

No. 2

A black and white photograph showing three Israeli soldiers in full combat gear, including helmets and tactical vests, walking towards the camera. They are positioned in front of a large, arched stone doorway. The soldier on the left is slightly behind the other two. The background shows a stone wall and a glimpse of a landscape through the archway.

DANIEL'S VISIONS

1. BABYLON
562 BC - 542 BC

2. MEDO-PERSIA
542-334 BC

3. GREECE
334-67 BC

4. ROME
67 BC - ?

DIVIDED ROMAN EMPIRE
483 AD - ?

Mannequin Figure:
Gold (Head)
Silver (Chest)
Brass (Belt)
Iron (Legs)
Iron & Clay (Feet)

Beasts:
1. LION
2. BEAR
3. WINGED LEOPARD
4. FOURTH BEAST resembles Mt. Christ & Shiloh of Jer 1:1

Historical Events:
- The rise of Greece under Alexander, & the defeat of Persia, 334 BC
- Fourfold division of Alexander's Empire 301 BC (approx.)
- DAN, 153-23, 1138
- KING OF THE NORTH
- KING OF THE SOUTH
- The little horn of the goat
- The emergence of Rome in the east 67 BC
- REV. 12 The Roman dragon Pagan, then Christian under Constantine 312 AD
- Sea, Rome in development 483 AD - 800 AD
- showing the eclipse of the imperial system & its rejuvenation in the Justinian epoch, (554 AD) giving papal privileges.
- REV. 13:1-18
- REV. 13:11-18
- DAN, 7:8, 24 Three horns uprooted.

Biblical References:
- "Mystery BABYLON THE GREAT MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."
- REV. 17
- Final manifestation of Rome destroyed by Christ. (The kingdom of men - Imperial, militant, Roman Catholic, representing those things shown by Nebuchad-nezzar's Image.)

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Printing & Distribution:
Bobby Henderson
bobdehnd@aol.com

Publishing & Compilation:
Aaron Thomas
aaronthomas2@juno.com

Please mail subscriptions to:

The Sanctuary-Keeper
P.O. Box 13045
Maumelle, AR 72113

Front Picture:
Narkiss, Dayan, and Rabin triumphantly enter Old City Jerusalem through the Lion's Gate.

THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

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Important Bible Teaching

EDITORIAL FLYLEAF

We appreciate the subscriptions, donations and notes of encouragement that we have received for this subscription year. We are providing the following break down of the number of paid subscriptions received up to this point: AR – 24; AZ – 1; CA – 2; CO – 9; FL – 9; ID – 1; IL – 3; IN – 4; KS – 1; KY – 9; LA – 10; MA – 8; ME – 1; MN – 3; MO – 9; MS – 2; NH – 1; NJ – 3; NM – 3; NY – 1; OK – 1; PA – 1; RI – 1; TX – 25; VA – 15; VT – 2; Canada – 7; **Total: 156.**

We are aware that it is becoming more accepted for Unamended ecclesias to sponsor functions, especially in relation to youth gatherings, that offer both Amended and Unamended teachers on their programs. Considering the large number of young people from around the continent that attend such events (from both fellowships) and understanding the fundamental

differences that exist – what is the sound scriptural logic for allowing our impressionable young people to attend such functions?

It is hard to imagine that there are not enough qualified Unamended teachers to instruct our young people, so clearly there is a purpose behind the practice. (Operation Onesimus had/has a clear agenda using similar procedures.) It would behoove parents and ecclesias to be more aware and selective of where they permit their young people to attend for spiritual instruction and social interaction, as well as being familiar with the teachers that have been invited. And, fellowship standards for those who are baptized (and for the example it sets for those who are not baptized) should be closely examined. Just because a function may operate under the "Christadelphian" name or even as "Unamended" is no guarantee of soundness in this Laodicean age.



THE SANCTUARY – KEEPER

*A Magazine for the Exposition and Defense of
The Holy Scriptures*

“Ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar”

Num. 18:5

“Ye are...an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.”

I Peter 2:5

“Thou hast kept My Word and hast not denied My Name”- Rev. 3:8

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THE ROARING LION

1st Peter 5:5-10: *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

Peter was writing to certain Jews sanctified through the New Covenant, scattered throughout the ancient world, and therefore called: “*chosen (elect) sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia* (I Peter 1:1).” After exhorting them in his epistle to steadfastness in light of suffering and temptation, he tells them: “*...your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.*” Strictly speaking, Peter had reference in these verses to the wickedness of sin’s flesh manifested in the hostile power of the opponent

who spoke against them and falsely accused them of evil. Though Jewish by birth, these opponents were not “Jews indeed” but as brother Thomas says in the *Last Days of Judah’s Commonwealth*, “...were profligates who spoke evil of Christ; and having the power hostile to the truth on their side, whether Jew or Gentile, they subjected their fellow-countrymen to a “fiery trial.” These adversaries were ever ready to excite the idolatrous Gentiles to action against those Jewish believers who acknowledged Christ as the Messiah. Peter refers to these evil-doers as “*the diabolos*, (or opponent, the seducer) *a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.*”

We can extend Peter’s cautionary exhortation in great measure to our own time and obviously we can assume that without a doubt these verses are counted in the arsenal of defense of apostate teaching on the existence of a personal devil or Satan. But, knowing the true meaning of the word translated devil, and understanding who and what satan and the adversary is or can be, enlightens us to the real meaning of any passages where these terms are used. But, most importantly of all, we need to be aware of the fact that the “devil” is very much active among us today and in a majority of instances is of the same nature as that referred to by Peter.

This article is not intended to be a study of the Biblical meaning of devil or satan but hopefully an exhortation to stir our purpose regarding our responsibility as watchmen of Yahweh, on guard against the wiles of the adversary. It is a duty we must never shirk because the call, “*Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?*” (Isa. 21:11-12) should constantly be sounding in the ears of faithful stewards of the ecclesia. Our privilege is to respond, “*the morning cometh!*” Brother Thomas Williams comments on recognizing error and fulfilling our sober obligations as watchmen: “It is at once a mental and a moral transition in which the mind must be purified and the heart stirred to loving action. The process requires rejection of false doctrines and cessation of evil practices and a reception of doctrines true and the precepts of holiness in the sight of God and men.”

The performance of this duty is surely one of the most difficult of our obligations towards one another but our responsibility is stressed in words of solemn warning in Ezekiel 3: 17-19. “*I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.*” The success of a dutiful watchmen is nothing less than an expression of that type of love that Christ showed for his ecclesia; a love he expects to live in the hearts of all those who bear his name.

Considering the words satan, diabolos, or adversary, with our knowledge of the truth we can turn to Eph. 4:27, Jude 9, I Tim. 3:11, or II Tim. 3:1-3 and understand the point of the context without being unduly influenced by apostate philosophy. Adversary is *antidikos* or arch enemy and the devil is *diabolos*, slanderer or traducer.

Diabolos, the sinful nature, is an enemy that can take many forms and manifest its evil works in as many ways as can be devised by the evil in the human heart. Satan is a Hebrew word carried over into the New Testament. Satan simply means adversary. Peter's admonition, like so many scriptural exhortations, has application to all believers and all our struggles with the flesh throughout the ages down to our present day. And, we will continue to battle this adversary which is powered by the spirit of diabolos, until the Lord once again walks upon this earth.

The diabolos *is* the adversary of the Truth (Romans 7:14-25). The adversary does not necessarily have to be malicious or stand openly opposed to the Truth. The adversary can actually be manifested in some deceptively innocent worldly pursuit that steals precious time from our devotion to God. The adversary can be a friend of the Truth who turns our affections in the wrong direction. The adversary can work its evil through the actions of a well meaning brother or sister who unwittingly sets a poor example that leads some of our young people astray. The adversary can also, like Judas, be counted among our own number but still be a loyal son of his father, the devil, with only betrayal in his heart. The adversary can also be a member of our family that takes a dangerous doctrinal path enticing other relatives and friends who naturally follow his lead. The adversary is at its most deceptive and is most dangerously seductive when it is numbered among our friends in the Truth. Now, all these describe who or what the adversary is and all these manifestations most definitely challenge our walk in the Truth during this probationary era. The adversary thrives on conceit and weakness and pride.

When the actions of the adversary are successful (which seems to be the case more and more frequently and as it continues to work among us), our walk in the Truth is endangered. Most disturbingly, this must also mean that a watchman has failed, because, by its very nature, the adversary is at enmity to God and therefore spiritually destructive. We have read Ezekiel's warning and it was not given in vain because the adversary's very nature, that of fleshly conceit, "*lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.*" (Gal. 5:17)

Poverty of spirit and Christ-like humility exist contrary to the conceit of the adversary. The adversary "*prophesies out of his own heart and follows his own spirit* (Ezekiel 13:2)," in direct contrast to what the apostle tells us that: "*we must humble ourselves under the hand of the Almighty that we may be exalted in due time.*" The Spirit also tell us in Proverbs 15:33, "*The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is humility.*" The adversary in its vainglory, once successful, becomes even more puffed up and strives all the more to satisfy the vanity of its fleshly mind and effectively spiritually destroys any who join his ranks.

The fleshly mind tends to rule our lives more and more in these last days because of the obvious worldly trends that are commonly and apparently without question accepted among the brotherhood. Christ-like humility has no place in the lives of worldly ambitious people working to improve the human condition and fill the plate

of fleshly pleasure. The world and its influences have softened our Biblically based attitudes and weakened our spiritual integrity. Evidence of this condition is not lacking. So, how should those who claim to follow Christ fit into this modern world? The answer is found in our daily life; in our basing every action on what scripture tells us that Christ would do in any situation. The answer is found in how well we know God and His Son. The answer lies in how well we apply those pure principles of truth we know in resisting the adversary in whatever form he manifests.

The Christadelphian generation just previous to mine (I'm considered a member of the "baby boomer" generation) would seldom if ever be seen attending a movie or entering a gaudy music hall or theater; no matter how "harmless" it seemed. This simple example conceals a depth of conviction that seems to have been lost among the modern generation of believers. This way of life was accepted as a serious life time conviction and so their devotion to Bible study and growing in the Truth matched that conviction. They were not content just browsing or with a quick occasional daily reading, but were active watchmen applying a practical application of the truth in their lives. They were selective in their use of spare time guided by choices based on whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of **good** report. They knew if there was any virtue it was in these things. They also knew that the Truth was immutable - That it does not change to fit a new generation or social attitude. They knew the Truth they held was the one singular Truth of creation.

