend with false teachings which had infiltrated the Colossian church. In chapter two, verses 18-19 we find: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

It is strange, but apparently true, that while some Gnostics believed you had to insult angels in order to be free of their bondage, others worshipped angels and even tried to pair up with them in a mystical type of marriage so that their souls could be united with them after death. Paul is telling the Colossian church not to be involved in the worshipping of angels or else they will lose their reward of salvation. By Paul warning the Colossians to let "no man beguile you", he was referring to the fact that some were teaching a mystical relationship with angels.

The Apostle Peter also warned believers to be aware of false teachers. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their dam-

nation slumbereth not" (II Peter 2:1-3).

In the book of II John, the Apostle John continues his warnings against the many deceivers in his day. Verses 7-11 inform us: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 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."

We mentioned at the beginning of this article that the Bible has prophesied that conditions would be similar in our day to what they were in the days of the early Church of God. There are false beliefs in the world of christendom today which are very similar to what they were in the days of John, Paul, Peter, and other leaders of the early church. Just what does the Bible prophesy about these similar conditions and beliefs?

We read in II Thessalonians 2 about a mystery of iniquity that was in Paul's day that will still be present even to the time that the Lord returns. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (verses 7-8). Iniquity refers to the transgressing of God's law.

Some of the teachings of the mystery of iniquity that were present in Paul's day, are around today, and will still be present when the Lord returns are as follows:

1.) Antinomianism--Many deceived people believe, or have believed, that either the Ten Commandments are done away, or that the Sabbath was removed from these Commandments. They also believe, for instance, that the law of the clean and unclean was only for Israel, being a part of the law of Moses.

2.) Eternal security--It is believed by many that one's conduct has no bearing upon one's salvation. The Gnostics, for instance, believed in an inner spirituality that was not based upon outer conduct. Eternal security advocates today believe that no sin or amount of sinning can keep a person from obtaining salvation.

3.) Progressive revelation--The Gnostics believed that their Hellenized religious doctrines were a more advanced form of christianity than that of the apostolic church. Many today believe that the writings of Paul, Peter, and other apostles make up an added, or replacement theology, to the teachings of Jesus.

4.) An immortal soul--Just as the Gnostics believed that one's immortal soul would go back to heaven at death, so today this same belief is perpetuated by many of the church denominations in the world.

5.) Sunday as the day of worship--Gnosticism taught that Sunday should be the day of worship because of its believed significance to the number 8. Today, many claim that Christ's supposed resurrection on Sunday should make Sunday the day of worship instead of the Sabbath.

6.) Tradition is equivalent to the Scriptures--Many have taught that there are a number of beliefs or paths leading to salvation. However, the Bible instructs us: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Jesus Himself stated: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

Just as there were many antichrists in the Apostle John's day, so there are still many antichrists in our day as well. The mystery of iniquity is still alive (but not well), and will remain until the Lord Jesus comes to put a stop to it. A big part of this mystery of iniquity is revealed to us in Revelation 17. Verses 1-2 reads: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

Verses 4-5 informs us further: "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." Let us have ears to hear.



God's Looking

By Daniel Cruz

When we were children we were told by our parents that God was watching from above and He knows our every move. This was done to instill a sense of fear and to avoid us being mischievous while away from the guidance of our parents. As time went on we tested this theory and found ourselves trying God in one way or another. So, what happened when the lightning bolt didn't hit us immediately after we misbehaved? Were the warnings that our parents explained to us false? Did we stop believing in God because He did not give instant punishment? Let us answer these questions.

First and foremost, God is always looking upon mankind. He does not entertain or give advice for just the good. He does not always impute judgment immediately for the evil. The Word is for all, and it is to be given to all, by those willing to do His will. Genesis 1:26 reads: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

We clearly see that God has created all things and is aware of all His creation. Man is not excluded from God's watch. The idea that God turns His head and He will not see mischievous behavior is unrealistic. Isaiah 66:4 says, "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not." Clearly,

God does not ignore evil and holds man accountable for these actions.

Brethren, the enemy has continually strived to tear down the Church and its followers in every aspect. It is evident that the world has become Sodom and the judgment for man's actions will be just. Knowing the truth holds us more accountable to maintain a level of integrity and keeping God's truth. We find in I Corinthians 10:9-12: "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Man has been given biblical examples of the judgment for the wicked, and it was swift and just by God just as the coming of the Lord will be. He will give the wicked what is due.

