

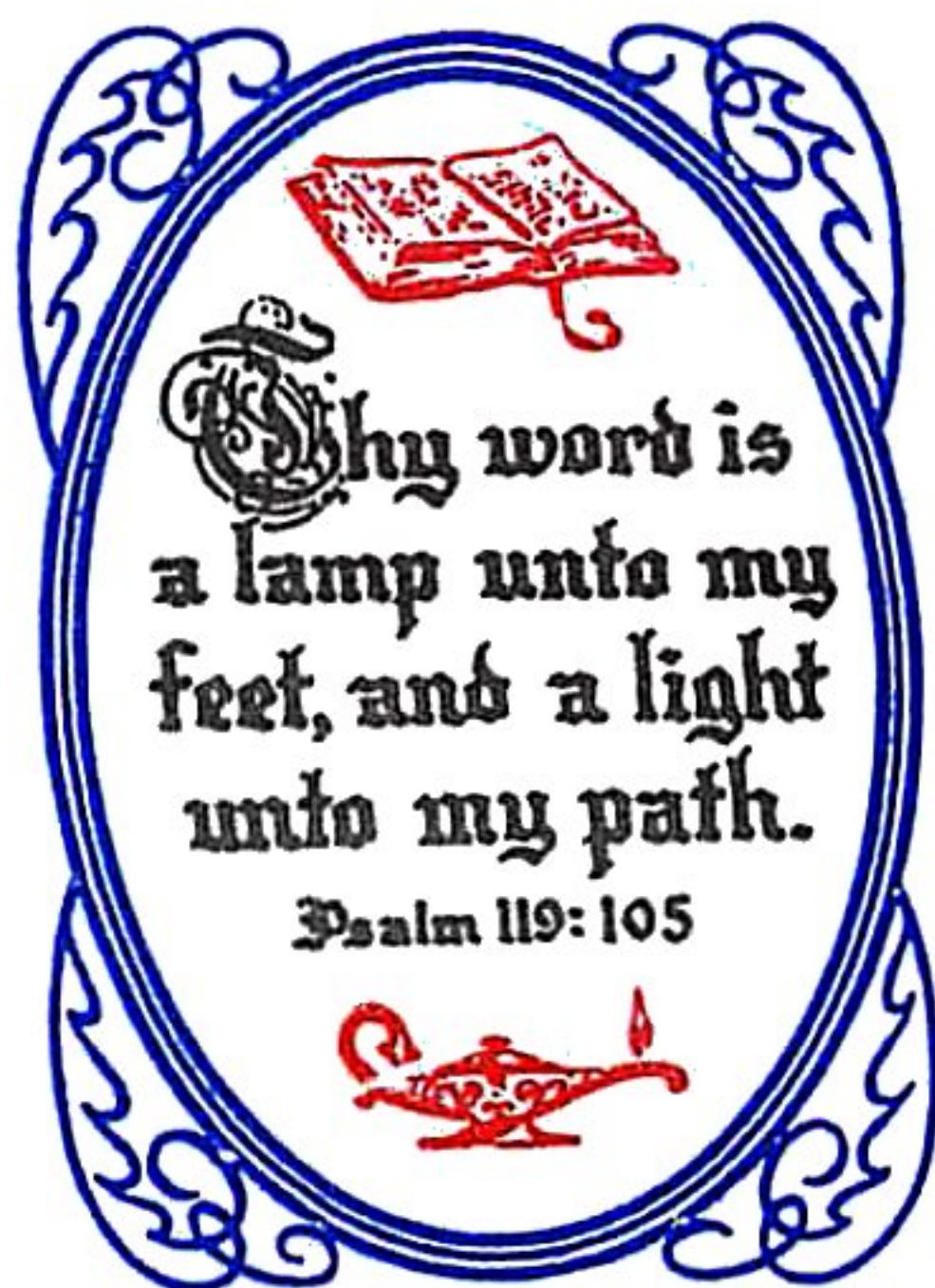
# Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the  
whole counsel of GOD

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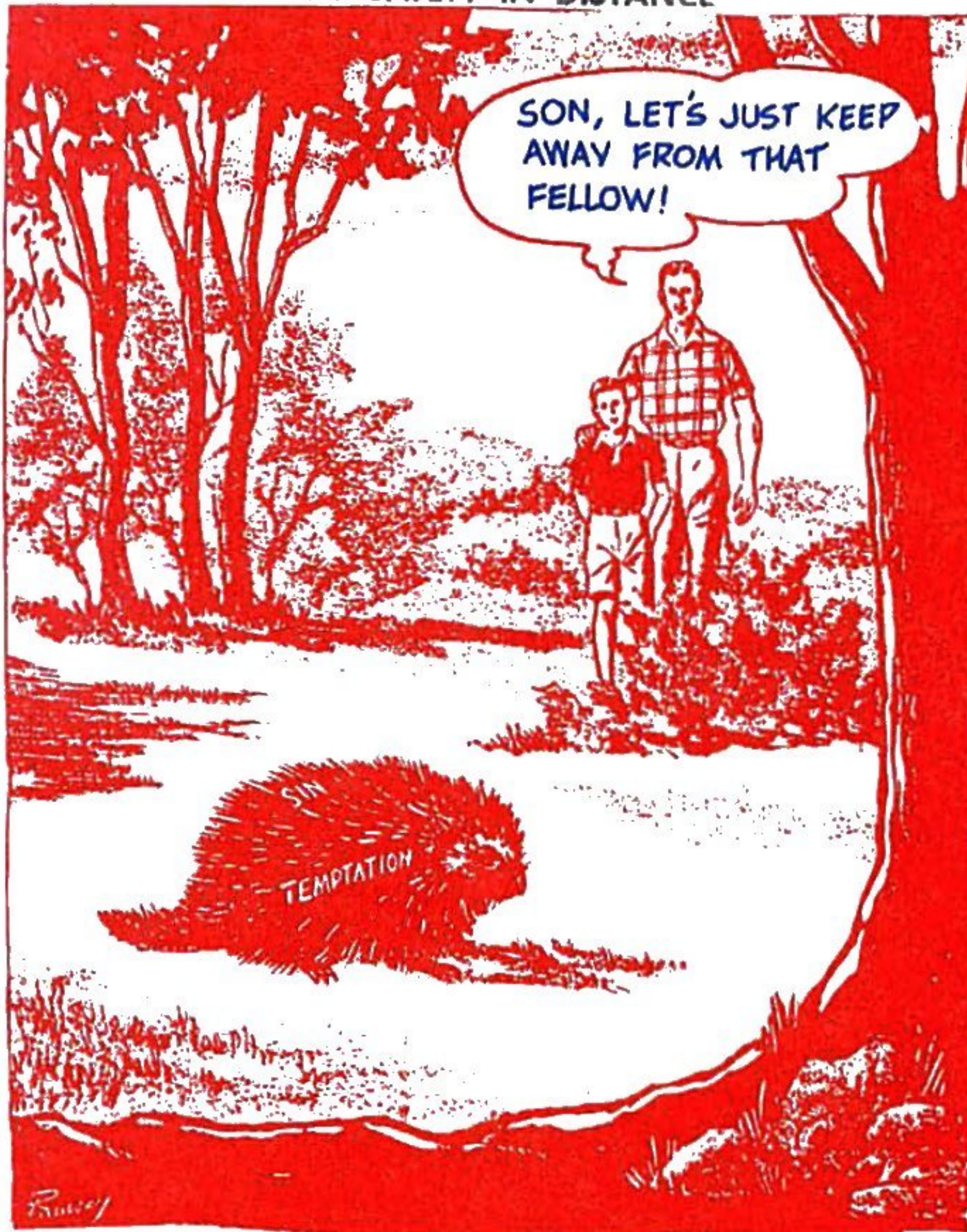