Many of us personally knew (and still know) some of these brother and sisters who were sincere watchmen and possessed a righteous jealousy of the truth. After reading some current popular publications in print and on the internet and after various discussions with some Christadelphians over the last few months, this writer has to believe that Bible study among an increasing number of Christadelphians is chiefly pursued for its humanistic insights or motivational anecdotes. The adversary is active among us and enhances self-esteem and pleasurable emotional and recreational experiences which are difficult to resist. Apparently there is a certain degree of **perceived** spiritual success in some quarters in this as evidenced in recent writings. However, seeking mastery of the Spirit word (moving from milk to meat) and becoming knowledgeable of the Scriptural principles contended for by our pioneer brethren is actually being discouraged (intentionally and by simple disregard) by new ideas we see becoming popular. In some cases even the mention of our early brethren or reference to their writings is met with disdain. Obviously no or very little knowledge of the pioneer writings is known among these folks who actually try to justify their new ideas by calling them "traditional" and claiming they are not new.

This is a new generation of Christadelphians; "neo-Christadelphians" whom brother Tanner (previous issue of the S.K.) has so accurately described: "(they) demonstrate a greater love for their own imaginations than they have for the revealed truth of God." Their publications openly display this fact and reveal a basic lack of knowledge in many areas of the Truth. There are several shocking and obvious errors

and among them the ideas that Christ sits on his throne now and that the kingdom has already been established in some form. These new ideas (not just their implications) may actually be the most dangerous threat to the Truth since its revival by brother Thomas.

We are compelled to discuss these matters because they are of the utmost significance and concern the eternal destiny of Christ's body. Where are the watchmen? The adversary, here in the beginning of the twenty-first century, apparently roams freely among the ecclesias. This is no small matter. Where are our spiritual obligations as members of Christ's ecclesia and as watchmen of Yahweh? There is absolutely no doubt as to our obligation here because the principle runs throughout scripture as we have seen in part. A lesson and exhortation for the present day ecclesia (the collective body of Christ) can be seen in the Thyatirans of the first century. When we look at the latter day body as a whole we see similarities (*Eureka* vol. 1, p 321. Logos, ed.):

"The works of the Angel (ecclesial leaders) were conspicuous for 'love, and service, and faith and endurance.' Such an eldership must have been in the general in a spiritually healthy and efficient state; and which argued also a wholesome condition of the Spirit's servants, called in the letter "my servants," or, in the nomenclature of the synagogue of the Satan, "the laity". It is "the leaders of the people cause them to err;" but where the leaders are faithful, this cause of error is wanting. The leaders corrupt the people, and when the people are corrupted, the seducers are enthroned and flourish; and the people come at length to delight in the corruption that destroys them."

"The ecclesia among the Thyatirans became an arena upon which the two classes of leaders displayed themselves. The one class were characterized by a more abundant love, service, faith, and endurance in the days of John, than in the days when they were originally constituted the Star in Thyatira; while the other class was characterized by the idolatrous, meretricious, and murderous wife of Ahab. "the woman Jezebel," who slew the prophets of Yahweh. The former were the Antipas in Thyatira whose devotedness sustained the truth against the machinations of all its enemies, heretical or pagan. Their "love" was not like that of the Satan's -- a love of "divine things" as far as agreeable to our animal instincts, and compatible with our worldly prosperity and peace. The love of the Antipas was the fulfilling of the law; the doing whatsoever Jesus had commanded, by which they evinced that they were his real friends. Many of the Satan's synagogue who rejoiced in Jezebel, possessed spiritual gifts, and could speak with tongues, and prophesy, and understand mysteries, and had the knowledge, and the faith to remove mountains, and bestowed their goods to feed the poor... (they were) "long suffering and kind," even to an excess rebuked by the Spirit in the letter before us; for they permitted Jezebel-teachers and seducers to speak, instead of putting them to silence at once. These were envious, boastful, puffed-up, of unseemly behaviour, seeking their own, easily provoked, evil thinkers, who rejoiced in the mystery of iniquity, which was finally

established by their means. These were the characteristics of Jezebel and her children, John's clerical contemporaries, and the official fathers of the professional soul-savers of modern christendom. Their co-apostolic predecessors like themselves were destitute of the kind of "love," without which men cannot be saved. "Love," says Paul, "rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

"The service of the Star-Angel in Thyatira, like its love, had increased. Their last works were more than their first. They contended earnestly for the faith originally delivered to them; like the Antipas in Pergamos, they held it fast, and were therefore in a position to overcome; for the power of victory is our firm and hearty belief of the truth. They were the pillar and support of the truth in Thyatira, where it might have flourished to this day if their successors in office had been "faithful men able to teach others." But this unfortunately was not the case, so that the fountain being poisoned at the head, the waters became bitter, and the people died. The evil had begun to work by A.D. 98, the epoch at which the Spirit addressed them through John. Forty years before that the Mystery of Iniquity was at work; but it had not yet triumphed in Thyatira. It was, however, hard at work there professedly opposed to Paganism, and at the same time doing its best to paganize christianity. The Mystery of Iniquity had its apologists in all the ecclesias. In Ephesus, they falsely styled themselves "apostles;" in Smyrna and Philadelphia "Jews;" and in Laodicea, they said, they were "rich, and increased in goods, and had need of nothing." But the Spirit pronounced them "liars," "vanquishers" and "wasters of the people," the Satan, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," and, as in the letter under consideration, the "Woman Jezebel". (A scriptural type of false teachers and deceivers: the adversary. The apostasy was born of these events. – R.S.)

There are some in the body today who believe that revealed Truth (the principles of the Spirit Word) is being attacked openly and arrogantly by the adversary or false teachers and deceivers. Consider the fact for a moment that we are possessors of a special knowledge that generations of humans have sought in vain for millennia. We are speaking of a truth that is both profound and simple in its actualization. We actually know why the universe exists. We know why mankind exists. We not only know why we have existence but we know the fate and destiny of the universe and all it contains. We, as possessors of that knowledge and as a people who have established a special relationship with the Master of creation also are charged with an unquestionable responsibility and grand purpose of life. The adversary would destroy all that. Our undeniable duty is to resist the adversary. Can we say that we are spiritually equipped to resist the adversary? Have we fully submitted ourselves to God in all humility knowing that if we *resist the devil* he will flee from us? Do we have the spiritual *courage* to resist? The Greek word resist has four usages in the New Testament. It is interesting that the word *resist*, as used in 1st Peter 5:9 cited in the opening of this article, comes from its literal primary use as adopted from the classical

Greek and is a military term used in the middle (or passive) voice. It means literally to “arrange or to arrange in combat formation in battle against; to set oneself against.”

In the fifth verse of 1st Peter 5, it is *antitasso* and is presented in the Greek negative form literally meaning “to leave persistent evildoers to pursue their self-determined course, with eventual retribution.” (Liddel & Scott). In James 4:7 (*resist the devil and he shall flee from you*) resist is the Greek form *anthistemi*, again in the passive voice and the word is literally “withstand.” In general the word carries the literal and figurative sense of withstanding or standing firm against. It’s interesting that it is carried over in the passive voice in these passages but on the whole its intention is plain especially when we consider that our lives are to be lived in Christ-like humility, wise as serpents and harmless as doves charged with the duties of watchmen of Yahweh. We have to hold fast like the faithful Antipas.

Do we as watchman have the courage to resist the adversary and resist those who walk in obvious error? Are we fulfilling our duty as watchmen of Yahweh and stewards of the ecclesia? To assure our place in Yahweh’s plan we must shun the vanity of the adversary and humble ourselves before the Almighty because “Before honor is humility.” God cares not one iota for human ambition and popularity. He despises men of high estate who would flaunt their exalted position in the ecclesia to influence or attract the common servant of Christ to his error. We see in Thyatira a vivid example of the successes of the adversary. But, we must, in these last few days of our probation, contend earnestly for the faith originally delivered to us; like loyal Antipas in the midst of the satan, hold fast to it and therefore be in a position to overcome the advances of the adversary. The power of victory is our firm and hearty belief of the Truth, the pillar and support of the ecclesia, built upon the faith of Abraham and all the faithful through the ages.

Rev. 2:25 “*But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias*”.

Ronnie Sanders

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a forward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: Remove thy foot from evil.”

Proverbs 4:23-27

THE FOUNDATION OF GOD’S TRUTH AS MANIFESTED IN THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

Galatians 3:26-29 - “*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*”

The doctrine of the covenants made to Abraham that are referenced by the apostle Paul in **Galatians 3:26-29** is the foundation and building block of the body of beliefs that the Christadelphian Body holds so dear. The ultimate fulfillment of these covenants is all of our hope and all of our desire. We believe that the fulfillment of these covenants is part of the joy that is set before us, therefore we rejoice as we read and contemplate these wonderful promises that God has left on record.

It is our desire over the next three editions of the Sanctuary Keeper, Lord willing, to review some of the basic components of these divine covenants and refresh our minds regarding the glorious Plan of Salvation that God has bestowed upon all those who are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord; in whom we also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit as stated in **Ephesians 2:19-22**.

The comments for our first article will be centered on the man Abraham and the spiritual significance of some of the events and people in his life. Let us begin our study in this article by turning to the book of Isaiah and asking our readers to read **Isaiah 51:1-8**. In the first two verses of this passage, we are told to ‘Hearken to God, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD, look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him.” This second verse encourages us to examine the life of Abraham. This is our objective during the course of this article.

Abraham is one of several personalities in the Scriptures of God whose birth name was changed to another more significant name. It is very important that we always try to understand these name changes and understand why the changes were

made. In Genesis 17, we see where his name was changed from Abram to Abraham. This was accomplished by adding the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet to his name. The number “five” represents grace, so we can see his name changed from “Lofty or Exalted Father” (Abram) to “The father of a multitude” (Abraham). As we proceed further in our article, we will get a clearer understanding of these changes.

Reading from page 137 of the verse by verse exposition of Genesis, we read this description of Abraham’s life. “His life reveals characteristics that his children should emulate (**John 8:39**). He believed, even when the evidence indicated that what was promised was impossible (**Romans 4:18**). He obeyed; even though he knew not what was before him (**Hebrews 11:8**). He was a man of vision; he looked for that which he could not then see (**Hebrews 11:10**). He was a man of patience; he waited for God to act (**Genesis 17:17**). He was a man of courage; he did not shrink from moving to the aid of Lot though warfare stalked the land (**Genesis 14**). He was a man of prayer; he pleaded the cause of Lot, and was granted his petition (**Genesis 19:29**). He was a man of sacrifice; he not only sacrificed animals unto God, but was prepared to give part of himself, even his “only” beloved son (**Genesis 22**). He lost nothing by his readiness to perform the Divine will, and gained much.” End quote.

The Scriptures are full of praise for this wonderful man of faith. In **Romans 4:11**, he is described as the father of all who believe, thus the father of the Jew and the Gentile alike. In both Testaments, he was known as the friend of God – see **Isaiah 41:8 and James 2:23**. Throughout the scriptures, we should see the significance of this wonderful man of faith.