What will the judgment be based upon? It will be based upon our actions today and the intents that we have. It is how and where we find ourselves with God. How we are perceived by God is more important than that of man. Our Creator has commissioned us to His service and we acknowledge this by our obedience to Him. God is ever watching and seeking out those who will adorn the Kingdom to come. Let us be aware that our Heavenly Father is watching. Revelation 22:12 informs us: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." So says the Word of The Lord.



Melchizedek

By David DeLong

Genesis, chapter 14, is the first place in the Bible where we find the person called Melchizedek. Surrounding this situation we find that Lot, Abram's (Abraham's) relative, had been taken captive by Chedorlaomer and other kings who were confederate with him. Verses 12-17 relates this story for us. "And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale."

Then we find a mysterious person, Melchizedek, going out to meet with Abram. Verses 18-20 reads: "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.

And he gave him tithes of all." Who was this Melchizedek? The passage of Scripture that we just quoted informs us that he was the "king of Salem" (sometimes known in the Scriptures as Jerusalem), and that "he was the priest of the most high God".

This is very interesting because here, in the pagan land of Canaan, we find a king who was God's priest. There are no other such godly king-priests of Salem mentioned in the Bible. In fact, just the opposite appears to be the case when we go to the book of Joshua, chapter 10. Another king, Adonizedek, is mentioned here as being the king of Jerusalem, and he is not a godly king. Verses 1-5 tells us: "Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty. Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel. Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they

and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it."

Melchizedek was a godly king, but Adonizedek, being against the children of Israel, was an ungodly one. The only connection between these two, perhaps, is that they both were kings and they may have shared part of a name, "zedek". One wonders how the king of Salem (Melchizedek), at this time in history, would have known about "the most high God"? It may be possible that he learned of God from Abram, who was living in the land of Canaan at this time. But that doesn't answer the question of how Melchizedek became God's priest, nor his blessing Abram, nor why Abram paid him tithes.

We turn to the book of Hebrews, chapter 7, to glean more information about this godly king-priest, Melchizedek. "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him."

Notice that Melchizedek has the titles of "King of righteousness" and "King of Peace", two similar designations for the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself (see Malachi 4:2; Isaiah 9:6). He does not have a father or mother, nor even a genealogy. The NASB version reads,

"Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually" (Hebrews 7:3). So remarkable is Melchizedek that he is greater than Abram and is paid tithes by him. Verses 7-8 tells us, "And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth." Melchizedek, according to these descriptions, sounds like Jesus.

The Melchizedek priesthood did not start when Melchizedek showed himself to Abram in Genesis 14, but rather it was in effect from the very beginning. When Melchizedek appeared upon the scene he was already God's priest. This priesthood, as we shall see, was promised by God to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. However, because God's people transgressed His covenant, they were placed under an interim priesthood (the Levitical priesthood) from the time of Moses until Jesus came to be after the order of Melchizedek.

Concerning this situation we learn: "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law...For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 7:11-12,17).

The Levitical priesthood, being temporary, could not bring us salvation. It was composed of animal sacrifices and carnal ordinances. Hebrews 10:1 reads: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."

Furthermore, we see a wonderful contrast between the temporary Levitical priesthood and the everlasting Melchizedek priesthood. "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless,

undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore" (Hebrews 7:23-28).

The Father swore that Jesus would be after the order of Melchizedek. "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). This Scripture was reaffirmed in the book of Hebrews. "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5:5-6; see also verse 10; 6:19-20).

Since Jesus is "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec", then this "order" includes laws and commandments that were in existence at the time (and even before) Abram met Melchizedek. We know that these laws and commandments were kept by Abram because we are told in Genesis 26:4-5: "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

Included in the laws and commandments which Abraham kept under the Melchizedek priesthood were:

a.) the Sabbath (see Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 2:27-28).

b.) the law of the clean and unclean (see Genesis 7:1-5; 8:20; Leviticus 11:1-47; Deuteronomy 14:1-29).

c.) tithing (see Genesis 14:18-20; Matthew 23:23; Hebrews 7:1-10).