# Table of Contents

| Article                              | Author        | Page |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|------|
| Definite Sign Posts of the End.....  | Gene Hawkins  | 3    |
| Freedom In Christ.....               | Anonymous     | 9    |
| To Be A Chaste Virgin.....           | Frankie DeGan | 11   |
| Made Yourself Ready.....             | A.S. Copley   | 20   |
| Occupy Till He Come.....             | D.E. Hill     | 28   |
| Tabernacle in the Wilderness #14.... | Vicky Moots   | 33   |

## THERE'S SAFETY IN DISTANCE



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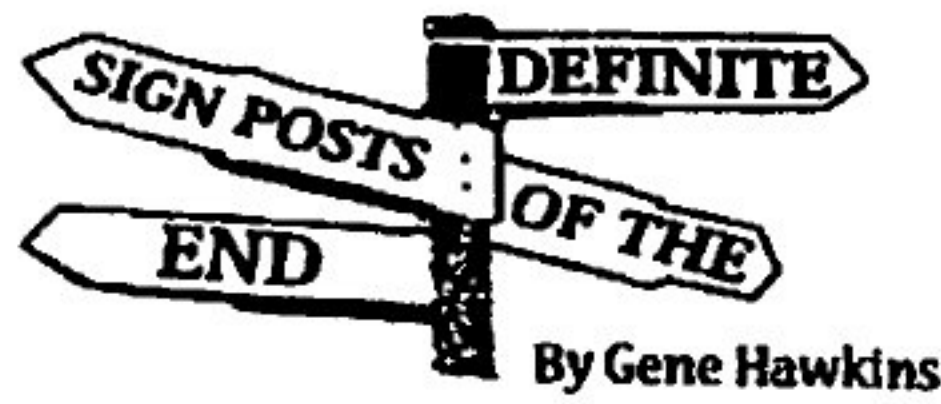
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Editor: Gene Hawkins





“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” I Thess. 5:1-3

These Thessalonian believers were a very spiritually elite group. Paul highly commended them for being in the light rather than in darkness. He specifically praised them for their knowledge that, “the day of the Lord...” (which is in reality a day of judgment) “...should overtake you as a thief.” They were simply not oblivious to that impending difficulty. He further admonished them to “...be sober...” and to refrain from sleep and drunkenness, the reason being that “... God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,” I Thess. 5:9 The apostle does not refer here to the “...wrath of hell...” but rather to the wrath of the great tribulation from which God purposed for them to escape. 3

Daniel is also a great advocate of God’s Sovereignty along this line for he is very clear that it is God, Who “ ... changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings.... “ Once again, He is sovereign in this matter, and it behooves all men to submit to His authority regarding the leaders of this world, including that of President Trump.

It has been stated previously in these pages that Pres. Donald J. Trump is currently God’s man of the hour. He has orchestrated the “Abraham Accords,” which were designed to bring peace to Israel and her neighbors in the Middle East. He has persuaded Iran to sign on to “The memorandum of understanding,” (MOU) which most world political leaders think Iran will ignore. American economy has soared due to his efforts, as many nations are now contributing money to American coffers, literally “buying in” to the American economy. The President and many of his associates are also touting the idea that the efforts of this President will bring lasting peace to the Middle East.



God's Word begs to differ. President Trump has used great military force to bring Iran to her knees, but given current world conditions, the scriptural record found in Rev. 8 presents the fact that such peace will not prevail for Israel and her neighbors. "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;" Rev. 8:8 This is the vivid description of a nuclear holocaust. The "great mountain," can be none other than Iran who has proven that she will sacrifice her own people to achieve her purpose, as seen by the Suicide bombers of Sept. 11, 2001.

4 It is of further interest that, "destruction cometh upon them, **as travail upon a woman with child**; and they shall not escape." This designated "...woman..." is without doubt Israel, who will give birth to the "...man child..." as both Isaiah and John confirm. "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child." Isa 66:7 "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." Rev. 12:5 These accounts were recorded thousands of years apart, yet they are synonymous with one on another, the reason being that both were inspired by the Holy Ghost. Much of the Church insists that the "...man child..." is Jesus, but that can in no wise be the case. First: Jesus has not been a "...child..." since He was born "A Babe" in the manger at Bethlehem. Secondly, He could not be "...caught up unto God..." for He is already there, and has been, since He was raised from the dead on the third day after He was crucified. The simple fact is that He is the God Who will be ruling in God's stead for 1000 years. The man child is the 144,000. They are the same as the five wise virgins in Matthew 25.

God has also brought forth Iran as a very prominent leader in these last days of The Church Age. He has seen to it that Iran is in her present role of leadership and rebellion against Israel and America. Scripture is clear that He will bring justice to this nation after she has completed the purposes which He has ordained for her, but there can be no doubt that Iran is the only current nation which fits the criteria for the nuclear holocaust described in Rev. 8. "And the second angel sounded, and as it



were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.” Rev. 8:8-9 This is most assuredly the record of a nuclear holocaust and, once again, the only current nation, having the credentials to achieve it, is Iran. She has made it very clear that she has no regard for life, even that of her own people, since she instructed her suicide bombers to fly their planes into the world trade center those many decades ago. She is, at this present time, engaged in launching drones, missiles, and other weapons of war, against Israel and her own Middle Eastern neighbors, using proxies such as Hamas and Hezbollah to do it. Hamas is the terrorist group which literally invaded Israel without provocation on Oct. 7, 2023, but world-wide sympathies seem to lie with Iran and Hamas rather than with Israel and America. This too was prophesied, as Jesus plainly declared in Matt. 24. “...Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: **and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.**” 5  
Matt. 24:4-9

Let us make no mistake: It is actually Jesus, Who is hated! “The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.” Joh. 7:7 Thus, if any of God’s people declare the same message, that He did, they too will be hated “ ... for my name’s sake.”

It bears repeating that much of the hatred leveled against Israel is because the younger generation world-wide, is standing up in support of the Palestinians, who have vowed to destroy God’s Chosen People and drive them into the sea. We can only wonder, whether or not their parents have taught them that America is the most prominent ally of Israel. It is once again gratifying to know that Pres. Trump has repeatedly pledged his support for this tiny nation, and is thus in absolute agreement with God. Note also the fact that the Justice Department is considering the possibility of prosecuting the parents for their children’s demonstrations **in behalf of Palestinians against Israel.** The following account declares that, “The Justice Department



will prosecute the parents of teenagers who break curfew as part of a crackdown on crime in the nation's capital ahead of celebrations this summer for America's 250th birthday..."