We are introduced to the man Abram in the 11th chapter of Genesis. His native country was in the land of Ur of the Chaldees. As we tread the footsteps of our spiritual father, we can learn some very special spiritual lessons. **Genesis 11:27-31** provides us a short genealogy of this man’s immediate family.

Abraham was called the friend of God (**Isaiah 41:8, James 2:23**), the called (**Isaiah 51:2, Hebrews 11:2**), the chosen (**Nehemiah 9:7**) and the faithful (**Nehemiah 9:7-8**). These are the same descriptions that should be applied to the man or woman of faith throughout the generations of the Kingdom of Man. Thus we can see that it is important to have a good understanding of both the typical and spiritual significance of the events that transpired in the life of this man of faith.

Again quoting from the Expositor on the book of Geneses – “He lived as a “stranger and pilgrim in the earth”; a stranger because he moved toward an objective. He is first represented as under the dominion of his father, Terah, and it was only after his death that Abram moved steadily towards his ideal and objective. How significant of our walk in the faith! Only when the “old man” is put to death, does the “new man” find its full manifestation in performing the Father’s will. The flesh will take us a certain distance, in grasping knowledge of God, but it must be put off before the full concept of belief in action will be revealed. Abram’s relationship with his father, Terah, and his ultimate entrance into the Land revealed that.” End quote.

Let us examine the four men that left Ur and their spiritual significance.

- ◆ **Terah** – his name means to tarry, delay. Thus he tarried in Haran and died there.
- ◆ **Nahor** – means to snore. He suffered from spiritual sleepiness and refused to leave Ur.
- ◆ **Abram** – his name means Lofty or Exalted Father.
- ◆ **Lot** – his name means veiled. As we study the life of Lot, we can see that, for a time, his spiritual vision was veiled and he acted as if he could not clearly see the vision of God.

These four men represent four different types of individuals who are exposed to the word of God. We may gain some insight into these men when we look at the parable of the sower in **Matthew 13:3-9 and 18-23**.

Nahor - is represented in the parable as he which received the seed by the way side and the wicked one came and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. He did not have any faith or any energy to move on and act on the call of Yahweh. He died in the land of his birth. He died still clinging to the ways of the flesh and the false gods of his heritage.

Terah – the old man – although he left his natural state, he is represented in the parable as one that received the seed into stony places, with joy he received it for a while, but having no root, he lost interest. He tarried and delayed to find out the true meaning of the call from Yahweh.

Lot – is represented in the parable as one who received the seed among the thorns. He heard the word and embraced it and then, at first, let the cares of this world choke out the true vine of the Divine Father. However, we are told in the scriptures that eventually his faith led him on towards the rewards promised in the components of the promises made to his uncle. He was called just Lot in **II Peter 2:7-8**.

Abraham – The parable of the sower represents him as he that hears the word and understands it and brings forth much fruit. What a wonderful description of the Father of the Faithful and the one called the friend of God.

Let us now look at some of the places visited by Abram and see if we can learn other spiritual lessons. As we study these different places where the father of the faithful dwelt, we see a beautiful picture of the entire plan of salvation in which Abraham and his seed was called. The very first thing that comes to mind is the nomadic nature of his life. **Hebrews 11** and **Acts 7** tell us the reason why he was constantly on the move. **Hebrews 11:13** - He was a stranger and sojourner, never receiving the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that he was a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. **Acts 7:5** – God gave Abraham no inheritance in it, not so much as to set his foot on. **Hebrews 11:10** – He was looking for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Through the revelation of Yahweh and through his various experiences

throughout his life, he saw the promises afar off. We are told in **John 8:56** that Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ and was glad. In **I Peter 2:11**, we are commanded to also be strangers and pilgrims in this life that God has blessed us with. We should have no roots in this dry ground of the Kingdom of Men. **I John 2:15** tells us to “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world”. **II Timothy 2:4** states “that no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life.” The guiding principle to all saints is “To be in the world, but not of it”. This was indeed the life of Abraham.

It is interesting to me that in **Hebrews 11:10**, the word that is translated as builder (*technites*) comes from the same root word (*tekton*) that is translated as carpenter in **Matthew 13:55** and **Mark 6:3**, where it was used by the Jews in contempt of the Lord’s earthly occupation. We can understand that through the eye of faith, Abraham saw the one who will not only assist Yahweh in building the great city of New Jerusalem, while still being the foundation stone of that great spiritual habitation of Yahweh, but he also understood the sufferings of He who was the great sacrifice of the ages, the rejection of the singular seed of Abraham by his own countrymen and kinsmen. The words of truth in **II Corinthians 4:18** are certainly applicable to Abraham and his wanderings in the land promised unto him but never received. “*We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*”

In **Genesis 13:14-17**, we are told that Abraham, in vision at that time, saw the entire land of inheritance. He is invited to survey the land in its entirety. As he did, we are sure that he would fully understand the events that would be required to take place before he would receive the promise of the land that God gave unto him. Not only would he see the specific land territory, but he fully understood that he would live in the land with his seed for ever. God taught him the concept of death and resurrection. Abraham’s understanding and faith was so great that he never flinched when Yahweh asked him to offer his only begotten son as a sacrifice as recorded for our learning in **Genesis 22**. He was fully persuaded that if Isaac died that he would be resurrected and would be allowed to be part of the fulfillment of the promises received by Yahweh from his father.

Let us now look at some of the specific places and corresponding events and spiritual significance of the wanderings of the father of the faithful.

Abraham was first called to follow God in the land of his natural birth – the country of Ur. He then dwelt in the land of Haran and then crossed over the Euphrates into the Land of Promise and became known as the Father of the Hebrews (**Genesis 14:13**). All of these names are significant of the calling and subsequent acceptance of God’s calling and election of the saints of all ages. Ur means Light of the Conquerors (per the Genesis Expositor – page 174). Haran means Enlightenment. Euphrates means Sweetness. Hebrew means Crosser Over. Here we see the path that God set forth for all who aspire to be a king and priest forever in the Kingdom of God that will be established on this earth. All mankind is born into a world that is governed by the

“light” of the conqueror. This is the light or path of the works of the flesh (the conqueror of all who do not accept the calling of the Most High God). This so called light is really not light at all but is known in scriptures as the darkness of the world. It appears as light to those who know no difference. If we accept our high and holy calling, we are brought into a greater understanding of the true Word of God. We are enlightened by the Truth and the eternal promises. We then enter into the sweet waters of baptism and cross over from the land of Babylon into a “new life”, dedicated to following the true path of righteousness unto the Lord.

Abraham was 75 years old when he was called to leave the land of spiritual darkness. Nearly one half of his life of 175 years was spent in this land of spiritual Babylon. What a drastic change that this man and his family had to endure and overcome. He was able to make this change and put behind him “the old man” and all that the old world offered because of the joy that was set before him, because of his faith in the promises and truth of God’s word.

In **Genesis 12:7-8**, we read of another significant event in the life of Abraham. One of the first things that he did after entering into the Land of Promise was to build an altar and make a sacrifice unto his God. We are again exhorted by his works and actions. This passage tells us that Abraham built an altar on a mountain between the cities of Bethel and Hai. The city of Bethel lay to the west of the mountainous altar. Looking towards Bethel, one could see the harsh, rugged mountainous regions of the area. Looking towards Hai, one would see the beautiful and fertile Jordan Valley. The mountains would suggest hardship, difficulty and loneliness. In contrast, the Jordan Valley suggests a life of ease, comfort, prosperity and happiness, truly a picture of the lust of the flesh. The altar that Abraham built stood right in the middle of these contrasting choices. These cities represent the ultimate choice between life and death. It was at this very place where Abraham and Lot split, with Lot choosing the easy life and Abraham content to take the path that God would lead him, always understanding that God would be his refuge in times of trials and tribulations. Brethren, we have the same choices to make. We can choose the easy life that the world offers and choose Hai, which means a “heap of ruins” or we can choose Bethel, which means the “House of God”. Choose you this day whom you will serve, we are told by Joshua. All who are the called of God out of this dark and evil world must come to the Christ altar which is strategically placed between the House of God and the heap of ruins. They must choose between overcoming mountainous obstacles or the alluring picture of worldly prosperity. **Acts 14:22** tells us the outcome of making the right choice – “We must through much tribulation, enter into the Kingdom of God.”

In **Genesis 13:18**, we again see that Abraham built altars to his God wherever he dwelt. We learn from this lesson that we too should take the Christ altar everywhere that we reside. We too should continually offer the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God, no matter where we are. We too should worship the God of Abraham in an acceptable manner and not succumb to the religion of the world.

We ask the reader to read **Genesis 12:10 through 13:4**. These verses will again edify us by an account in the life of Abraham. **Genesis 12:10** tells us that there was a grievous famine in the land, so Abraham packed up his belongings and went down into Egypt. What Abraham did is not uncommon to the ways of man. When tribulations occur in our lives, all of us tend to migrate towards more pleasant situations. Abraham had just recently received a promise from the LORD that the land in which he dwelt would belong to him and his seed forever. We have to believe that the LORD would have provided the natural sustenance to Abraham and his family to survive the tribulations and hardships that would come in this land. However, he still went down into Egypt. Notice the Scriptures states that he went “**down**” into Egypt. Of course, this is a natural way of stating the geographical progression. But, there is also a spiritual significance of this phrase. All who leave the path of righteousness and return to the old man and the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life will “**go down**” from their high and holy calling and go down into the depths of the flesh, which is what Egypt always represents. Have we committed the same sin as Abraham did? During periods of trials and tribulations, do we forsake the blessings promised by God and look for our own ways of satisfying the flesh as opposed to the required continual self sacrifices and separation from fleshly desires? The tribulations that we experience should build our character. **Romans 5:4** tells us that tribulations worketh patience, patience experience and experience hope. We should never run from our trials, but remember that God has promised us that He will never leave us nor forsake us and that He has not placed on us more than we would be able to bear as taught in **I Corinthians 10:13**.

I believe the message of the words in **Jeremiah 6:16** could be applied to Abraham’s next move as recorded in **Genesis 13:1-4**. We ask our readers to read first the passage from **Genesis** and then the passage in **Jeremiah**. Abraham returned to the old paths of worshipping Yahweh. He returned to the very beginning of his journey, putting his trust in the Deity. To ultimately receive God’s promises, all must come up out of Egypt, go to the Christ altar and call on the name of God. If we are the children of Abraham, then we are commanded to always call on the name of the LORD. Look at **Psalms 105:1-11**. **Proverbs 3:5-7** would have described Abraham’s return to the Promised Land. In **James 4:8**, the apostle tells us to “Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you”. If we return to the paths of righteousness and look to the example of Abraham, then we might be able to walk the same paths as Abraham when Christ is again in the earth.