Today these laws, still being under the Melchizedek priesthood which Christ represents, are just as valid as they were under the Melchizedek priesthood of Abraham's time. God bless you as you study these things.

HOPE FROM ISAIAH

*by
Betty Whetstone*

*Who could not long for the Kingdom,
For the joy and the peace it will bring;
For the peace shall break forth like a river
And the hills and the mountains will sing
Fear is unknown in the Kingdom,
Eyes no longer will weep;
For there is only joy and safety,
And renewing, refreshness in sleep.
Animals are vicious no longer,
They too, will know peace in the land;
The wolf and the lamb feed together,
For they no longer have to fear man.
The children can all play in safety,
For nothing will after them harm;
They all can play there together,
And can rest on the strength of God's arm.
The tiger and the bear are not vicious,
As they ramble about through the day;
The lion is no longer a hunter,
He munches on a big pile of hay.
O, who could not long for that Kingdom,
Where there is no heartache or pain;
No crutches or canes will be noted,
For sin is no longer a stain.
Father, we lean on your mercy,
And seek the peace of your land;
We will know only joy and gladness,
And the rule of Your true, loving hand.*

--Isaiah 65:22,25; 11:6,9.



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit to this segment, please send them to The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426-0328.

In this month's column, we share with you the following article written by Cesar Galvez M. It tells of the many contrasts in the world when summarizing the year 2012. Let us bear in mind that these contrasts also existed before the year 2012, and they continue to exist in 2013 and will after as Signs Of The Times.

Please take special note of the scriptural references he gives in response to these contrasts.

A Good Testimony

By Cesar Galvez M.

In summarizing the year 2012, we find that there were many contrasts in the world which continue today. Several nations that were in poverty twenty years ago are now coming to the economic forefront. Some former prosperous countries now suffer much unemployment and poverty. In the whole world, the obesity in children is increasing almost at the same rate as malnutrition, and it is now possible for a doctor in one country to advise a patient who is in another country by means of modern technology. Meanwhile, the number of deaths in the world for not taking care of a common cold is increasing.

These series of contrasts can also be seen in the religious aspect. There is an increase in the number of evangelical churches all around the world. A person may even think that people are getting closer to God. As a consequence, the teachings of God through His Word should be very present in our society. However, even if it does not sound logical, the precepts of God are more denied as the days pass. An example of this is marriage. During these days, many people do not want to get

married. Instead, they would rather live together in a free union. Many married couples want and do get divorced, and those who don't have any relationship would rather stay that way. Some even preach that it is alright to have a relationship outside of marriage. It seems that the institution of marriage is no longer functional. Is the biblical way of marriage outdated?

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us how to behave in marriage. "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:24-25). As we have read from God's Word, the secret for a good functional marriage depends on not losing sight of the groundwork which God has provided. This is the perfect love between a man and his wife.

Another contrast that is in the world is the monetary aspect. No doubt, it is hard to preach the doctrine of tithing when we see the whole world so selfish. If you ask many people how they picture a religious leader, they would describe him as someone well dressed and wearing jewelry with a chauffeur, followed by security guards. The most notable thing is that he obtains most of it WITHOUT WORKING.

God does not teach in His Word not to work. In II Thessalonians 3:6-10, the Apostle Paul tells us that we must behave according to the DOCTRINE that we have received, a doctrine that teaches us not to be a burden, but that we should help our brothers because that is just, and we deserve to eat the bread of our work. "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us"

(verses 8-9).

The ones who show faith in God in their lives do it because of their love for Him. However, the majority will depart from true faith in God. Our God is firm, and He is firm in His promises to us. “For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” (Romans 3:3) The whole world is full of people who deny the veracity of the Word God. There are people who preach a false god. They teach customs and festivities which are simply not established by God, demonstrating that these are only practices or novelties of men.

We must be firm in avoiding these teachings which will make us fall. We must grow in the knowledge of God and the instructions that He gives us so that we won't be moved by this current. We must show by our testimony that we are the true Church of God. “But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God” (I Corinthians 11:16).

May Day Workers Around World Lash Out At Lack Of Progress

ISTANBUL – Workers around the world united in anger during May Day rallies Wednesday – from fury in Europe over austerity measures that have cut wages, reduced benefits and eliminated many jobs altogether, to rage in Asia over relentlessly low pay, the rising cost of living and hideous working conditions that have left hundreds dead in recent months.