"At a news conference at Justice Department headquarters, Jeanine Pirro, the U.S. attorney in D.C., decried "teen takeovers" — a trend in which crowds of dozens or hundreds of young people meet in buzzy nightlife areas and sometimes cause mayhem. She said these takeovers have terrorized local businesses in neighborhoods such as Navy Yard and NoMa and cost taxpayers money. The federal crackdown comes as the Trump administration has repeatedly intervened in D.C.'s public safety system..." The latest of those tussles has been over a youth curfew policy that the mayor has pushed as a solution to the takeovers. The curfew, in effect for much of the past year, allowed the police chief to declare special 8 p.m. "curfew zones" in areas where large groups of youth gather. But after expiring in April, the policy has hit roadblocks in the D.C. Council, where a significant minority of lawmakers oppose extending it. Still, it's unclear how Pirro's plan — which will be accompanied by an increase in National Guard troops and a surge in other federal law enforcement resources, officials said — will play out in the city. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) said Friday that D.C.'s police department did not have the resources to pursue arrests of parents as envisioned by Pirro.

Another very prominent example of rebellion against God and His order is revealed by what we might call, "the doctrine of transgenderism." There are multiple teens who insist that they were not put in the right body. Some males insist that they are actually female and females claim the same argument. This should come as no surprise to those familiar with God's Word. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman,



burned in their lust one toward another men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet." Rom 1:24-27 The essence of these words is that "God made a mistake," which is a gross impossibility. Thus, those who would engage in this ungodly practice are in direct rebellion against God and they will receive "...in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet." God is a God of Love, for "...God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Joh 3:16 But God is also a God of Justice, meaning that His Righteous Gov't. must punish sin. He did that when He laid all the sins of mankind for all time upon Jesus and subsequently poured out His wrath upon Him, for Jesus had become the very personification of sin. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." II Cor. 5:21

Many died by crucifixion during the era when Jesus walked this earth, but none of them were cast into outer darkness as was Our Saviour, when He hung on the cross at Calvary. This is the reason for His tormented cry in Psa. 22. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent." Psa. 22:1-2 David surely felt this way but only Jesus actually experienced this total separation from God in those final three hours upon the cross.

The good news is that such punishment upon sin was only temporary and that fact is borne out with these words, also from Psa. 22. "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee:...They cried unto thee, and were delivered:... But I am a worm, and no man;...despised of the people....they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him:... But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly." Psa. 22:3-10 Once again, these words must be attributed to Jesus rather than David. Only He knew by experience the plight presented by Psa. 22.

We would close this edition of The Sign Posts with our opening text from I Thessalonians. "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.... For



when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." I Thess. 5:1-3 The entirety of this prophecy will not be realized until about 250 days before the middle of the tribulation week. However, since Paul mentions this "...Peace and safety..." scenario which is quickly followed by "...sudden destruction..." we are forced to conclude that a short time of "...Peace and Safety..." may come to pass BEFORE the Great tribulation even begins. It is quite apparent that Jesus is "...even at the door..." but this announcement to these Thessalonian overcomers may surely bespeak the thought that the present Middle East Peace Agreement sponsored by Pres. Trump may indeed bring forth some semblance of peace even before Jesus comes for His Bride. If that indeed be the case, it is time for those who are looking and longing for Jesus' soon appearing to "...look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28

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8

*Canst thou take the barren soil  
And with all thy pains and toil,  
Make lilies bloom?  
Thou canst not! O helpless man,  
Have faith in God. He can!  
Canst thou paint the clouds at eve,  
And all the sunset colors weave  
Into the sky?  
Thou canst not! O powerless man,  
Have faith in God. He can!  
Canst thou still thy troubled heart  
And make all cares and doubt depart  
From out thy soul?  
Thou canst not! O faithless man,  
Have faith in God. He can!*



## FREEDOM IN CHRIST

“But now being made free from sin and become servants to God; ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. x x For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” – Rom 6:22 and 8:2.

Aside from several suggestive additions, we quote verbatim the following comments on Paul's freedom in Christ. Let us read it.

An earthly life of humble, holy, loving happy obedience to God is the proper end of the gospel truly preached. (That is its end for this present life.) Let no man dream that God sets His saints free to sin, or to self-will. He is holy, and could not do this; He is loving and would not do it. Yet, He does make them free, and He employs “the gospel of His Son” to do it.

No one in all the Roman Empire had more liberty than the writer of the letter to the Romans. His conscience was freed from guilt, though “the chief of sinners” (that is, before he trusted Jesus.) He was free from sin in which he had been born. He was free from the law, which had been especially given by God to his nation. He was free in his apostleship to use all manner of good earthly things – so free before his Lord that a special reward is to be given him for foregoing his freedom, as often he did – I Cor. 9:15, 18. And he was “free from all men” – even from the apostles that followed our Lord on earth; so free from all men, that he could bring himself under bondage to all, to win the more. 9

### **Whence This Freedom?**

It is idle to ask for the secret of the wonderful life of Paul in the man himself. If he, in the Spirit, writes; “By the Grace of God I am what I am,” why do you point to his education at Tarsus or Gamaliel's feet? If he says: “I am nothing,” why do you call him “a great logician?” If he declares that “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God,... but we have the mind of Christ,...and speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth,” why not believe just that?

In Moses and Paul, the two great fundamental revelators of the oracles of God – one of Law, the other of Grace – God outpoured utterly the world-wisdom, self-sufficiency and self-confidence of each. Moses became the meekest of men; and Paul less than the least of all saints. Moses ministered before God in outward



things, while God wrought for him: Paul ministered in inward things, while Christ wrought in him. Union with Christ in glory, and Christ indwelling by the Spirit – this was Paul’s open secret. And if this apostle declareth that “THE GOSPEL is the power of God unto salvation,” why not find just what this “Gospel” is, for sinner and saint, and hearken to it? For “faith cometh by hearing” the Word of God. – Rom 10:17. We do not know whether the writer of the above words has chosen Paul’s freedom to be his own, or not, for men often speak and write truth quite beyond their own experiences. But, beloved, Paul taught doctrine and wrote his experiences, not for our admiration, but “for our admonition.” God made him to know and enjoy Christ, not for himself alone, but that we may know and enjoy Him. He learned the way of victory for us. He was free that we might be free. He became all things to all men that we too by the same indwelling Christ may become all things to all men that we may gain the more. We may “be thus minded,” even as He. Let us gaze upon the dear lovely Son of God as revealed to Paul and unfolded to us by His pen, and be “filled with all the fulness of God.” Let us take freely and abundantly all that our eyes see in Christ. Who ever heard of a fine dinner prepared simply to be admired, simply to be eulogized for its display of meats, sweet-meats and wines and banquet utensils? Nay, it is prepared to be enjoyed by eating and drinking and making merry. Likewise, our adorable Redeemer and Friend, Jesus Christ, has come to be known and loved and enjoyed forever. Oh, let us feed on Him by eating the Truth about Him, and then we shall gladly feed others with Him as “the living Bread.” “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

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If you would be an overcomer, let Christ  
overcome you and in you.

The little pointed arrows;  
The thorns that prick and vex,  
Which seem to overcome us  
And make our way complex,  
Are meant to make us eager



## TO BE A CHASTE VIRGIN!

Frankie DeGan

**“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” – II Cor 11:2**

First, let's dissect this verse. The first word “jealous” in this verse means “to have warm feelings”, “have desire”, “zealously affect”, “to be full of zeal for good”. The word “godly” means “divine” and the second word “jealousy” means “zeal”, “ardor [ar-der] in embracing, pursuing, defending”. I love the definition Webster provides for “ardor”. It means “extreme vigor or energy of a true believer”.

This is the description of the “godly jealousy” the Apostle Paul has for all believers. He desired unity among all the believers and assemblies. He continued to work to that end, in the ministry as Chief Apostle.