In **Genesis 15:1-6** and **Genesis 17:19-21**, we read of the Scriptural account of the promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah. In **Romans 4:17-25**, the apostle Paul provides a very good insight into this time in Abraham’s life. The apostle points out the excellent character of this “Friend of God”. Abraham was not weak in faith nor did he stagger at the promise of God through unbelief. He did not consider the fact that he was 99 years old nor the deadness of Sarah’s womb as she was 90 years old. All that mattered to him was that what God had promised would surely be fulfilled. This is true faith without doubts or questions. Abraham perfectly understood that God

could and would provide life. If we have the faith of Abraham, we too will receive life and we too may be made perfect as Abraham will upon the Master’s return. We should not be like the individuals noted in **II Peter 3:3-4** but should always remember the words that **Peter pens in verses 8 and 9 of the third chapter of II Peter**. “God is not slack concerning His Promises.”

The events recorded in **Genesis 22:1-14** depicts one of the greatest acts of faith that anyone has every manifested; other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham was instructed to take his beloved son Isaac, the son of promise, to the land of Moriah and offer him for a burnt offering. Abraham rose early the next morning and began the three day journey to the place that God commanded. Upon reaching the place of offering, Abraham bound Isaac, laid him on the altar, stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. Suddenly, an angelic voice was heard and then we read the words of **Genesis 22:12** –“Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I knowest that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.” God provided a sacrifice that would be offered. Although Isaac was not actually offered, in the mind of Abraham, he was as good as offered. Paul tells us the same thing in **Hebrews 11:17-19**. Abraham was willing to offer up Isaac knowing that God would resurrect him. These events tell us of the depth of the knowledge that Abraham had concerning the sacrificial burnt offering of the true sacrifice, even the beloved son of God. Through these events in **Genesis 22**, we are presented the concept of resurrection and we must believe that Abraham was taught and understood the entire process of redemption, sacrifice and resurrection.

Just as important as the doctrinal significance of these events, we are presented a beautiful picture of the faith of the Father of the Faithful. He was willing to offer up his own son. We will never be asked to make this type of sacrifice. However, we have been asked to make another type of offering. **Romans 12:1** reads “Present your bodies, a living sacrifice, which is our reasonable service”. Are we as ready to do this as Abraham was in offering his son? It is recorded that Abraham arose early in the morning to begin his journey. He did not procrastinate nor put off what had to be done to do those things that are pleasing to the Lord. No, he was ready to complete the task as soon as possible. We should be just as willing and able to eagerly accept the Lord’s commandments and be prepared at all times to obey the LORD and crucify the deeds of the flesh.

The entire life of Abraham is a beautiful example for those who are part of his spiritual family. Many more hours could be spent on each and every event in the life of Abraham that is recorded in God’s Holy Writ. It would be wise for each of us to undergo a study of the invasion of the northern confederacy in **Genesis 14**, the encounter with Melchizedek in **Genesis 14**, the confirmation of the promises in **Genesis 15**, the birth and life of Ishmael in **Genesis 16**, the significance of the act of circumcision as recorded in **Genesis 17**, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in **Genesis 19** and on and on and on.

I would like to close these comments by quoting from Brother Robert Roberts in his exposition on **Isaiah 51**. “The Body of Christ as well as Jesus himself is exhorted to “Look unto Abraham”. Are they called out from country and kindred? So was Abraham. Are they few and feeble in the midst of enemies and wars’ alarm? So was Abraham. Is the promise of life so far outside the bounds of human possibility that it stirs incredulity? So it was with Abraham. Do they believe against all appearances? So did Abraham. Do they wrestle against all fleshly affections and desires and crucify the old man with Christ? Look into Abraham offering up Isaac and receiving him back, as it were, from the dead. Do they look for the day when the heathen shall be expelled from the land of promise under a greater Joshua who shall give them rest? So did Abraham.” End quote.

Just as sure as the promises to Abraham will be completely and perfectly fulfilled, if we look unto Abraham and follow his example, then we may be blessed as recorded in **Galatians 3:6-9 and Galatians 3:29**. “They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Let us look unto Abraham and we may hear these welcome words of joy – “Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter ye into the joys of the LORD”.

B. Henderson

Baptism is the seal by which believers accept the Abrahamic covenant, and agree to abide by its conditions, in the sure and certain hope that by “patient continuance in well doing” – (Rom. 2:7) they will participate in its blessings. But in order that they may undergo this ceremony, they must have an intelligent acquaintance with the nature of that covenant. No sane man enters an agreement or contract without knowing what are the conditions he will have to comply with, and the blessings he will derive therefrom. The conditions imposed upon Abraham were faith and obedience: he had to believe God’s promise that he and his future “seed”, the Saviour of the world, should possess the land of Canaan, and he had to do what God commanded him. These conditions he fully complied with: “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith”; “therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness” – (Rom. 4:20-22); furthermore, “faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect” – (Jas. 2:22); in other words his faith was manifested in obedience. Similar conditions are required from all others who become parties to the same covenant. Though different in detail, they are identical in principle; for “without faith it is impossible to please God” – (Heb. 11:6), and only “he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” – (1 John 2:17). *The Real Christ, p. 130*

“CHRISTADELPHIAN STANDARDS”

A Sunday Morning Address

When we read the scriptures in Job chapter 14 we see that Job asks some questions about mankind and his place on earth, but also answers them, something we should take note of. After all, why are we here? Why do we meet in the place we meet in each Sunday? Why do we find these groups of families meeting together, except for the bond that holds us together, the truth of the scriptures? Most of us in Christadelphia are inter-related, that is, families that are related one to another, intermarried. That is how our Creator has chosen to work with man.

Many of us were not related at one time though, so what brought us together? Was it curiosity? Was it a certain need? Was it anything that we in ourselves were searching for? Or was it our Heavenly Father, after all these years, still taking out from the masses a people for his name? There is a reason, for without it most of us probably would have never come into contact one with another.

We really didn’t have anything in common before, since some of us lived far away from one another. But as I stated, the word of truth has a way of bringing in some. I say some; for all will not accept this word of truth, this gospel of the good news, that some in the various Ecclesias have spread to their fellow workers and acquaintances. There are some Brothers and Sisters that were born into the truth, we might say. They may be second, third, or even fourth generation Christadelphians who have never known anything different. Others, such as me, came into the light out of the darkness of spiritual Egypt. Many who came in from outside had to be re-programmed, so to speak, they had to de-learn, or cast away earlier ideas or notions of the gospel—those things that they had been taught or heard before. Some of us though didn’t have the baggage of the apostate system to overcome; we actually started new, as a babe, not having many notions or thoughts at all about scripture. There wasn’t an image of the kingdom of man ingrained in us that had to be destroyed in order for us to learn the gospel.

In learning the Truth - the Gospel - in doctrine and in walk, in commandments of Christ, and in teachings of mankind to be dispensed with - or not to be believed; there are standards of which have been spoken of in the past by some of our brethren. Some have called them Christadelphian Standards. I would like to address these at this time. Christadelphians should adhere to a body of Standards consisting of 1) doctrine; 2) belief and 3) walk, all which combine to form a way of life.

The first thing we would like to do is ask a question—Exactly what is a standard? Here are a few definitions from the dictionary:

1. Something considered by an authority or by general consent a basis of comparison- an approved model.
2. An object that is regarded as the usual or most common size or form of its kind.
3. A rule or principle that is used as a basis of judgment.
4. Standards- those morals, ethics, habits, etc, that are established by authority, custom, or an individual as acceptable.
5. An authorized exemplar of a unit of weight or measure.
6. A certain commodity in or by which a base monetary unit is stated.
7. A musical piece of sufficiently enduring popularity to be made part of a permanent repertoire.
8. A flag indicating the presence of a sovereign or public official.
9. A flag, emblematic figure, or other object raised on a pole to indicate a rallying point of an army, fleet, etc.
10. An established authority.
11. A gauge, basis, pattern, or guide
12. Standard criterion refers to the basis for making a judgment. A standard is an authoritative principle or rule that usually implies a model of pattern for guidance- by comparison with which the quality, excellence, correctness, etc., of other things are determined.
13. An acknowledged measure of comparison for quantitative and qualitative value- a criterion.
14. A degree or level of requirement, excellence, or attainment.

When we add the word Christadelphian to the definition of the word standard, we should get an idea of a standard that is further set apart or of more excellence than normal; a standard that is special - not the norm. Why is this? It is because of our beliefs of being a set-apart peculiar people. Because we are human, it sometimes becomes difficult to differentiate our actions and thoughts from others. The children of Israel were set-apart. *“For thou art a Holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are on the earth.”* (Deut 14:2) *“And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments.”* (Deut 26:8)

Upon observation of orthodox Jewish customs and worship, etc., we can see where one might call them peculiar, or different. Just as the children of Israel were to be set apart, we, as spiritual Israel, if that's what we really are, are commanded to be also. (1st Peter 2:9 & Titus 2)

All of us have heard exhortations on the declination of the truth, and how it came about. Some scriptures that were used we should turn to once again and review. (2 Peter 1:21- 2 Peter 2:2). We see there were false teachers in that day and there would continue to be false teachers, even to the coming of the Messiah. Galatians 1:1-9 tells us that in Paul's day the perversion of the gospel was happening at that time. 1 John

4:2-6 tells us that John dealt with the same error. In 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-12 we see that Paul warned of a falling away from the truth of the gospel.

The philosophy of the Greeks was a detriment to the early ecclesia, as well as it has been to mankind from the beginning. The serpent said, “Ye shall not surely die”, and we see Nimrod built upon that false statement. Later it was latched onto by the Greeks in the belief of an immortal soul, which was only the beginning of many other errant thoughts which would become widespread, and which still continues to this day.

The Kingdom of God was taught and believed early on by those that held the truth, (Acts 1: 6-7), but later it became apostatized and began to be taught as an allegory by the Greek philosophers, many of which became so called Christian fathers, such as Eusebius, Iranaeus, and possibly even Polycarp, who was a disciple of John. Based on the apostles' warnings these things all came to pass and continue today. Is it my intention to paint a bad picture? No, but we must be and remain cognizant of the warnings given by the Spirit word if we are to remain.