In protests, strikes and other demonstrations held in cities across the planet, activists lashed out at political and business leaders.

--Houston Chronicle

Comment

There has really been no progress made at all. Social and living conditions have only worsened. There are those who believe that if these conditions were improved, the world would be a better place in which to live. Many famous people believe this, and they say that they are trying to make the world a better place. They will not succeed. They deceive themselves!

The political and business leaders do not have the answers. They may be sincere in trying to better the lives of the people, but Bible prophecy is against them. Equality and justice for all in the world will not become a reality until the thousand-year Kingdom of God is established.

Signs

NOTE: I should like to take this opportunity to share with you a small article from a 1981 issue of *The Advocate of Truth*. It tells of one of the signs of the times at that time.

THERE SHALL BE SIGNS —

“The equator zone, which is responsible for the temperature in the ocean, in the past year has shifted some 600 miles to the North, according to Soviet scientists. This was reported by the official Soviet news agency, *Tass*. These occurrences, as scientists are quoted as saying, are caused by the increased sunspot activity. Scientific measurements indicate that the temperature of the equator zones in air and water have deferred by 5 to 6 degrees centigrade. The possible cause for these and other unusual processes could have originated with the unusually strong currents from the Philippine Sea.”

These scientists can only guess, but the Bible gives a very clear answer – we do live in the end time! In view of the soon return of Jesus Christ, we read in Luke 21:25, “*And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.*”

Comment

There are several natural movements, after the above was written, within the earth that scientists have recorded but cannot pinpoint the real cause. Just a few years ago, scientists told us that there were strange movements beneath the earth. Could that have contributed to the increase in number and strength of earthquakes we have experienced?

Reason Lacking In Democratic Countries

A well respected news columnist said, “what most voters are concerned about are jobs, incomes, growth, opportunity and education.” However, the leaders of their countries are unable to deliver these things because of their looking after their own interest and their lack of concern for the welfare of their citizenship. They refuse to set down and reason with one another how the needs of their people may be achieved. In the first part of Isaiah 1:18, the Lord said, “Come now, and let us reason together.” This is what the leaders of all democracies should do. We know this will never happen in the remainder of this age.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

remaining firmly rooted and grounded in the faith? Remember that we confirm our faith by being tried.

QUESTION: Why must my faith be tried?

ANSWER: Peter tells us that faith is tried because like silver and gold, it becomes the more precious (II Peter 1:1). Not only that, but it makes it more fruitful: that it “...might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:7). Tried faith is more precious than gold because gold will eventually perish. Gold comes out of the earth, but faith does not. Faith is one of heaven’s products, and will only pass away at the appearing of Jesus Christ because then it will be merged into sight. Faith is “*much more precious than gold*” because gold may be consumed by canker and rust. Gold may be taken from us, or we may be taken away from it, but at Christ’s appearing it will turn to our full redemption, as the fruit thereof forever. Gold never satisfies the soul. Faith does. Neither does gold strengthen the soul. Faith does. Faith has power to strengthen the soul so that with buoyant magnanimity it bears up most bravely and courageously under all the trials and sorrows of life that may come. Faith surmounts all manner of difficulties and shines light right on. In the light of the forenamed benefits and blessings resultant from faith, we can understand why John exhorts: “*And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming*” (I John 2:28).

Do you think it is possible to abide in Him, or to have confidence in Him, or to meet Him unashamed without

QUESTION: Why was the Epistle to the Hebrews written?

ANSWER: The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to show the children of Israel that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law with its types and prophecies. In other words, the Levitical Priesthood was ended, and the original Priesthood (The Melchizedek) came back into the jurisdiction of which Jesus is a High Priest forever (Hebrews 7:10-11, 17). The writer takes the religious practices of the Levitical Law and shows how they prefigured Christ. In other words, they were prophetic examples of what Christ would be and do when He came. In other words, Jesus came to show us the new and living way to eternal life. The High Priest of the Levitical system went into the Holy of Holies once a year with the blood of an animal to purge the people from their sins. “Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true.” This place “made with hands” refers to the temple at Jerusalem, but Christ went into the presence of God immediately after coming out of the sepulcher and also into the temple of each person’s heart that wishes Him to be their High Priest after the order of Melchizedek forever.