The word “espoused” means “to woo”, “to betroth to someone” and Webster defines “betroth” as “to promise to marry”. This is the engagement. The wedding has not occurred yet. This is our time to become one with Christ, the “one husband” in our text verse.

11

*“Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth.” – Rom 7:1.* Most people when they see the word “law” in the scripture, they think it always refers to the Mosaic Law, but there are 4 different laws mentioned in Romans 7.

- \* The Law of Life which is the one we will look at today

- \* The Law of God which does include the Mosaic Law but encompasses all the Law or Word of God – verse 7

- \* The Law of Sin – verse 23

- \* And the Law of the New Creation Life – also verse 23

In this study we are interested in the first “law” mentioned... the Law of Life. The “Law of Life” bound us to Adam, not the Law of Moses. We are born into this world as a human being so we are bound to Adam by the “Law of Life.” Paul uses the marriage relationship as an example.

*“For the woman who hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he liveth;” – Rom 7:2a.* Note, this first husband we read of here in verse 2 was Adam, and



we are bound to Adam as long as he lives. This is the first Adam, the old creation. She is subject to this husband until death.

*"But if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband."* – Rom 7:2b. Paul is saying the same thing he said back in Romans 6 "that our old man is crucified with Christ" and that we are to reckon ourselves "to be dead unto sin". This is the first Adam, our old creation that has died with Christ on Calvary. Jesus has provided freedom of the old man to ALL. We that believe on Jesus, are accepting this gift of freedom. He has made us free or loosed us from the dominion of the first Adam and we have been raised up with Christ in newness of life. We are loosed from the old husband, Adam and free to be joined unto Christ.

*"So, then if, while her husband liveth, [1st Adam] she be married to another man [2nd Adam], she shall be called an adulteress;"* – Rom 7:3a. Yes, this would be in the natural, but Paul is bringing this up to explain the spiritual state of believers. In this condition, she is committing spiritual adultery. There is to be no involvement with another outside the marriage relationship.

Our spiritual state will be one of these **two conditions** as described here:

- 12
1. After our new birth, if we continue to yield to the 1st Adam or 1st husband we will bear his fruit. This is the carnal condition Paul teaches us about. He first mentions it in Rom 7:14 and again in Rom 8:7. He goes into the topic deeper in 1st Corinthians.
  2. Or if after our new birth, we nurture the new creation by God's word, we will grow in Christ.

*"...But if her husband [1st Adam] be dead,"* – Rom 7:3b. This means, if we reckon that old man dead, *"...she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man [the 2nd Adam]."* – Rom 7:3c. This is condition #2, the spiritual, where we want to be found as a believer. Having reckoned the old man dead and submitting to the new man.

This is why Paul uses this analogy or parallel as we now see both Adams here. The first husband is symbolic of the old creation or the first Adam and the second husband is symbolic of the new creation or the second Adam.

Christians have two natures residing within us. The old nature/first Adam and the new nature/second Adam. Those remaining in the carnal condition are trying to bear fruit with two husbands.

When a person is first born-again, they are what we



call baby Christians. An infant in Christ. It is at this point the old creation is still dominating. They need to be fed the word of God and have a revelation of reckoning the first Adam dead. Until this occurs their fruit is unacceptable to God. We see in I Cor that is of wood, hay and stubble. Those things of self-effort, self-strength, self-righteousness. Fruit produced in this condition is unacceptable to God. It is not of Christ, the second Adam. Therefore, their fruit is not holy or righteous. God will not attribute these things to His Son.

In verse 4 Paul explains why he used the example of the two husbands. *"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."*

So Paul has described to us the great need in moving out of this carnal realm into the spiritual realm, that we might grow into mature sons of God.

Back to our verse in 2 Cor 11. *"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."*

Paul has espoused all believers, the whole Body of Christ, to this "one husband" which is the second husband, the second Adam, the new creation which is Jesus Christ. But as we mentioned in the beginning of this lesson, we are espoused. We are engaged and Paul says *"...that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."* The word "chaste" means "clean, innocent, modest, perfect, pure." This chastening occurs through our growth. The Lord brings us to this place. *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature [maturity] of the fulness of Christ"* – Eph 4:13. 13

In Revelation we read "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." – Rev 19:7. It's not that she has made herself ready through her own works or strength...it is that she has submitted to Christ during her life on this earth and has grown "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The bride will be fully mature at Rev 19.

But even Paul knew in Phil 3:12 he had not reached that place yet. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that



for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." "Apprehend and apprehended mean "attain, obtain, to lay hold of so as to make one's own." This chaste virgin that Paul wants to present to Christ, is the bride of Christ and she will know the depths of His love. She will receive His love and she will reciprocate His love back to Him as she grows in this relationship we have been learning about.

*"And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him. For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."* - Heb 12:5, 6

We know according to scripture, that if we suffer with Christ we will be joint-heirs with Him. This suffering is not of mistakes we have made because we thought it best to do things our own way. These sufferings are of righteousness. They have been selected to work in our life and to develop growth in us by the Father. To change us from glory to glory into the image of Christ.

*"If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"* - Heb 12:7

**14** *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."* Heb 12:11

Verses 5, 7 and 11 above, we find the word "chastening" means "education, training, correction, instruction." We find the same Greek word in II Tim 3:16; there it is "instruction." *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."*

The meaning of "chasteneth" in Heb 12:6 and chastened" in Heb 12:10 is "instruct, learn, discipline." God's chastening is through His Word... *"precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little"* ...and delivered to us by His Love and Grace.

*"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."* - Ps 23:4. The rod was a club worn at the belt and was a weapon for defense against predators. "Rod" is defined "authority, power, and discipline."

The staff was a walking stick used to guide and direct the sheep and also doubled as a weapon if the situation required it, against any enemy that might arise. "Staff" means "protection, guidance." The staff expresses kindness and longsuffering.

The Shepherd [Jesus Christ] is our protector



expressed by the rod. Rest is a result of this protection. With the staff, He leads/directs our path, guiding us to sustenance. He knows we must be on a nutritious diet of God's Word. He is in control, He is our Head! He provides reproof, correction and instruction to us.

This verse says "*thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*" We must find comfort in the chastening of God no matter if it is for education, training and instruction or discipline and correction. He will perform all this through His love and grace which draws us deep into this intimate relationship with Christ. For Christ to be our head we must submit to Him.

For Paul to present us as this chaste virgin...the Bride of Christ, we must be willing to go through the preparation of chastening. Of being instructed, directed, guided; of resting in the Lord's protection, of submitting to Him as our Head and responding to his correction and discipline when it is necessary in our life. This is where we receive the power within by the Holy Spirit to reckon the old man dead.

So brothers & sisters, let us yield to all these wonderful truths that we might be included in "*...and His wife hath made herself ready.*"

15

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### CHRIST COMES

Mary M. Bodie

After the silence of ages;  
After the waiting of years,  
He cometh-the answer to sages.  
The vision foretold by the seers.

Quickly as lightning that flasheth;  
Brighter than sun in its beams,  
He cometh-the mighty Jehovah,  
But not as the dreamer of dreams.

Regal in splendor, He cometh,  
Scepter of iron to sway.  
All glorious the King in His triumph,  
Upon His inaugural day.

Comes for the help of His people,  
Conquering, faithful and true,  
And calls from the parted, blue heaven,  
"Behold, I will make all things new."