What then are the things that harm the body? Are these things from without, or from within? Mostly we do not face trials and afflictions from without, not in western society anyway. Believers in other countries might not be as fortunate as us in this regard. Our problems are from within, of which not only can, but probably will eventually cause trial from without. Things that the Brotherhood are contending with today will probably cause a different look or concept by the governmental authorities toward us. Things such as running for and accepting public office, brethren enlisting in the armed forces, questionable employment in law enforcement or other entities, going to law against each other through divorce or other things will cause the authorities to look at the Christadelphian body differently than has been in the past. These are only a few of the things we are faced with today. They will harm the Christadelphian body around the globe, I see no way around it. Christadelphians will be looked at just as another religious denomination, and might not receive any preferential treatment that it has enjoyed in the past. We might lose our status as conscientious objectors because of the things that are happening in the brotherhood today. It may not happen soon, but in my mind it will happen nonetheless to some extent. Many may say that we shouldn't be alarmed at such things, that these have always been around and we have always had these problems, but in my short time around the truth, of 25 plus years, I have seen a marked rise in these types of problems.

How has this come about? Simply put, by doing the same things that man has always done, taking the easy way out. It has happened because of the liberality of worldly thinking and opinion, or, more simply put, by believing the lie.

The serpents lie encompasses all incorrect doctrine and teachings, as well as actions and morals. The giving up of standards long acknowledged (as the nation of Israel did in wanting to be like its neighbors) is what the brotherhood is going through currently. The incorrect theory of replacement theology is one more problem we have, because some believe that Israel by her actions was divorced by God. We understand

that God always took her back, for she is His bride, just as we are supposed to be the bride of Christ.

There is also a phenomenon amongst Christadelphians that I will label as the pied piper syndrome, a phenomenon that is especially dangerous to our younger ones not yet well grounded in the faith once delivered unto the fathers. This manifests itself by the latching onto one or some that proclaim to have found “a new way”, or have received a “new epiphany” from above. Scriptures that we have considered earlier warn us of just that happening. These well meaning brethren become pied pipers and gather a following of those with itching ears, wanting to hear some new thing, (as the Greeks did), to their own destruction and the dismay of the rest of us and our Heavenly Father.

Another syndrome is rampant that theorizes we are all equal in Gods eyes so then we are only accountable to ourselves and God, not to each other. Because we have no established “church hierarchy” we can do as we want. Because of no church hierarchy such as paid ministry there can be no authority, no standards, we don’t have to honor one another, or count one another better than ourselves to be. Because we are supposed to be equal we can appear at ecclesial functions as we want, we can act as we want, think as we want, and speak as we want. Such thinking and actions are incorrect. 1st Timothy 5 tells us of a hierarchy we should be aware of, “let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they that labor in the word and doctrine.”

Can we be so callous as to jokingly refer to one such as Abraham, called in James 2 by the spirit word as the friend of God and referred to also as the father of the faithful, simply as “Abe” which was recently done on a Christadelphian website? Sure, Abraham was only a man, but he is found written in the book of life for his faith. To flippantly refer to him as merely “Abe” is to me, approaching sacrilege. One would not want to go up to Elisha and say, “Hey Baldy, drop over to my crib and we will throw down some food and watch the game”, would they? We must remember that those worthies of old were set apart to do our Heavenly Fathers work, of which we should both admire and honor.

So how do we approach this misdirection of doctrine and walk? Do we act complacent and think to ourselves that these things do not take place in our little ecclesia? Are the believers to be unified, or fragmented upon Christ’s return? If Paul were to come to us today, as he did to the Ecclesias in Asia Minor in the past to correct the problems that were there, would he have to work overtime?

It is not my point to tear down, but only to inform that we need to be built upon our Holy Faith, that these things brought upon us can be dealt with effectively, and then put aside as we see the day approaching in which our Heavenly Father will judge the world by that man that he has appointed, His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We have recently observed the start of a new year in mans thinking, some 40 years after the release of Jerusalem by diverse occupying forces. Does the word of

truth remain constant for our guidance? Do we keep to the old paths and standards, being refreshed by the renewing of our minds, built up in our most Holy Faith, or do we face a fiery judgment and calamity because of the apathy that has been established in our midst? We have a world of instruction at our fingertips that can be written in the pages of our mind, that we might put on that helmet of salvation, that breastplate of righteousness and that we might have our loins girded up to bolster our faith in these last days of wickedness in this dark and evil world. (Some concluding verses to consider can be those found in Romans chapter 12 and also 1st Peter 1:1-11.)

Bill Jones

ODIUM THEOLOGICUM

The above means “hatred among theologians,” and is generally used to deter people from acting with Scriptural injunctions in matters of principle in religion. Hatred has a place in this connection, however. Christ himself hated the doctrine and deeds of the Nicolaitanes (Rev. 2:6,15). The Psalmist hated every false way (Ps. 119:104).

This hatred is not directed against persons, as such, but principles and results, and actions which some may describe as the odium theologicum are intended to show the view taken of false principles and practices which would interfere with purity of faith and fellowship. Scriptural injunctions are precise. Christ’s injunctions to his disciples indicate the idea in regard to the matter (Matt. 10:14). Upholders of heresy are to be rejected (Titus 3). Those who teach a different doctrine and consent not to sound words are to be withdrawn from (1 Tim. 6:3-6). To bid them God-speed is to partake of their evil deeds (2 John 9-11). The same thing applies to walking disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6).

Faithfulness to God’s Word necessitates complying with these commands, and a wise man will not be scared away from them by considerations of a contrary character.

W.H.B.

Taken from *Christadelphian Standards* (Logos publications)

IS THERE A PRESENT “SPIRITUAL KINGDOM”?

Dating back to the December 2005 “Special Edition” of the Sanctuary-Keeper and culminating in last quarter’s issue, attention has been drawn to certain errors that are being freely promoted within the Household through the efforts of the author of *The Judaizers – Another Gospel*; published by WCF and also endorsed by the *Shofar*. Some of the error pointed out and/or dealt with have been the misapplication of the term “Judaizer”; imbalanced view of grace and works; that Christ now reigns as King, that there is a present “spiritual Kingdom”, that those baptized are now in that Kingdom or back in the Garden; that the believer now possesses “eternal life” in a “spiritual” sense; new views on the atoning and mediatorial work of Christ and other critical matters as well. It is **sincerely** and **urgently** hoped that it is perceived that what we are facing is nothing short of the promulgation of “another gospel” itself. We are not dealing with merely a “different point of view” or a “deeper” view of spiritual matters but a whole system of belief that is openly antagonistic and defiant towards the things most assuredly believed by Christadelphians for some 150 years.

We have not enjoyed dealing with these matters and painfully understand that in the current Christadelphian climate that to openly deal with and defend against challenges to the Truth is often viewed with as much contempt and irritation (if not more) than the error itself. But what are we to do? If it is thought that these openly promoted errors or any challenges to the Truth in belief and practice pose no threat to our own individual circumstances or ecclesial situations, to not deal with these problems head on and openly when we have the opportunity will only insure the fact that we will have to face them down the road – unfortunately when the problem has become too tolerated and too overwhelming to correct.

For all of the encouragement that has been received regarding the addressing of these issues the S.K. has been involved in correspondence with a reader who has viewed the S.K.’s warnings regarding “The Judaizers” book as “extrapolations”, and has questions or doubts as to the problem with believing that there is a present spiritual kingdom taught in the Scriptures. Some of the verses of greatest confusion and concern to the correspondent are *Romans 14:16-18*; *1st Corinthians 4:18-20*; *Luke 17:20,21*; *Colossians 1:9-14*; and *Matthew 13* (parables of the “kingdom of heaven”). Though bro. Tanner did a very thorough job of explaining the matter in last quarter’s issue and though we cannot improve upon it, we think it would be beneficial to revisit the subject and hopefully emphasize the necessity of understanding this fundamental and critical topic correctly. To only address the verses that have been presented for us to explain is not as beneficial as giving a fuller (though not complete) consideration

which includes other related passages that are used by the *present spiritual Kingdom* proponents (both without and within Christadelphia).

We provide the following summary adapted from a series of Sunday school lessons that we conducted a few years ago. We prepared it as a way to be “always ready to give an answer” in opposition to the various falsehoods being promoted in mainstream “Christianity” – we never thought that it would become necessary to use such notes to counter what is now being taught and accepted within Christadelphia itself.

“*The Kingdom at hand*” or “*nigh*” at Christ’s first coming

In **Matt. 3:2** and **4:12-17** we read first of John stating “*Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*”, and then in the second passage we have the same terminology used by Christ. In **Luke 10:8,9** we have Jesus’ instructions to the seventy that were sent out to say to the Israelites, “*The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.*” With a superficial consideration of these passages it might be thought that some kind of kingdom was on the verge of establishment when these messages were delivered. But where do we find that a Kingdom was set up during Christ’s ministry or even shortly after his ascension to heaven? The fact of the matter is that we do not.

The phrases in our heading are ones that are relied upon by those of mainstream (apostate) Christianity (most notably among the *Church of Christ*) to prove that Christ established some kind of spiritual kingdom during or shortly thereafter his first appearance; with some viewing “the Church” as the Kingdom and others that the Kingdom is “in our hearts”. There are several evangelical denominations that though believing in some kind of current spiritual kingdom also believe that there will be a future physical kingdom on the earth. It should be realized that believing in a future literal kingdom does not excuse the fallacy of believing in a present “spiritual” application. (The latest installment of the extremely popular *Left Behind* book series that fictionalizes the evangelical view of the rise of the “Anti-Christ” and “Rapture” propounds the view of a literal 1,000 year kingdom on earth.)

The error that we are facing within Christadelphia is basically the same - that upon baptism we enter some kind of “spiritual kingdom” while still awaiting the manifestation of a future physical kingdom on earth. Whether literal or “spiritual” it will be seen from Scriptures that the only kind of Kingdom that the Scriptures teach of is that which existed in Judah until overthrown by the Babylonians and which, as a matter of promise, will be restored upon Christ’s second appearance – the stone striking the feet of the Nebuchadnezzar dream image. To hold to a present “spiritual” kingdom view is to make of none affect the very portion of the Gospel message (*the things concerning the Kingdom of God*, “*the times of refreshing*”, “*the times of restitution of all things*”) that was the foundation of the teachings found in the prophets, in Christ’s doctrine and the doctrine of the apostles - and to wrest several scriptures to support their error in the process. A “present” kingdom and a future kingdom are two doctrines that cannot be reconciled to fit together. It is like believing

that we have an immortal soul but yet also believing in a future resurrection (as believed by apostasy). If we already have the first we don't need the second.

So how are we to understand the proclamation that the kingdom was "at hand" or "nigh"? Can we say that there is a sense that the Kingdom was at hand? John was the first to make the proclamation - and what was the mission of John? We read in Isaiah 40:3 (and Matt. 3:3) that he was to "prepare" the way for the LORD - or Yahweh manifest through His Son. He was to herald and prepare the people for the appearance of the Anointed one, the promised royal seed of David as well as Deity manifest in the flesh.