The temple, the priest, the ceremonies were all symbols or pictures of what Christ would be and represent. It was not a collective religion anymore. Christ is the High Priest for every individual. Every child of God is a temple where Christ officiates. The heart of every creature is

either the worship place of Christ, or of the devil. We do not need a sample anymore for we have the real thing-- Jesus Christ.

QUESTION: How do you explain the contradictions between the four Gospels?

ANSWER: There are no contradictions in the Gospels. They are really variations in the accounts. These are what one would expect from accurate independent eye witnesses. These variations prove that the Gospel writers were not in collusion. They were not copying from some common document as many critics charge.

QUESTION: What exactly was the “Rose of Sharon” mentioned in Song of Solomon?

ANSWER: The Rose of Sharon mentioned in Song of Solomon is not the kind of flower called a rose today. The flower mentioned in the Song of Solomon may have been a bulbed plant. Scholars suggest it was a type of crocus, perhaps the meadow saffron.

QUESTION: Is the word “Jehovah” found in the Hebrew original of the Old Testament? If not, what is its origin?

ANSWER: Regardless of whether it is considered a title of God or a proper name, and in spite of the fact that it appears hundreds of times in many English Bibles, Jehovah is not in the Hebrew original of the Old Testament.

When God revealed His name to Moses at the time of the Exodus, it was held as a closely guarded secret. To be able to call upon the Lord by name, thought men of that day, was a sure way to gain a hearing impossible to a person unfamiliar with the divine name.

In the earliest Hebrew, the sacred name was written as a tetragrammaton or grammatical form made by the combination of four letters, all consonants. Though the language barrier between the ancient Hebrew and modern English can never be fully bridged, the divine name was roughly equivalent to JHWH or YHWH. Many modern translators insert vowels and render the name as Yahweh.

Even when it was written in cryptic and abbreviated form, the Hebrew regarded the divine name as possessing sacredness in itself--apart from the Sovereign to whom it pointed. So they customarily wrote beside the consonants of the potent name a set of vowels corresponding to

modern *adonai*--“my lord.” When reading orally from the Law or the Prophets, it was *adonai* that was pronounced, rather than JHWH.

This state of affairs persisted for generations. Then around A.D. 1520 a scholar, thought to have been Petrus Galatinus, conceived the idea of combining the two titles of God. He took the consonants JHWH plus the vowels of the Hebrew word we render as *adonai* and formed a new name JeHoVaH. Completely artificial and never having any counterpart in ancient Hebrew speech or worship, the name Jehovah has been so firmly established by the impact of the King James Version that many moderns use it as a favorite name for God.

QUESTION: A friend told me that the familiar saying “The Lord helps those that help themselves” is found in the Bible. However, I cannot find it in the Bible. What is its origin?

ANSWER: This famous saying comes from Benjamin Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanac*, not from the Bible. Perhaps Franklin may have remembered a similar proverb in Aesop’s fable of Hercules and the Wagoner: “The gods help them that help themselves.”

It seems that the emphases on self-reliance in this saying, rather than God-reliance, may reflect Franklin’s deistic leanings more than it does biblical thought. God must provide the things for which man uses to help himself.

QUESTION: When the Bible says that man was created in God’s image, does it mean that males are created in God’s image in a way that females are not? I have friends who believe this. I tell them that it is not true. Am I correct?

ANSWER: Yes, you are correct! First, let us quote the whole verse of Genesis 1:26, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

The Hebrew word translated man in this verse is a collective noun referring to all humans. The Hebrew word is *adam*. This is also the name of the first man. In the context of Genesis, chapter 1, it is a general term for humans, male and female. Therefore, they are made in God’s image, both male and female.