# **SATISFIED**

The following lines were written by and found under the pillow of a dear girl after she had departed to be with the Lord Jesus Christ, who was very precious to her. H.W.

## **“I Shall be Satisfied”**

Psa. 17:15

I shall be satisfied,  
But not while here below,  
Where every earthly cup of bliss  
Is wisely mixed with woe.  
When this frail form shall be  
Forever laid aside,  
And in His likeness, I awake,  
I shall be satisfied.

16

## **“He Shall Be Satisfied”**

Isa. 53:11

He shall be satisfied,  
When all He died to win,  
By loving-kindness gently drawn,  
Are safely gathered in.  
When in the glory bright  
He views His glorious bride,  
Sees of the travail of His soul,  
He shall be satisfied.



# REFLECTIONS

## . . . From the Editor

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."- John 8:31- 36

**Freedom!** What a wonderful concept. We would consider several terms in this passage which are so very applicable to our own personal lives. First: Jesus said "If the son therefore shall make you free..." This word points back to V. 35 meaning that the Son is able to bring freedom directly because "... the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever." Jesus here describes Himself as God... **The ONE** Who abideth forever, **The ONE** Who is eternal. Secondly, "... ye shall be free **indeed**." That term simply signifies that which is "of a truth... verily...of certainty." In other words that which is real.

The third term to consider is "If the Son... shall **make** you free..." Many read this "if the Son set you free," which presents the idea that one is made free immediately by some magical incantation. Real freedom is often a very painful process. Therefore, God's Word is very clear that "... the Son shall **make** you free " which relates the fact that freedom often requires a lengthy and even painful process.

It is also imperative to know that deliverance of any kind is two-fold: "out of and into." God never leaves a void. One must be delivered "out of" one situation and "into" another. God, for example, not only delivered us from the bondage of sin and death, He also delivered us to life and righteousness. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:17



The Jews response to Jesus in V. 33 is almost comical: "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" They were at that very hour under the oppressive hand of the Romans, but seem to be completely oblivious to that fact.

18 This conversation continues as Jesus asserts, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you." V. 37 When men reject God's Word, they are vulnerable and are thus open to commit any act of the flesh, including murder. Jesus' indictments against them continue as He declares that, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father." V. 38 The Master emphasizes this declaration in V. 44 of this same chapter. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." Joh 8:44 The argument continues as, "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father." V.39 "Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication;... "The insinuation here is that "You were "... born of fornication..." The Jews never did accept the fact of the virgin birth of Jesus even though it had been prophesied. Therefore, they simply viewed Mary as a young woman who had transgressed against her espoused husband...we have one Father, even God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. 48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.



51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. 52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. 53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? 54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: 55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. 57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." [He meant by this that He was indeed God and therefore was eternal. The Jews revealed their rejection of Him and His Words in V. 59] "Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." His hour was not yet come but it soon would be come, for these same Jews would deliver Him to the Romans to be crucified. Let us be thankful for the freedom we find in Christ. He did all the work at Calvary to offer freedom to all, we only need to believe in Him and continue in His word and "...and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

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## **ANNOUNCEMENT:**

### **STREAMING OF SERVICES**

Gospel Fellowship worship services are being streamed weekly on the website: [www.gracegod.com](http://www.gracegod.com)

Sunday School begins at 10A.M. with the Worship Service following at 11 A.M. CST.

Sunday Afternoon Service begins at 1:30PM

Wed. Evening Prayer Meeting & Bible Study starts at 7 P.M.

Take your liberty and tune in for all these opportunities to learn of God's Word.



## “MADE HERSELF READY”

A.S. Copley

“LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE, AND GIVE HONOR TO HIM: FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY. AND TO HER WAS GRANTED THAT SHE SHOULD BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE (BRIGHT): FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS (RIGHTEOUS ACTS) OF SAINTS” - Revelation 19:7,8.

Who is the Lamb's wife? How does she become such? Where does she come from? Of what nationality is she? Is she the only daughter of some world-famed celebrity? Is she imported from some far country? How did she learn of the possibility or even the probability of a union so great and sublime? These are interesting questions, whose answers are found in the Book of books, and may be discovered in this article. However, we are especially concerned at this time, with the fact that “His wife hath made herself ready.” To have a good clear beginning,

20 we must let our beloved Brother Paul answer our questions.

Addressing the church at Corinth he said, “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy (a jealousy of God): FOR I HAVE ESPOUSED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST” - II Cor. 11:2.

Other scriptures indicate that the assembly in Corinth was to be considered as a type of the whole Church. The Holy Spirit speaks through the Apostle to all the churches, though these letters were written to the individual assemblies. He espoused, or fitted together, or harmonized, the whole Body of present-day believers unto Christ.

But the next verse shows that some believers do not yield to the divine espousal, nor to the process of harmonizing them for the Bridehood. He had grave fears lest some “minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”; that is, turned away from plain chastity and a simple virgin character. False teachers were introducing another gospel which dimmed the God-given vision of Christ that had come to them, and was causing them to depreciate Paul's message and mission. If believers lose their childlike simplicity and virgin purity, they will become entangled with religions and flirt with other lovers.



Their gaze upon Christ will become changeable and unsteady. How then, can they be in the Bride company, though they were originally espoused to Christ? Such saints are not making themselves ready for marriage to the Lamb.

In that unspeakably precious picture of Christ and His wife - The Song of Solomon - it is positively taught that there are daughters, concubines, and queens; but none of them became Solomon's wife. Without pointing out any fault in any of them, he paints in most brilliant colors the character and charms of his friend - his love. He says, "My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her" - Song of Solomon 6:9. The Bride of Christ comes "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" - Rev. 5:9. The Lamb will not marry all that are saved from all lands. "His wife hath made herself ready." When did she do it? Long before the wedding day. When did she begin? In the natural, a woman begins to prepare for the wedding as soon as her friend makes the proposal and she has fully accepted it. In the spiritual, Bridal believers may not be able to tell the day nor the circumstance in which they began getting ready for the wedding in the Heavens. Many people were saved long before they heard Bridal truth taught. Let us look at the rest of our text. She was "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" - her righteous acts or deeds. A lady may be many days making her wedding garments; but she does not wear them till on the wedding day. She tries them on to be sure of a perfect fit; but she is not arrayed thereby. Therefore, let us study the righteous deeds of the Lamb's wife. We shall discover who will constitute the Bride of the Lamb.

In the book of Revelation, we see that the vision of the saints in Heaven, separated into different grades and places, is the climax of their actions and places on earth. The germ and root of such divers experiences and acts, are found in the seven Church letters - Revelation two and three. In every grade or class there is of necessity a beginning, a development, and a consummation.

THE POSITION of the Bride company - "In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne" - Rev. 4:6. The fact of some saints being seen in the throne in Heaven reflects back upon their lives on earth where they became familiar with the throne life. Hallelujah! The throne of grace was their dwelling place.