With that in mind we consider the word "kingdom" which is from the Greek *basilea* (as was explained last quarter). The original not only represents a kingdom but it also, based upon the context, is representative of *royalty or a royal personage*. The Diaglott translates the passage in Matt. 3:2 as "REFORM! Because the ROYAL MAJESTY of the heavens has approached." The same translation is also found in 4:17. The anointed King of the Kingdom was before them; the appointed time for the setting up of the restored Israelitish Kingdom had not yet arrived (and still has not arrived). Christ embodied the principles and character of the Kingdom and was the living emblem or figure head as to its future reality. (Luke 10:8,9 falls under this explanation as well.)

This did not mean that he was already reigning or would shortly reign as a King in that he had no kingdom to reign over (as identified in the Promises and Prophets as to territory, subjects, and political character) nor any immediate prospects to do so. As David was anointed as King well over 10 years before he actually reigned over a Kingdom, so too was Christ anointed (upon his baptism) to await a future time to sit on the throne of his father David over a united and restored Israelitish Kingdom. During his first appearance Christ was sent to the "*lost sheep of the house of Israel*" to confirm to them the promise of such a Kingdom and to teach them of the way in which the eternal inheritance might be obtained - through repentance and continued faithfulness.

Turning to **Luke 16:16** we read, "*The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.*" We will deal with the phrase "every man presseth into it" a little further on, but for right now do we read "that the Kingdom of God was *set up* or about to be *set up*"? No, we read that it was "preached". There needs to be a distinction made between a "preaching" of the Kingdom and a "setting up" of the Kingdom as found in Scripture. The efforts of John, Christ as well as the apostles that would follow after was to teach in regard to the things concerning the Kingdom of God. During the short time that the ROYAL MAJESTY appeared before them no better teaching tool or token as to the reality of the promised restitution could be put before the people.

The Kingdom was then and still is now in the preaching and preparation phase. In regard to preaching, it is a matter of the believers teaching of it and looking forward

in hopeful anticipation to its future reality - as a matter of promise. As far as preparation, Yahweh is still taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name; and under the current High Priestly role of Jesus "heirs" are being developed as the shaping and polishing of precious stones to receive the promised inheritance and to reign with Him in that future Age (Rev. 20:6 also Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29; Titus 3:7)

So when is the Kingdom referenced in the Scriptures spoken of being set up? Was it to be during Christ's ministry, at Pentecost...when? While the apostles asked Christ "*wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*", if they were expecting some kind of "spiritual kingdom" to be established why did they not ask "Lord, when are you going to establish the spiritual kingdom, and then when are you going to establish the kingdom to Israel?" The fact of the matter is that **there was only one kind of Kingdom** that was of any concern or hope for them, and only one kind of the Kingdom that was spoken of by the prophets and by Jesus.

In Daniel 2:44,45 we have the Stone power striking the feet of the Kingdom of Men - "*and in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom*". There is no description here or anywhere else of the stone striking first to set up a "spiritual kingdom" and then striking once again at some other time to set up a physical kingdom. In **2nd Timothy 4:1** we read - "*I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom*". Here we have clear testimony (among many) as to the time of the setting up of the Kingdom. And in **Matthew 25:31-34** we read, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, **then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory....**Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**'"

How can these scriptures be correct if the Kingdom (as some suppose) is already in existence? Why would it be necessary for Christ to give the inheritance of the Kingdom to the faithful at his return if they already possess it or "are in it"? At the time mentioned in Matt. 25, the Kingdom will have been "prepared from the foundation of the world" **as a plan** - just as a building or any kind of project has to exist as a plan before it is ever built. It was this plan that was being openly and clearly preached to the people at Christ's first appearance from the very mouth of its Anointed King.

In answer to those that "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke 19:11), Christ provided a parable to correct his listener's misconception. Luke 19:12-15, "*He said therefore, 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, 'Occupy till I come.'...And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom...'*". Clearly, by the reason given for the parable and the parable itself, it should be understood that Christ would not have a Kingdom, nor the ability to grant entrance into it (vs. 15-27) until his return.

In relation to those who say that the Kingdom is now in a present “spiritual” form or that it is constituted of the believers upon baptism (i.e., The Church), we then ask, “*what was the purpose of or characteristic of the Kingdom as promised?*” If the Kingdom, whether spiritual or otherwise, is already in existence and we are now in it (established by Christ during his first appearance – or at Pentecost as suggested by the author of “The Judaizers”) then does it mirror what the scriptures say it will be? If there is a current application of the Kingdom then surely we would have evidence of it apart from the teaching of a physical Kingdom on earth. But we do not because there is only one political constitution as to time and place foretold by the Scriptures. Therefore, if there is a present spiritual kingdom it has failed miserably as to how the Kingdom is described in the Scriptures. (Is. 2:1-3; Is. 9:6; Luke 2:14 to name a few).

The Kingdom is “within” you

We have been asked to explain the passage found in **Luke 17:20,21** as being among “the most challenging verses pertaining to the Kingdom of God”. We read, “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, *“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, ‘Lo, here!’ or, ‘lo, there!’ for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”* The explanation for this passage is very similar to our understanding of the verses considered in the previous section.

The Diaglott rendering is as follows: “Nor shall they say, “Behold here! Or behold there! For behold, GOD’S ROYAL MAJESTY is **among** you.” “Within”, as appears in the A.V. is from the Greek “entos” which is derived from “en”. This is a Greek preposition which indicates *to be in the midst of*, or as rendered in the Diaglott “among”. It is rendered “among” 115 times in the New Testament (consider John 1:26).

The statement that the kingdom would be “without observation” literally means to “Stop looking around, the King is among you.” The Pharisees were blind to this fact and it would do them no good to be given information as to the setting up of the Kingdom when they didn’t want to realize that the anointed King himself was right there before them. Also, Christ’s first coming (as a lamb) would not be accompanied by the same display as his second (as a lion). The first appearance was in preaching the kingdom, and was not accompanied with a grand and forceful appearance, as was desired by the people. A degree of spiritual discernment was necessary to recognize him.

“The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence”

Matt. 11:12 – “*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*” Some will point to this verse as proof that there was a spiritual kingdom in existence. Taken alone, apart from everything considered to this point such a conclusion is understandable. But we understand that it is “line upon line”, “precept upon precept”, “here a little and there a little” (Isaiah 28:10) that we are able to understand the full picture.

It has to be realized that the violence against “the kingdom of heaven” was done against those who **preached the Kingdom** and therefore against the doctrines they represented. John was beheaded, Christ shamed and crucified and the apostles persecuted. The Jews tried to preserve their own interests and proud claim to “the kingdom” by force rather than faith in what was being taught to them. They viewed Christ – “the royal personage” - and his associates, and what they taught as threats to their own self interests.

“Every man presseth into it”

We have already made reference to **Luke 16:16**, but have reserved the phrase “every man presseth into it” until now. This is a phrase that confuses those of mainstream Christianity. The Diaglott renders the verse: “The law and the prophets were till John; from that period, the Kingdom of God is proclaimed, and every one **presses towards it.**” For those who would think that a Kingdom was set up during Christ’s ministry or even at Pentecost, then how can they explain the words here that would place it starting during John’s ministry?

As has already been mentioned, no words are found that the Kingdom was “established” but that it was “preached”. And notice the word as rendered “into” in the KJV is “towards” in the Diaglott. It is from the Greek word “eis”. It denotes motion “to” or “unto” an object, *with the purpose of reaching or touching something*. Our movement, or pressing “towards” the Kingdom begins at the start of our probation. We are not in the Kingdom (spiritual or physical), but in earnest expectation are working “towards” it. (Phil. 3:13,14; 2nd Peter 1:11).

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink”

This is one of the other passages (**Rom. 14:17**) we have been asked to address. The full verse reads, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” This is used by some to prove that the Kingdom is not literal or that there is at least a spiritual application to the concept of the Kingdom. It is thought that this represents the effects of spiritual conversion; or by following after righteousness, peace and joy as believers that such constitutes a present “spiritual” application of a Kingdom.

What has to be considered here is the context. They (the Roman ecclesia) were arguing over the eating of meats. The crux of the issue is brought to a head in this verse 17 in pointing out that the temporal needs of this life are of no value in contending with and judging one another unworthy of divine favor. The Kingdom and our striving to be granted entrance into the Kingdom is not about food or the observing of special days (this was the emphasis of the Jews and also of pagan religions as well). It is about “righteousness, peace, and joy”.

Though there is the need that these attributes are to be emulated by the believers, they do not represent the Kingdom as being current – spiritual or otherwise. Christ “suffered” for the “joy set before him.” Currently we are working or “pressing”

towards the Kingdom. We pray for it in “thy Kingdom come”, and we are “heirs” of it and not currently in possession or in it (James 2:5; also again see 2nd Pet. 1:11).

“The kingdom of God is not in word but power”

“Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. **For the kingdom of god is not in word, but in power.**” (1st Cor. 4:18-20). We view this passage in a similar way as we do Rom. 14:17 – “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink”. There is nothing hear to promote the idea of a currently existent “spiritual kingdom”. The International Standard Version has a helpful translation in this case – “Some of you have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you soon if it's the Lord's will. Then I'll discover not only what these arrogant people are saying but also what power they have, for the kingdom of God isn't just talk but power.”

What we do see is that the kingdom is not about words – “talk is cheap” as we might say, especially the proud and defiant talk of some of the Corinthians. The coming Kingdom will not be established or characterized by the prideful boastings of men but by Yahweh's power. The word “power” is from the Greek *dunamis*, which indicates *strength, power or ability* – in many cases, including this one, *miraculous power*. Paul and the fellow apostles had this power (and only those they laid their hands on) and the authority that went with it in their efforts in establishing the early ecclesia (John 14:26; Eph. 4:12) as well as it being a token of things to come. We know that this “power” served its purpose and did not go beyond the apostolic era. And, it is by such power on an even grander scale that the Kingdom will be established and function in that future age.

If we view this passage in 1st Corinthians as proof that there is a present “spiritual” kingdom then we would have to come to the logical conclusion that we should also have this “power” (i.e. Holy Spirit) spoken of if we are “already in the Kingdom”. As brother T. Williams often would write regarding the wresting of a scripture to promote a false idea – “it proves too much.”

“Translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son”

Colossians 1:13 is another one of the passages of expressed concern, with verse 9-14 as the larger context. This has long been used by the “mainstream” as absolute proof that the Kingdom is now and that the believer upon conversion is now in a spiritual Kingdom.

As a preliminary point: we have to be careful in how we understand the usage of “tenses” in the scriptures, especially when they contradict more plain and explicit passages of scriptures. As was clearly pointed out in last quarter's S.K., we also understand that God often speaks as though things already exist or have been fulfilled. We know that entrance into the Kingdom is not granted until Christ's return (Matt. 25:31).