Kenya

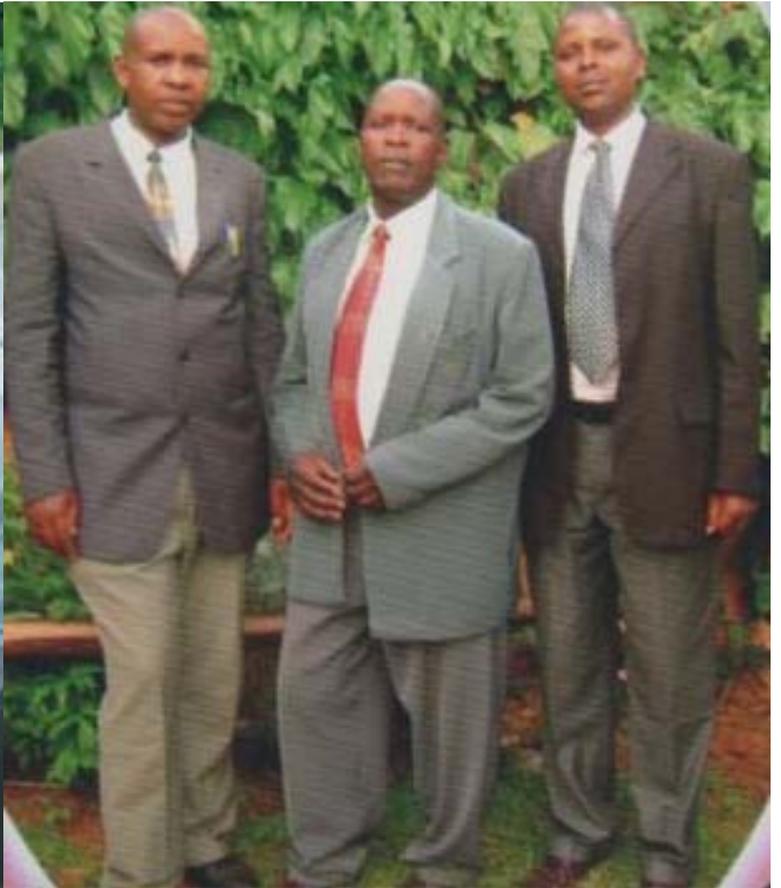
Kericho Camp Meeting

A group of Pastors at the Kericho camp meeting.





A baptism during the camp meeting.



Ministers at Kericho.



Pastors and Elders are assembled together for this photo.

LESSON I**THE NUMBERING OF ISRAEL CAUSED
PESTILENCE ON THE PEOPLE****Scripture Reading: II Samuel 24:11-25.****Golden Text: II Samuel 24:15.****“So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.”**

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned about David numbering the people of Israel. God regarded this act as a sin and will punish the people. Let us now study how God punishes Israel and what David does to help.

1. The Lord sent Gad to David. What message did he bring? II Samuel 24:11-13.
2. What was David's reply to Gad? II Samuel 24:14.
3. What did the Lord send upon the people of Israel? II Samuel 24:15-16.
4. Did David plead with the Lord to spare the people? II Samuel 24:17.
5. What did the Lord then command David to do, and did he now obey the Lord? II Samuel 24:18-19.
6. Who does David meet, and what does David want with him? II Samuel 24:20-21.
7. What did Araunah say to David, and what was David's reply? II Samuel 24:22-24.
8. Was Israel spared from the plague? II Samuel 24:25.

LESSON II**SOLOMON'S CHOICE OF WISDOM****Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 1:1-17.****Golden Text: II Chronicles 1:10.****“Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may****go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?”**

NOTE: We are not going to study the two books of I and II Kings at present, but are beginning with II Chronicles. I Chronicles is in part the same as II Samuel which we have just studied. II Chronicles, which we are beginning, is almost the same as I and II Kings. After the death of David, Solomon is anointed king of Israel. We are going to study the life of Solomon, and about the wonderful temple which he built.

1. Who was Solomon? Was the Lord with him? II Chronicles 1:1.
2. Where did Solomon and all the congregation of Israel go in II Chronicles 1:2-3?
3. Where was the ark of God at this time? II Chronicles 1:4.
4. How many offerings did Solomon make upon the altar before the Lord? II Chronicles 1:5-6.
5. When God appeared unto Solomon, what did He ask of Him? II Chronicles 1:7-10.
6. Did God grant his request? II Chronicles 1:11-12.
7. When Solomon returned to Jerusalem, what did he do? II Chronicles 1:13-17.

LESSON III**SOLOMON PLANS TO BUILD THE TEMPLE****Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 2:1-18.****Golden Text: II Chronicles 2:9.****“Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great.”**

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned that Solomon asked God for wisdom and knowledge, and God granted it to him. David wanted to build a temple but was forbidden

because he was a man of war. Now let us study about the plans Solomon makes with Hiram.