They became familiar with the Sublime One on the throne. Not only do such saints “come boldly unto the throne of grace” in time of need, but they abide there in the Presence of the Lord where there is fullness of joy and where there are pleasures forevermore. Who is more welcome in the presence of a king than his wife? Think of Esther and Ahasuerus, and of Bathsheba and David. Who can the elders and the living ones portray, in Revelation four, if not the Bride of Christ? They are not the “man child,” for he will be caught up TO GOD and the throne. He is not seen IN the throne, and is caught up to God rather than to the Lamb. “Will the King of kings marry a child”? “Man” is never a figure of a bride; it is always a woman. Is it possible, that the Redeemer with infinite resources cannot find for Himself a full-grown woman but must be joined to a “man child”? Unthinkable! Unspiritual! Illogical! Unscriptural! The Wife of the Lamb makes herself ready for glory and for the Bridehood, by lingering around the throne of grace now and by courting the King’s Son. It is a noticeable fact, that few people expect that close place with the Lord. They stop short with Jude, who sees God able only to present us “faultless BEFORE the Presence of His glory” - Jude 24, instead of “IN THE MIDST of the throne” - Rev. 4:6. They should now live in the Presence of His grace on earth.

22 THE EXULTATION of the Bride company - “And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold” - Rev. 4:4. Be it remembered that the twenty-four elders and the four living ones are the same company, mentioned under different aspects, first as rulers and then as worshipers. When on thrones, they are ruling elders; when on their faces, they are worshipers. Looking back again, we find saints on earth like those whom John saw in Heaven in vision. They are no longer babes in Christ, but are fathers and mothers bearing the stamp of elders. They “receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness,” and “reign in life by One, Jesus Christ” - Romans 5:17. In all things, they “are more than conquerors through Him” - Romans 8:37. They are making themselves ready for thrones in glory. Tho they be in outward bondage here, circumscribed and handicapped, yet they reign by faith and love and hope - turning every dition into stepping stones toward the throne in glory. They pray, while others gossip. They read the Bible, when others read the papers. They worship, when others visit. They toil, while others loiter. They control their own spirits; hence, are “better ... than he that taketh a city” - Proverbs 16:32.



The weakest saint thus becomes strong in the Lord.

CLEARNESS OF VISION belongs to the Bride company - "Full of eyes before and behind... full of eyes within" - Rev. 4:6,8. Do they obtain those eyes after they reach the glory? No! They have them here on earth. They are simple hearted and believe Jesus' words - "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" - John 16:13,14. On earth they grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. The Holy Spirit opens their minds or understanding, and opens to them the Scriptures - Luke 24:32,45 and Romans 12:2. Through Paul's words of superabounding grace, they learn the "perfect will of God" and go on to perfection. See Eph. 1:17,18. When they reach the throne room in glory, they will not feel embarrassed by the surroundings, having become acquainted with them beforehand through the Spirit. Beloved Reader, are you thus learning the Lord and His Word and His Will?

THEIR MOBILE EQUIPMENT - "Had each of them six wings" - Rev. 4:8. Isaiah (6:2) calls them "seraphim," and Ezekiel (1:5) calls them "living creatures." Birds have only two wings; but believers have four on earth, and will have six in Heaven. We are equipped for our various movements in the perfect will of God. Four, being the number of man in the world, figures God's ample supply for all our activities down here. There is none to waste on the flesh, but there is no lack for our activities in the Spirit. Since we will have our glorified bodies in Heaven, we will need two more wings there; and they will be awaiting our arrival. "There is no want to them that fear Him" - Psalm 34:9. 23

THE OCCUPATION of the Bride company - "Worship Him that liveth for ever and ever" - Rev. 4:8-11. Worship will be the supreme employment of the saints in glory, especially of the Queen company. Isaiah hears them exclaiming with seraphic sweetness and power, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6:3) - for our Bridegroom will then be reigning from Heaven over the earth. Hallelujah! John beheld them and said, "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, , which was, and is, and is to come" - Rev. 4:8. Worship is the chief engagement of the full overcomers on earth. I am more and more persuaded of this fact.



To the extent that we learn to worship God in the Spirit here and enjoy that devotion, we will enjoy worship in the ages to come. Our every activity now is a training for the activities in glory. If our chief engagement here is service, like the uncountable number of Revelation seven, service will be our chief activity in the ages to come.

Believe it or not, five times we read of the full overcomers falling down and worshiping; and not once are they termed servants. Study and compare Rev. 4:10; 5:8,14; 11:16; 19:4, and contrast these with Rev. 7:15. Even rulership, as great as it is, cannot be compared with divine worship. The elders "cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" - Rev. 4:10,11. This is sublimely wonderful, that divinely ordained service will be swallowed up in devotion, adoration, worship, and praise.

24 Do you marvel that a countless host will "serve Him day and night in His temple" (Rev. 7:15), while a small minority - probably "ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 14) - will worship the Lord? Does this not stir us up to worship more in the Spirit, and not allow any service - religious, or otherwise - to interfere with our worship? As we do now, we will do then. What we are here, we will be over there. The place we occupy in the Body of Christ on earth, we will surely occupy in Heaven. Is it not solemn? But is not the privilege to worship, both high and sublime? No one need be debarred from it. It is for those who give themselves up to worship, who deliberately choose it, and will not refuse it.

How shall we worship? We learn how, by studying the verses cited before. The elders "give glory and honor and thanks" unto God. They say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power" - Rev. 4:9,11. They fall "down before the Lamb," taking the most lowly and humble place, "having every one of them harps, and golden vials (bowls) full of odors, which are the prayers of saints" - Rev. 5:8. Our bodies, now "earthen vessels," become golden bowls by glorification. Praying in the Spirit is a vital part of worship. Prayers filling these earthen vessels are as sweet odors or incense before the Lord. How sweet and pure, holy and heavenly, is the hour of worship. Singing the high praises of God, also is a great part of divine worship.

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art



worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on (over) the earth" - Rev. 5:9,10. So great and wonderful will be the music and singing of the Bride company, that a hundred million angels will be mightily stirred to praise and adoration. The Bride leads the hosts of Heaven in thanksgiving and praise. She praises the Lord for redemption and for the riches which it has bought for us. Who but the Bride speaks of reigning with Christ as kings and priests? Who but the Bride really learns to enter in and enjoy this holy, heavenly, sublime, and rapturous activity now? Most saints seem to weary of being on their knees after a few minutes. Their voices seem to get tired. Their flesh has not become sufficiently saturated with the Life of Christ and the power of the Spirit to continue long in worship. Work, worry, and warfare have too much place in their lives. They are qualifying themselves to "serve Him day and night in His temple"; for many of them prefer to be with the big crowd.

At the super-glorious banquet in the Heavens, the Bride company will lead in the worship. "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great" - Rev. 19:5. Their voices will have such authority and power, that the great host of servants and those who fear the Lord will immediately respond and exclaim, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" - Rev. 19:6. Observe that "to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white (bright): for the fine linen is the righteousness (righteous acts) of saints" - Rev. 19:8. What a gorgeous array! This is what startles me: That the righteous acts emphasized most are worship and adoration toward the Lord. Not once is it said that the Bride group serves the Lord in Heaven; though no saints serve Him more earnestly and truly than they, and none have a graver responsibility than they. They call the judgment horses into the ring - Rev. 6. They sound the trumpets - Rev. 8:2. They have control of the wrath bowls - Rev. 15:7.

But the ministry that exceeds all others, which is not even termed a ministry, is that of thanksgiving and praise and adoration to the Redeemer and Saviour of men. Therefore, "the garment of Praise" is the most unique and attractive one of the Bride's costly



trousseau. Worship toward God is the greatest and the sublimest act of righteousness that we can render to Him. Of all the linen deeds, this is the fine linen, the clean linen, the bright linen, the most commendatory righteous acts of any saints. No saint clothed with chills, dryness, starch, and form, need hope to be in that choicest of Heavenly bands. If we choke on hallelujahs and praises now, we will miss that high and glorious place up yonder.