Now as a matter of proper translation, which is the real crux of this passage - the word “into” is from the Greek preposition “eis”. The same word is translated “for” in verse 16 of the same chapter. From this point we understand that we are “translated” (or changed) **FOR** the kingdom. How are we CHANGED? This represents our FEDERAL change out of Adam into Christ, the imputation of Christ's righteousness upon us, from aliens to joint heirs (Eph.2). This is more fully explained in Romans 5, 6 and 8. The only way we can be prepared FOR the Kingdom is by such a change of constitutional relationship (1st Thess. 2:12).

The Diaglott renders Coll. 1:12,13 quite sensibly as, “Giving thanks at the same time to that Father who called and QUALIFIED us for the portion of the Saints inheritance in the Light. Who delivered us from the DOMINION of Darkness, and *changed us for the Kingdom* of the Son of His love.”

Matthew 13

Finally in our overview we arrive at Matthew 13 where we find several parables that are preceded by the statement “the kingdom of heaven is like unto...” We have not the space, nor do we think it necessary to deal with these parables in detail at this time. There is plenty of good Christadelphian literature that focuses on the specifics of the parables (e.g. Nazareth Revisited, pp. 138-173) for the reader to investigate. But to list those found in Matthew 13 that are preceded by the comparison to the kingdom of heaven, we have:

- ◆ The wheat and the tares (vs. 24 -30)
- ◆ Parable of the mustard seed (vs. 31,32)
- ◆ Parable of the leaven (vs. 33)
- ◆ Parable of the hid treasure (vs. 44)
- ◆ Parable of the goodly pearls (vs. 45,46)
- ◆ Parable of the net (vs. 47,48)

Again, there is no need to go into detail here but in reading over the parables there is no indication given as to the kingdom already being set up (or that it was soon to be established after Christ delivered the parables) in any kind of form, but of a process, in various applications, that would transpire before in its preparation or at the inception of its future establishment.

In Conclusion

These matters before us are not merely differences of opinion but fundamental issues belonging to “the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ”. It hest to be remembered that the subject of the Kingdom of God is mentioned in every book in the New Testament except for Philemon and the 3rd book of John, and that it is mentioned in every chapter of Paul's 1st and 2nd Epistle to the Thessalonians. Quoting from a quote out of bro. Dunaway's Bible – “*The Kingdom is the inspiring theme in the Old and New Testament. Faith in this Kingdom is the inspiring motive, the guiding star and will ever remain so.*” To tinker with this most

basic of subjects – even if it is only thought to “improve” or provide a “deeper” insight into the issue by the introduction of such mistaken views – is to preach “another gospel”, which as stated in Galatians 3:7 – “is not another”, and “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (vs.9).

With that in mind can we merely agree to disagree on this subject or any of the others that are being challenged? Absolutely not. Can we afford to pretend that nothing is wrong and remain silent? What are we prepared to do in defense of God’s Truth?

A. Thomas

How did our early brethren view the idea of a present “spiritual” application of the Kingdom?

The World’s Redemption, p. 228

“We must not delude ourselves with the idea that we are in the kingdom before the Master has invited us to inherit it, which will be when “the Son of man shall come in his glory”. (Read pp. 222-238 for detailed information that directly opposes current false notions regarding the subject.)

Eureka, vol. 1, p. 222, Logos Edition (Speaking of the Smyrnian Ecclesia)

“They were *“HEIRS of that kingdom,”* in which they believed; and, as every intelligent person, who is not spoiled by the clerical traditions of the Nikolaitans, knows, an heir is one who is to obtain possession of a thing after the present possessor dies; so the Smyrneans were not present possessors of the kingdom, but living in hope of some time or other coming into possession of *“the kingdoms of this world,”* when “the Satan,” the present and actual possessor of them, shall be forcibly ejected. They were heirs of these kingdoms patiently waiting to possess them, when they shall become “the kingdoms of Yahweh and of his Anointed,” – that is, of Jesus and his Brethren, illimitably anointed with the effluence of the Eternal Spirit; and thereby constituted “THE YAHWEH ELOHIM ALMIGHTY;” who, having conquered them in the war of his great and terrible day, shall reign over them during the Aions of the Aions, or the thousand years – Rev. 11:15; 16:14; 20:4,6.”

“The Smyrneans did not entertain the silly and absurd notion, so characteristic in our day of clerical craziness, that they were either the kingdom itself, or in the kingdom! Not having been Nikolaitanized, they did not believe that “the church” was “the kingdom of grace,” and transkyana “the kingdom of glory above,” where immortal souls” sing and dance to the hundredth psalm! This teaching of the Nikolaitans, or vanquishers of the people the Spirit says, “I hate.” The Ephesians hated it; and scripturally enlightened people of the first century, and of the nineteenth, and of all intervening centuries, despise it and hate it also, with a hatred most perfect and cordial. It is nothing but Gnostic Heathenism, contemptible and hateful to Deity, and all the saints.”

ARE OUR CONSCIENCES SEARED WITH A HOT IRON?

Everybody has a conscience, the reflective part of the mind. It has an important role basically in our past, but it can spill over into the future in that we may try to project what we might do for one situation or another. Mainly, though, our consciences reflect over what has happened in our past. And based upon our response to different situations, our conscience is responsible for our happiness or unhappiness. As we honestly look at ourselves, we have to live with who we are and how our conduct affects our conscience in response to similar given circumstances.

When we or someone gives into a temptation of some sort, they are repressing their conscience in one way or another. By refusing to consider how we may respond to our actions later, immediate gratification takes over our logic and the conscience will bear yet another burden. What eventually happens is that dealing with our conscience sooner or later is inevitable. It will just not go away.

Think of the illustration we are given of Joseph and his brothers. Many years had passed since Joseph was sold into Egypt. The brothers had to have experienced great conscience rendering by the way they had reported the loss of Joseph to Jacob. Now they are on a trip to Egypt which turned into quite an ordeal. Perhaps they thought it would only be a way to get foodstuffs for their families. They had not thought about Joseph for 22 years, but were thinking about him now. Some people go for longer periods than that with a troubled conscience. Some might have gone their entire life with a bothersome conscience hoping that by the time of their death their “sin” would not be found out. Numbers 32:23 explains that “...*be sure your sin will find you out*”. Our fellow laborers in the vineyard may not discover what has been cloaked, but the conscience and God knows. Having a troubled conscience can cause one to take on an attitude to always be defensive in order to not be “found out”.

This is the way it was with Joseph’s brothers. They had to come to grip with their own sin. Remember they did not know that Joseph could understand them? And here they were, speaking in Hebrew, not knowing Joseph knew what they were saying, “*we are very guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; there is this distress come upon us.*” (Gen 42:21). Have we wondered how Joseph must have felt hearing his brothers firsthand talking like this about him?

What determines then, whether a person sins catch up with him in his lifetime? It seems the answer is whether God chooses to deal with that person. It is better to have to deal with the issue now than at the judgment seat. If we think it is an agony to confess our sins now, there is no way to calculate the agony, the sorrow, the bitterness

or the woefulness we would have at the judgment. So we could say if our conscience is bothering us now, we should feel blessed because God has chosen to place this on our hearts. God is dealing with us now.

How does the troubled conscience work? Are there any signs? In looking into the issue with Joseph's brothers, their memory of what they had done is awakened. Then maybe fear of exposing what they did grips them. Here were the nine brothers returning back to Canaan...having to face their father...under a huge burden of guilt. Their worst fears were coming up to the surface and they could no longer deny the awful truth that had been buried inside their consciences for so long. Their ability to suppress the deed was gone. It seemed like things were progressing too rapidly. Were they wondering, "What's next?" The thing that they did not want ever known...was what they had done to Joseph. What's even worse...the one person they did not want to know...was their father. Just knowing that may have been unbearable. Do we have some great fear? Are we likely to keep it to ourselves?

"Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way..." (Gen. 42:25) Doesn't this act by Joseph make you wonder why he did that? It is obvious that Joseph loved his brothers in spite of their deception many years ago. Joseph did not want to hurt them or take their money. If we think about it, had Joseph wanted to harm them, he could have prevented God's process of vindication right then and there. The Governor of Egypt had the power to vindicate himself right on the spot. Joseph had become personally and emotionally involved. He realized that a greater lesson was to be learned for himself and his brothers by the hand of God. Joseph realized that the God who had been with him could turn on him as well, should God's purpose be tampered with. Joseph could not bend the rules just because God was with him. God does not tolerate vindicating oneself for prideful reasons. If we find a way to vindicate ourselves and get away with it, it is not a good sign, for it would suggest that God is not dealing with us.

Sometimes God will put us within an easy grasp to vindicate ourselves only to test our resolve to allow Him to help us or let us stand alone. Romans 12:19 says *"vengeance is mine...saith the Lord"*. And then realize what the inspired writer of Romans again tells us in the full context of these verses (Rom. 12:19-20), *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."* Joseph fed them. He commanded that their sacks be filled with corn, and their money restored.

As we look at this instance in time and the life of Joseph, we can see the classic example of a troubled conscience bearing its inner secret. As the nine brothers headed home, what should have been good news was really bad news for them. Think of how they must have felt when on the first evening of their return journey, they discover the money in their sacks. This would have been good news if they had good

consciences. But that isn't what happened. When they saw the money *"...their heart faileth them, and they were afraid..."* (Gen. 42:28) They were realizing that unconfessed sins breed constant fear. The words of Proverbs 28:13 say it best, *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."* God does not want us to be afraid or fearful. *"let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* (John 14:27)

The only explanation that the nine brothers could come up with was *"What is this that God hath done unto us?"* They finally realized that God was in control and was leading them to take the next step towards restoring the complete bond between them and their father. It was only going to be a matter of time. They were getting closer and closer to exposing and admitting their crime. They knew Joseph was alive and they would have to tell their father. Deep down they knew that Joseph wanted their father to come to grips with what had happened many years ago and their deception, and most importantly, their willingness to ask for Jacob's forgiveness. This would be a test for Jacob as well. We see the lesson. The sooner God chooses to deal with us, the better. The sooner our conscience allows an opportunity to attain resolution, the better. Yes, it can be painful, but when we realize our God is a loving God, overcoming that pain or apprehension becomes easier. Much better now than at the Judgment Seat.

The nine brothers now arrive back home. Along the way they probably were asking each other, "Who is going to do the talking? We must tell our father we can't return to Egypt without Benjamin." As we look at the text, we can see some interesting ways the events are related back to Jacob. The brothers report to Jacob what had happened in Egypt but only revealing what they had to reveal: *"The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies"* (Gen. 42: 30-31) And guess what this man said to us Jacob? *"Bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies..."* (Gen. 42:34).