1. Was Solomon anxious to build a house for the name of the Lord? II Chronicles 2:1.
2. How many workmen did Solomon have, and what were their duties? II Chronicles 2:2.
3. What did Solomon ask of Hiram, the king of Tyre? II Chronicles 2:3.
4. Why did Solomon want to build a house to the name of the Lord? II Chronicles 2:4-6.
5. What did he ask Hiram to send him? II Chronicles 2:7-9.
6. What was Solomon to give Hiram's servants for their labor? II Chronicles 2:10.
7. Did Hiram answer Solomon? What did he say? II Chronicles 2:11-14.
8. Solomon numbered all the strangers in the land of Israel. How many were there? What were they to do in helping to build the temple? II Chronicles 2:17-18.

LESSON IV

SOLOMON BEGINS TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 3:1-17.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 3:2.

“And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.”

NOTE: Solomon, the son of David, is now reigning over Israel. He has asked God to give him wisdom and understanding, and God promises to supply him. Hiram, the king of Tyre, promised to help Solomon build the temple by supplying workmen and materials needed. Now let us see how Solomon begins to build the temple.

1. Where was the temple to be located? II Chronicles

3:1.

2. In what year of his reign was the temple begun? II Chronicles 3:2.

3. What were the measurements of the house of God to be? II Chronicles 3:3-4.

NOTE: A cubit is 17.5 inches and a score is 20. Solomon's temple was then 87.5 feet long, 29.2 feet wide and 175 feet high.

4. With what precious stones was the house garnished? II Chronicles 3:5-6.

5. What covering did he place on the posts and walls? II Chronicles 3:7-8.

6. What was the weight of the nails? What else was overlaid with gold? II Chronicles 3:9-10.

7. Describe the wings of the cherubim, (angels). II Chronicles 3:11-14.

8. How large were the pillars on the left and right? II Chronicles 3:17.

BETTY'S OPPORTUNITY

Betty danced in from the rural mailbox, clasping a parcel in her arms.

“Its come, Mother,” she shouted excitedly, “my new rosebud dress! Now I can wear it to the outing.”

Mrs. Brown looked up from the big lunch basket she was packing with all sorts of goodies for the outing at the lakeside. She smiled into Betty's eager, little face.

“Open your parcel, dear,” she said.

Betty lost no time in obeying. Her cheeks were flushed

with pleasure. Her blue eyes sparkled in anticipation. Betty did not get many new dresses.

"Oh-h-h-h!" she breathed with a happy sigh, as she unfolded the dress and shook out the wrinkles.

"Try it on," laughed Mother, who was almost as excited as Betty herself.

Betty's fingers were all thumbs, but she finally managed to wiggle into the garment.

"It's the prettiest dress I ever had," she said proudly. "I must take ever such good care of it."

"Yes, it's very nice, indeed," added Mother, as she turned Betty round and round. "Too pretty to wear to an outing," she teased.

"Mother, please - !"

"You may leave it on, dear," laughed Mother, "and now we're all ready." She placed a clean, white cloth over the hamper which held pies, cakes and sandwiches.

Father came in presently. "Why, how sweet you look, Betty," he remarked in a pleased voice. "Been getting a new dress?"

"Yes, Daddy. Isn't it pretty?"

"Very pretty, indeed, but remember dear," he said, stooping down to kiss the girl's rosy cheek, "remember, although Jesus likes to see you nicely clothed, He would love you just the same if you wore patched dresses. Jesus looks on the heart, and I'm glad to know my Betty's heart is sweet and pure."

"That's worth more than all the pretty dresses in the world," added Mother approvingly.

Father picked up the lunch basket. "This to go?" he asked, sniffing deeply, "surely smells good."

"Yes," answered Mother, "but do be careful. Please don't spill anything."

They were soon driving swiftly along the hot, dusty country road to the cool lake shore picnic grounds.

A crowd already had gathered under the trees. Betty eagerly joined the boys and girls in their merry games. She forgot about her new dress until she saw Joan Newsome wearing one exactly the same.

Betty liked Joan, but somehow Joan did not seem to like her. Was it because she had so many friends, while Joan had so few?

All the joy left Betty's face as she met Joan's disapproving look and ugly frown.