Let us make the welkin ring with our adoration, in the home and in the sanctuary. Music drove the devil away from King Saul. Singing and shouting, worship and praise, will drive away the blues and break Satan's fiendish power. No arguing, but praise. No answering back, but praise. Less explaining, but more worship. Less correcting, but more praying. Occupation with Jesus and the Father in wholehearted devotion solves problems, heals wounds, silences criticisms, works wonders, and prepares us for glory. This is the surest way for us to make ourselves ready for the Bridehood in glory. The high priest wore bells on his robe in the Holy Place. Shall not the Bride's raiment ring with the sweet bells of the gentleness and loveliness of her Bridegroom?

26 **FIRST TO BE SEEN IN HEAVEN** is the Bride company. Revelation four informs us that, when the throne is being set in Heaven on which our Lord shall be crowned, the twenty-four elders and the four living ones are there to behold it. The innumerable company of saints and the one hundred and forty-four thousand will appear later - Revelation seven. This fact also reflects back to their experiences on earth. Full overcomers are in the front rank here. They are the foremost to see and receive the deep things of God. They lead out in real spirituality. They blaze the way for others. They have the vision of divine grace, and are anointed with Pentecostal power. Full overcomers are the first to learn the value and the power of the Word of God, and they seek to know it from beginning to end. They are not content with a head knowledge of the Scriptures, but they let the Spirit work it in them. Christ becomes their very life down here - "not I, but Christ." - and their exceeding great reward hereafter. They glory only in the Cross, and never in their own achievements. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"; and this is their daily attire. They are intent on being ready for the wedding in glory.

**THE OUT-TRANSLATION** is the controlling objective of the Bride company. If she is seen first in



Heaven, she must arrive there first. She is not generalizing about the coming of the Lord, putting it off into the vague future. She looks for Him daily. The hope of Jesus' advent purifies the waiting saints. Nothing is permitted to dim that hope. This very fact, that the comparative few are actually looking, longing, and yearning for Him to come while the many are indefinite about it, indicates the out-translation. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear" - Hebrews 9:28. What about those who are not looking? What about those who are building big things down here? What about those who have double vision? The Apostle Paul made himself ready, so that he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." He was sure of the crown; for he loved the Lord's appearing - II Tim. 4: 7,8. He will doubtless be chief among those of whom it is written, "His wife hath made herself ready." For he ran for the resurrection out from among the dead, and always rejoiced "in hope of the glory of God," and held fast to the "blessed hope" - Romans 5:2; Titus 2:13. He died in great triumph. He died in gazing upon the crown laid up for himself and for everyone who loves Christ's appearing. We are waiting with increasing triumphant hope for His coming, and also gazing upon the crown laid up for us. Hallelujah! 27

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## THE BLESSED HOPE

S. S. Horner

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,  
We hear the Word declare.  
We know the overcomers  
Shall meet Him in the air.

We run this race with patience  
And stand the fiery test.  
So when we win the Bridegroom,  
We'll know we have the Best.

We run this race in triumph.  
God furnishes the grace.  
And when we hear the trumpet,  
We'll know we have first place.



# **Occupy Till I Come**

Sermon by D. E. Hill (Sept. 22, 2002)

**“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 (a type of the Word of God), and said unto them, Occupy till I come.” - Luke 19: 12 - 13**

28 Let's talk today about what might be the most powerful incentive to walk with God. “Occupy till I come.” If I meditate on these four simple words, things appear in its depths and riches. Let me first point out the words are the words of the God-Man Jesus Christ. Whom the angels said “Emmanuel or God with us”. The One that has brought us into relationship with God. His words are the purest and truest that could ever be spoken. We can neglect or reject these words, or ask God to keep us in harmony without them; but there will be consequences. These words are something we all must give an account to. For time and eternity are together with us today and we at any moment may step across the threshold into eternity.

The words are teaching us a warning. They teach us a direction. They teach us a revelation of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who said “if I go away, I will come again, that where I am, there you may be also.” So, the Bible makes it clear, there will come a reckoning day for us all. For the life He has entrusted us with is the life where we are to gather up the riches of God. It is like the song says “heaven's wealth is lying scattered all along life's lowly road, gather up some precious jewels by the way.” So, I am here today to encourage you to occupy yourself, regardless of your standard of temporal living, with the fact that God “hath blessed you with ALL spiritual blessings in the heavens in Christ” (Eph 1:3). Get occupied because you may face it tomorrow. You will come face-to-face with this reality.

Now certainly there will be a second coming. And I believe that all the evidence points to it will be very soon. And next to that bloody and awful but awesome and wonderful event at Calvary is the plan that He has for our life after we are saved. God has a plan and it is beyond the imagination of most of God's precious people. To take you



from a dung hill and put you on a throne with his precious Son Jesus Christ. To rule and reign with Him throughout the coming ages. Today we are in the period of the church dispensation described as the church of Laodicea. A church that is neither hot nor cold. A church that says it is rich and increased with goods. It has need of nothing spiritual but many needs of new cars and better homes and better clothes. This church will tell you to go after that worldly need. But the need we are talking about today; they don't have a need of. Gold tried in the fire holds no interest for the Laodicea church. The Christian who has need of nothing, the Bible says is wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. And they need to buy of Him gold tried in the fire and clothing that will cover their nakedness.

If we really believed in the soon coming of Jesus, we should address our worldliness, our sinfulness, our cowardliness, our prayerlessness, our self-will, our love that is waxing cold and our out-right hate taking the place of love for our brother. Jesus made it one of the worst of crimes if you hate your brother, he said you are guilty of murder. Think of the condition that many of God's precious people live. All of these could be solved if we would take in what He has for us. These things would be replaced by Christ-like separation from the world and a humble consecration. And there would be an urgent effort to make ourselves ready for a wedding. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev 19:7). Society, privilege, 'beautiful' people in the eyes of the world, earthly riches; all of this when your eyes are opened to spiritual riches are worthless in comparison. Nothing is as important as being ready.

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Note our text, a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. He receives that kingdom when he's gone. How can that be? He is building it up in you and me, and in people like us, if we will permit him. Do you have any idea how to be rich? Let God make you rich. Do you have any idea how to repay Him for what you may owe Him? Take the cup of salvation and drink it and drink it and drink it. Over 70 years I have learned where my true treasures lie. I think of how God called me away from the things of the world and what riches He has brought me into over the years. I wouldn't trade one day of it for all the fun I thought I had as a sinner.

The nobleman went into a far country and called his ten servants. Ten is the number of responsibility according to ability.



You will be responsible according to the ability that God gives you. If He didn't call you to preach, don't try to tell the preacher how to preach. If He called you to sit in a pew, sit in it and thank God He gave you the ability. One of the hardest things to do is to sit and be faithful. Learn to wait on God and let Him enrich your life. The nobleman gives them ten pounds and said "occupy till I come". Occupy means to "trade with" and refers to the state of life in which we live. My "standing" is- I am a child of God. That can never change. Paul never wrote to the churches inquiring about their "standing" but instead about their "state". State refers to the type and level of life you are living. Are you living those things which are lawful or unlawful (according to the Word of God)? Are you living a Godly life or are we living a worldly life?