They were getting closer and closer to their worst fear...that their father might learn the truth. But it makes you wonder if they would have said even as much as they did, had they not left Simeon behind? God has a way of forcing us to admit certain things. Now came the hardest part, they had to say, *"Benjamin must go to Egypt."* Even though they didn't want to, they had to reveal this to Jacob. Wow! Imagine seeing their faces as they looked upon Jacob and would see his heart strings being pulled apart! The anguish of Jacob who had to face the chance of losing his youngest son to a foreign king, would have been the biggest hurt and pain they had ever experienced! But they had no choice. No their consciences were not seared with a hot iron. Their pain was great, but their relief would soon be greater.

They experienced, perhaps we do at times as well, the pain of being boxed in without any way to achieve relief but by admitting error and remorse and confession to not become entangled with a troubled conscience ever again. *"...let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand*

of man.” (2 Sam. 24:14). The writer to the Hebrews says it best in Chapter 12, verse 6, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth...”

We know the end of this matter with the full restoration of Jacob to his family and the happiness of true confession (“saying the same thing God says about sin”) awards the troubled conscience. Living with a troubled conscience can dim the beauty of the Truth of the Gospel. It can destroy our hope and challenge our faith. Let our hearts become refreshed and let us lay aside the weight that does so easily beset and run the race with a clear conscience towards the imminent Kingdom.

W. Lynn Harrell

JERUSALEM: 1967-2007

June 7th of this year marks the 40th anniversary of the uniting of Jerusalem under Israeli control on the third day of what is commonly known as the Six Day War – a preemptive measure on the part of Israel to counter the indications of an invasion by Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The war would also include the troops of countries such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Algeria.

Beside all of the pre-war rhetoric on the Arab side, war was not really desired at that time, or at least no one wanted to be the first to start war, including Gamal Abdel Nasser. But due to incessant Soviet support and encouragement, and the inability of the Arab leaders to refrain from being irrationally carried away by their hatred of Israel as well as playing to the frenzied passions of their own people, the climate of the region steadily heated up towards conflict (no doubt with the directing hand of Yahweh). The region was being carried towards another war whether they really wanted it or not. But this war would not be like Israel’s neighbors planned it would be. On May 26th of that year Nasser made the bold assertion: “If Israel embarks on an aggression against Syria or Egypt the battle against Israel will be a general one and not confined to one spot on the Syrian or Egyptian borders. The battle will be a general one and our basic objective will be to destroy Israel.”

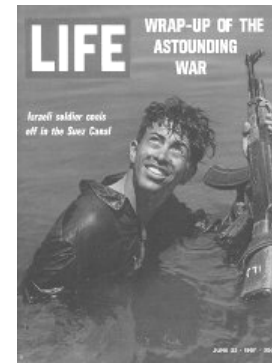
Israeli leaders themselves perceived that Nasser (apart from the rhetoric) was not interested in war at that time, and neither was Israel’s Prime Minister – Levi Eshkol.



In a pre-war cartoon, a Lebanese paper depicts Nasser, backed by Arab states, kicking Israel into the Gulf of Aqaba

But due to the continued process of escalation as demonstrated by the Egyptian closure of the Straights of Tiran, the signing of an Egyptian-Jordanian “defense” treaty and the handing over of the Jordanian military forces to Egyptian command, and aggressive troop movements on part of the Arabs on Israel’s borders put Israel under extreme pressure to either call their bluff or risk being the victim of another invasion by the much improved and armed Arab alliance. To wait and be the victim of an invasion would result in an extremely high casualty rate (1% of the Israeli population in the 1948 War of Independence). This was not a gamble that Israel was willing to make. But, they knew that they would only have a matter of days to make any gains before the world community would interfere.

The tensions were exponentially compounded by Soviet involvement in the situation. The Soviets had long supported the Arab cause through military advisement as well as financial and military support in opposition to American interests in the region. In the days leading up to the war as part of a larger global power play, Russian diplomatic efforts were geared toward providing a mixture of real and false intelligence to both Egypt and Israel regarding one another’s intentions towards war. Russia was playing their typical game of brinkmanship that soon would spiral out of their own control.



Israeli soldier cools off in the Suez Canal

That the matter then (as is today) is not just a regional issue but a global matter was summarized by Lyndon Johnson’s message to the Soviets preceding the war - that if Egypt were to attack, “then the United States will consider itself freed from the commitments it gave to the USSR to exercise restraint.” And as the Egyptian defense minister was told by a Russian diplomat – “if America enters the war we will enter it on your side.”

Despite constant and panicked diplomatic shuffling and an extremely hesitant Prime Minister in Israel, on the morning of June 5th at 7:10 a.m. “Operation Dawn” was launched by the Israeli military. Literally within a matter of hours (if not minutes) the Egyptian air force had been obliterated, and within days Israeli troops had reached and gained control of the Suez canal and the Sinai Peninsula, had captured the Golan, had pushed the Jordanian armies out of the “West Bank”, and as a source of extreme excitement had taken control and united all of Jerusalem. If the events of 1947/48 were not thrilling enough in relation to long held prophetic expectations, the miraculous events of the Six Day war had exalted Israel from a fragile existence to the position of a regional and military power and a major player in world affairs at large with Jerusalem restored as its heart once again.

2,300 days

In Daniel 8 we are given the prophecy of the 2,300 days (or years – “day for a year” principle). We are told in verse 14, “unto two thousand and three hundred days;

then shall the sanctuary be cleansed”, which if calculated from Alexander’s decisive victory over the Persian Empire (the smiting of the Persian “ram” by the Grecian “goat”) at Issus in B.C. 333 brings us to 1967. The whole vision is described in verse 26 as the “vision of the evening and morning” and the proper rendering of the passage in verse 14 is “unto two thousand and three hundred evening morning” or “evenings and mornings” .

The word “days” found here in the Authorized Version is from two words: *ereb* - dusk/evening and *boqer* - dawn/morning. The implications of the phrase is connected to the Levitical offerings made every evening and morning (Lev. 6:20) which were to be carried out continually or “perpetually”, which indicates an expanded but indefinite time period. But the period here in Daniel is specific and due to its rebellion Judah would become the offering implied. This would be a “perpetual” period of extreme suffering on the part of Israel. As bro. Thomas explained in the Exposition of Daniel (p. 28) – “This was an evening of sacrifice of the nation, in which they eat bread of affliction with bitter herbs, until the time of the morning come”. With the termination of the 2,300 “evening morning” period, Israel’s dawn would approach. This writer finds it interesting that Israel, though not knowing the outcome at the time, named their 1967 offensive “Operation Dawn”.

Vindication of the Holy

The word “sanctuary” in Dan. 8:14 in the Hebrew (*kodesh*) actually indicates “holy” in relation to the holy city, or land. The word “cleansed” (*nitzadaq*) is better understood as to be *vindicated from injury or violence*. Now when was this vindication to take place? As dramatic and significant as the events of 1967 were in bringing an end to over two millenia of Gentile domination of Jerusalem and the Land; this was the terminus of a prophetic time period but also the beginning of events that would lead to its complete vindication by Christ and his Redeemed. A taint still overshadows the City and the Land from various Gentile influences, which will be compounded by the coming Gogian invasion. Bro. Thomas continues to comment on p. 29 – “Let it be observed, that this does not teach that the avenging of the holy is to commence immediately...It only gives us to understand that when that period is passed, the next series of events in relation to the Holy Land shall be the manifestation of things necessary to wrest it from the Gentiles, and to avenge it in their overthrow.”

40 years later

We still wait, 40 years after the momentous events of June, 1967. The fervor and zeal stirred up in the Household by those exciting and encouraging events has faded. But with all that we have seen transpire and the ever increasing amount of prophetic circumstances that are coming together before our eyes, the fervor and zeal should not **and cannot** be diminished in us. The world scene, as we now see it coming together, is a direct result of those events in 1967. The outcome of the war shifted the balance of power in the Middle East and is even recognized by observers in the world to be the single most influential factor of present tensions. Jerusalem, under the possession of the nation of Israel, is a “burdensome stone” in the world’s eyes and an ever increasing

catalyst for the resurgence of hatred towards Israel and the Jews. This has not only been true among the Islamic populace but also in relation to three major political influences of the prophesied last days. We speak of the dragon (Russia), beast (Europe) and false prophet (the Papacy) whose “frog like spirits”, or influences are to gather the world “to the battle of that great day of God Almighty”.

Russia was embarrassed by the fiasco of the Six Day War, and shortly after a Russian official complained to an American diplomat that, “The war has shown that the Arabs are incapable of unity even when their vital interests are at stake.” Time after time this observation has proven to be true. As threatening as some of the Arab/Islamic influences have been, and as united as they are in their hatred towards Israel, they have not been able to overcome their hatred towards each other. They have been a “pricking brier”, a source of constant irritation and embarrassment to Israel but not a threat to their very existence. (We are now watching the brutal struggle between Hamas and Fatah in Gaza and the strife in Iraq as more examples of this fact.)

Rome was also not pleased with the result of the War. First of all they view the resurgence of the Jewish nation as a direct threat to their own “spiritual” significance. Secondly, they view the “holy sites” found in Jerusalem as needing to be under Roman jurisdiction – desiring Jerusalem to be declared an “International City” under Papal control. As was boldly stated to Cardinal Dellacava by Israel’s ambassador to Rome, “As a Jew and as a citizen of Israel, it is clear to me that Jerusalem belongs entirely to Israel...that fact was determined a thousand years before Christianity and 2,000 before Islam, and the Vatican had better find a way of reconciling itself to it.”

The Vatican and much of the world has still not reconciled itself to the fact and most countries still do not recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capitol. The time is coming when the world will lose patience with the inability of Israel’s neighbors to deal with “the problem” of Israel and Jerusalem. A Russian confederacy, including nations such as Iran (Persia) and France (Gomer), with the approval of Rome are coming closer to thinking an “evil thought” in taking care of this “burden” once and for all. (Ez. 38,39; Dan. 11; Joel 3; Hab. 3; Zech 14). We are seeing the prophesied political elements coming together as we speak in anticipation of “that great day”, when at the height of human pride against Deity’s purpose the Holy Land and City are to be fully vindicated against the wicked offensive of the Kingdom of Men in taking a spoil (Ez. 38:13) and planting “the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain” (Dan. 11:45).

In the 62nd chapter of Isaiah we read, “*For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Yahweh shall name.*” We can be assured that Yahweh’s purpose is moving ahead and is so very close to visible manifestation in all its long hoped for benefits that await His Faithful servants, and the participation in the glorious vindication to come that results in the salvation and blessing of National Israel.