"Smarty," Joan hissed in Betty's ear. "What business have you with a dress exactly like mine? I hate you!" Then she walked away, leaving a heart broken girl behind her.

The outing was spoiled for Betty - and all because of a pretty rosebud dress. "I hate you, I hate you, I hate you," kept ringing in her ears. Her eyes were smarting without tears. Her throat ached.

Then she remembered what Father had said. It made her feel better right away. She was glad she had given her heart to Jesus. Last Sabbath's memory verse had been, "Do good to them that hate you." But how could she do good to Joan?

The opportunity presented itself sooner than expected.

When the time came for the girls' races, Betty and Joan were lined up with the others, eagerly awaiting the word "go". It came like the crack of a whip, and the seven girls ran swiftly forward.

Soon two were well in advance of the others. They were Betty and Joan!

Then Joan was ahead. It did look as if she were going to win when her pretty dress caught on a thorny bush, throwing her to the ground. She burst into tears. Betty, who was just a few yards behind Joan, ran on, touched the goal, then quickly stooped down, placing a gentle hand on Joan's head.

"Don't cry, Joan," she comforted, "the prize really belongs to you, for you were ahead of me when you fell."

"But my p-pretty dress is s-spoiled," sobbed Joan. "Mother will be angry."

"No, she won't, Joan," exclaimed Betty, "cause we'll trade. Isn't it nice they're exactly the same?"

Joan wiped the tears from her eyes, and amid much giggling and laughing, the two rosebud dresses presently changed owners.

"Why are you so good to me, Betty?" asked Joan, wonderingly. "I was ever so mean to you."

"Well, Joan," was the smiling reply, "you said you hated me, and Jesus tells us we must do good to anyone who hates us. It's better than hating back."

"I guess that's why I have so few friends, Betty," said Joan thoughtfully. "I've been doing so much hating. But I'll ask Jesus to take all the hate out of my heart and fill it with love, instead."

"He will, too, Joan," said Betty, happily.

Later, when Betty asked her Mother if she had done the right thing, Mother answered: "Yes. And Jesus would think so to."

--Selected

- holy brethren* (Hebrews 3:10)
- holy priesthood* (I Peter 2:5)
- holy men* (II Peter 1:21)
- holy conversation* (I Peter 1:15)
- holy faith* (Jude 20)
- holy city* (Revelation 21:2)
- holy Jerusalem* (Revelation 21:10)

HOLY THINGS

The word "holy" in the Bible may indicate righteousness, but more often it carries the idea of separation from the common and profane. That which is holy is consecrated to God. Hidden in this puzzle is a list of holy persons and things mentioned in the Bible.

- holy ground* (Exodus 3:5)
- holy sabbath* (Exodus 16:23)
- holy nation* (Exodus 19:6)
- holy convocation* (Leviticus 23:7)
- holy tithe* (Leviticus 27:30)
- holy people* (Deuteronomy 7:6)
- holy God* (Joshua 24:19)
- holy vessels* (I Kings 8:4)
- holy name* (Psalm 103:1)
- holy mount* (Isaiah 27:13)
- holy flock* (Ezekiel 36:38)
- holy covenant* (Daniel 11:28)
- holy angels* (Matthew 25:31)
- holy prophets* (Luke 1:70)
- holy child* (Acts 4:30)
- holy scriptures* (Romans 1:2)
- holy lump* (Romans 11:16)
- holy root* (Romans 11:16)
- holy children* (I Corinthians 7:14)
- holy temple* (Ephesians 2:21)
- holy apostles* (Ephesians 3:5)
- holy calling* (II Timothy 1:9)



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Melchizedek

By David DeLong

**No kindred of Melchizedek
Are given as a guide,
He seems to just appear upon the scene;
In kingly courts he did abide,
And Abram met him from his trek
Of fighting kings, for kin and goods to glean.**

**He was the priest of God, most high,
And also King of Salem,
To Abram, then, he brought forth bread and wine;
Not like heathen priests of Baalim,
Melchizedek could testify,
For in this wicked land his light did shine.**

**Who was this King of righteousness,
Known, too, as King of peace
Of whom we have no trace of his descent?
Perhaps debate of this won't cease,
But, more important, though known less,
His order Christ does truly represent.**