30 The nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself his kingdom. Hebrews 11 records some of the thrilling events of that godly life that was lived in the Old Testament and the New Testament continues adding events. I (Brother Hill) think that I have had several experiences in my life as a Christian that will set me apart from a carnal Christian in that day that will come. The only thing we can say is that eternity will reveal just how much you yielded to God. And Hebrews 12:1-2 says "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses (men and women of Heb 11), let us lay aside every weight, and the sin (choosing not to believe God) which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The sin which doth so easily beset us is unbelief. Some may ask: 'Is He with me? Will He be with me?'. Precious hearts, He is with you always, even to the end of the age. He will never depart from you. You may not recognize Him or let circumstances or situations take you away from faith, but He was there for you whether you took Him or not.

This is our day. Tomorrow is not our day. We may have tomorrow but we are not guaranteed. Today is our time to get ready for His coming. Occupy till I come. We might never have another day. And regardless of our status in this world, it is only temporary. How we occupy our temporary time in this world will determine our place in eternity. We need to understand that each of us in the plan of God are blessed with all spiritual blessings in



the heavens in Christ. But note he called his ten servants and he gave each ten pounds and said "occupy till I come". That is he says be faithful and keep the word of my patience. Whether great or small, we are called to do the will of God, and He will not hold you accountable for anything that is not His will. And He will let you know what His will is.

In the church today, there is one great reality that faces you. You couldn't say this to the twelve apostles, you couldn't say it to Daniel, you couldn't say it to Samuel, you couldn't say it to David, but I can say it to you, get ready to be in the Bride of Christ. She will make herself ready. Do you want to join that group? If you open your eyes, you will want to. Paul prayed "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling" (Eph 1:18). There were three occupations in Israel: there were workers, there were warriors, and there were worshipers. The highest thing is to be a worshiper. The lowest thing was to be a worker. But God has vested all of those occupations in every one of His children. He wants you to be a worker (winning souls), a warrior and a worshiper. God's wealth is everywhere. You can pick up as much of it as you want. If you win Christ as the bridegroom, you will own it all with Him (just as Ruth owned it all with Boaz). Do you want to own it all with Him? It will be for eternity. How can we possibly repay Him for all these benefits? We will have eternity to thank Him. 31

You can occupy and be a lazy Christian, or you can be indifferent, or you can occupy and be a Martha (consumed with works and serving). But you cannot occupy and neglect the fact that you are in a war. You should collect your weapons because you are in a war. The devil is here to steal, kill and destroy. He doesn't want you reading this article and he will say you are stupid for believing this. Precious hearts, don't you realize what is ahead of you if you want it? You are not in a war against flesh and blood, it isn't your husband or wife that has you all upset. The reason you are upset is you haven't put Christ in the place He wants in your life. You see, if you are right with God, He will take care of everything. Get your heart open to the purpose of God. You can pass this up if you want to, that is why you are reading this. You could reject it if you want, but if so one day you will face the fact that you did not believe it. God knows and records everything about your decisions and life.



You cannot fully occupy and not be a worshiper. The Bible says God is spirit and He seeks such to worship Him. You know the only thing you can do for God is take the cup of salvation and drink what He has provided for you. Sometimes one of the hardest things to do is take. God has healing for you, will you take it? I am not kept by a sound heart, I am kept by a sound savior. I believe He will keep me here every second He wants me here. To occupy in this fashion, we must realize we will encounter suffering. We will reign with Him if we suffer with Him (2 Tim 2:12). How much have you suffered to go your way? The Bible exhorts us to set your affection on things above, not on things of earth.

32 "Occupy till I come" is a powerful incentive. You see, Jesus is coming. He wears many crowns and is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. There is one way we can know Him which is above all the kings and lords, and that is as a Bridegroom. Do you want him as your Bridegroom forever? Think about where you can be in a wink of an eye. Think about what is just beyond that threshold. I have almost dedicated seventy-four years to Him as number one. To occupy is to heaven's standards, to be fearless of man and his favor or fury. Let eternity rule in your heart, for we are not long for this life. Like Israel, to please God they must enter and possess their promised land. And like Moses said to his brother-in-law Hobab, "come thou with us and we will do thee good." Hobab replies, no I will not go but instead return to my own land. God forbid we answer in that same way. What is your decision at this point? Do you want what God has for you? Then occupy till He come.

\* Some people are making such preparation for rainy days that they aren't enjoying today's sunshine.

\* I know not the way He leads me, but well do I know my Guide. (Martin Luther)

\* Only people who do things get criticized.

\* Worrying is like a treadmill. It can wear you to a frazzle, and you still don't get anywhere.



The Tabernacle in the Wilderness  
The Priestly Garments (The Breastplate) Part 14  
Dr. Vicky Moots

The next item of clothing for which instructions are given is the Breastplate. It is described in Ex. 28:15-30. It is closely associated with the Ephod, which was described first, and it will be physically joined to it by chains and rings of gold, as you will see when we study vv. 25-28. Verses 15-16 give us its material and its dimensions: "And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof."

So, we see that the Breastplate is made of the same materials and colors as the Ephod. The spiritual meaning of these was discussed previously when we studied the Ephod. Notice that it formed a square linen bag, or pouch, since it was doubled. The purpose of this was to create a space to hold the Urim and Thummim (these will be studied later).

The dimensions of it were a span in both directions. A span is the distance from the tip of the little finger to the outstretched thumb (approximately one half cubit). The span, width and length speak of the protection of the hands of God upon us.

The first part of v. 17 states, "And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones..." Twelve different precious stones are listed in vv. 17-20. The last portion of v. 20 declares "... they shall be set in gold in their inclosings." According to v. 21, the individual names of each of the twelve tribes of Israel were to be engraved on each stone separately, a name for each stone.

The true identity of most of these jewels is unknown. Much study has been done by biblical scholars to try to determine their real names as we know them today. Each stone is different, and yet each one is precious and beautiful. Their glory is manifested by the light that shines upon them. Each one of the persons whose names are engraved on the stones is also precious and beautiful in God's sight in the light of Jesus Christ, as is each saint of God.

We learn from v. 29: "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate



of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually." Notice that on the onyx stones on the Ephod, the names are borne by the High Priest upon his shoulders, and on the Breastplate, they are carried on his heart. We, likewise, are carried both on our High Priest's strong shoulders and upon His loving heart.

In vv. 22-27, we find that provision was made for the Breastplate to be joined securely to the Ephod. Two rings of gold were placed at the bottom of the Breastplate, and two rings of gold were attached to the Ephod just above the girdle. There were also two wreathen (twisted) chains of gold attached to the settings of the onyx stones on the shoulders of the Ephod, which were also attached at the other end to the golden rings at the top of the Breastplate. Then in v. 28 we read, "And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod." Therefore, every movement of the high priest's arms would affect the Breastplate that was over his heart.

34 Spiritually, this means that we are kept secure by the strong arms of our High Priest, and nothing can separate us from His love. A ring is a symbol of eternity, and so the rings of gold symbolize the eternal life which we have in Christ. The color blue speaks of heaven. Therefore, the lace of blue which joins the rings of the Breastplate and the Ephod together speak of Christ's eternal, heavenly priesthood, for He is seated in the heavens at the right hand of His Father and ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). We can never be forgotten or forsaken because we are joined to Him, and our names are forever upon His heart.

(to be continued)

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|----------------|--------------------------------------|
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|                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
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| Luke            | 1,2 Timothy       |
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