

COMMENTS ON THE DAILY READINGS

December 1

Esther 9

V.1 – The laws of the Medes and Persians could not be withdrawn or cancelled (hence the symbol of silver in contrast to the gold of Babylon), only countermanded by a further law. The fateful day Haman had elected arrived and the Jews had been given authority by the king through Mordecai to defend themselves and destroy their enemies.

V.2-5 – Mutual support and the fame and authority of Mordecai gave the Jews the upper hand throughout the vast empire so that “no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.” Provincial rulers helped the Jews because of the influence of Mordecai. This of course is a wonderful type of the post-Armageddon situation where the influence of Christ on submissive nations will see the recovery and redemption of Israel from the deadly threat of Gog at the time of Armageddon, and the subsequent threat of Catholicism in full rebellion against the rule of Christ (see Ezek. 38:17; Ps. 2; Mic. 5:7-8; 7:15-17).

V.6-15 – The Jews slew 500 of their inveterate enemies in Susa on the 13th of Adar, including the 10 sons of Haman who met the same fate as their father by being hung on the gallows on the following day. On the 14th, another 300 enemies were slain, but it is noted the Jews were not interested in the spoil – “but on the prey they laid not their hand” (as did not the Jews in the provinces either).

V.16-19 – Interestingly, the provincial Jews had an easier time than their brethren in the capital. It took the latter two full days to slay 800 before they celebrated on the 15th of the month, whereas in the provinces 75,000 enemies were slain in one day allowing rejoicing on the 14th (This may have been because Susa was a fortified city and the enemies may have had better protection). Accordingly, two days were appointed for the celebrations of Purim.

V.20-28 – Using his absolute authority, Mordecai wrote to all the Jews in the empire instituting two days of memorial to be called Purim (after the word for the lot cast by Haman – *pur*) – “that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.” To this day Purim is kept by Orthodox Jews, the next scheduled for the evening of Monday, 2 and Tuesday, 3 March 2026.

V.29-32 – “Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim” – A second letter written by Mordecai and Esther confirmed the first letter establishing the permanence of the feast. Not only was it to be a time of rejoicing, feasting and giving of gifts to the poor, it was also to memorialise the sacrifices made – “the matters of the fastings and their cry.” So it will be in the Kingdom that the sufferings of Christ and of his brethren will be regularly remembered (Rev. 20:4).

Esther 10

V.1 – “And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land (*erets*), and upon the isles of the sea” – As it will be in the Kingdom. The word “land” is *erets* and could just as easily be translated “earth” as it often is. In the fulfillment of the type, Yahweh will be acknowledged and magnified as His Son spreads the knowledge of His glory over all the earth (Num. 14:21; Hab. 2:14) – Ps. 150:6 – “Let everything that hath breath praise Yahweh. Praise ye Yahweh.”

V.2 – “the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him” – The exaltation of Mordecai cast long shadows of the future greatness of Christ who

could say even before his ascension to his Father – “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). When he is declared to be “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16) the antitype will have fulfilled this beautiful and explicit prophecy.

V.3 – “For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed” – There could be no better description of what Christ will accomplish and perform when he has fully established the Kingdom of God on the earth. He will have been accepted by his surviving Jewish brethren whose forefathers crucified their own Messiah (Zech. 12:10), and will seek their welfare in the wake of those who were “Abraham’s seed” in the past, and any who desire to be so in the future.

Jonah 1

Bro. H.P. Mansfield commented on the importance of the Book of Jonah – “Jonah is a glorious gem that sparkles among the string of pearls that make up the Inspired Library we call the Bible, because of the amazing prophecy and sign it portrays concerning the work of the Lord Jesus. When the true key to the understanding of this book is discovered, it is appreciated why the Lord made constant reference to it, and exhorted his adversaries to consider the significant sign revealed in it. If they had heeded his words, they would have been able to assess his true mission, and may not have crucified their Messiah.

Jonah was not a bigoted, petulant Jew, dominated by a narrow, unscriptural Judaism, but a high-minded prophet in the true sense of the word. Like the Lord Jesus whom he typed, he was prepared to sacrifice himself for his people, and in doing so, brought salvation to both those Jews and Gentiles who heed his message.”

| THE SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAH | |
|---|--------------|
| CHAPTER 1 — EVASION (THE STORM) | |
| Jonah Flees To Evade His Mission | vv. 1-3 |
| The Storm | vv. 4-5 |
| The Confession | vv. 6-9 |
| The Sacrifice and Conversion | vv. 10-16 |
| CHAPTER 2 — PRESERVATION (THE FISH) | |
| The Fish | Ch. 1:17-2:1 |
| Jonah’s Psalm of Thanksgiving | vv. 2-9 |
| Jonah’s Deliverance | v. 10 |
| CHAPTER 3 — PROCLAMATION (THE CITY) | |
| Jonah Pays His Vows | vv. 1-4 |
| The Ninevites Repent | vv. 5-9 |
| Yahweh’s Mercy | v. 10 |
| CHAPTER 4 — EDUCATION (YAHWEH’S REPROOF) | |
| Jonah’s Displeasure | vv. 1-3 |
| Yahweh’s Reproof | vv. 4-11 |

V.1 – “Now the word of Yahweh came unto Jonah the son of Amittai” – Jonah, or Yonah, is the Hebrew word for “dove” or “pigeon.” The dove, or pigeon, was the only bird offered in sacrifice under the law (Lev. 1:14). It was the offering of poverty for a sin-offering, or a burnt-offering, and also was offered with a lamb at childbirth (Lev. 12:6—in case of poverty, two birds were offered instead of a lamb, as was done in the case of the birth of Jesus—Lev. 12:8;

Luke 2:24). The dove was also used in the ritual for cleansing a leper (Lev. 14:3,22).

“Amittai” means “my truth” (BDB); veracious or true (Strong). The dove was one symbol of the Spirit (Matt. 3:16), and the Spirit produces truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 17:17; 1 Pet. 1:22). Little wonder the sign of the prophet Jonah was the only sign God’s people would be given concerning the mission, crucifixion, resurrection and glorification of His Son (Matt. 16:4).

V.3 – “But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of Yahweh” – The seriousness of attempting to flee from the presence of Almighty God suggests extremely strong motives. Jonah saw the implications of a repentant Assyria for his own people. Assyria had plundered and brutalised Israel for decades (and was to do so for centuries to come), so a

revived Assyria spelt disaster for Israel. The summary of contemporary Assyrian history by the Bible Handbook below is useful.

Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrian Empire was a World-Empire for about 300 years, 900-607 B.C. It began its rise to world power about the time of the division of the Hebrew Kingdom at the close of Solomon's reign. It gradually absorbed and destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Assyrian kings who had to do with Israel and Judah were:

Shalmanezar II, 860-825 B.C. Began to "cut off Israel."
 Ashur-dan 808 - } Period of Decline (Jonah's visit?)
 Ashur-Nirari 746 - }
 Tiglath-Pileser III, 747-727. Deported most of Israel.
 Shalmanezar IV, 727-722. Besieged Samaria.
 Sargon II, 722-705. Carried rest of Israel captive (Isaiah).
 Sennacherib, 705-681. Invaded Judah (Isaiah).
 Esar-haddon, 681-668. Very powerful.
 Assur-banipal, 668-626. Most powerful and brutal *Nahum* (?).
 The brutal empire fell, 607 B.C.

Thus Jonah was called of God to prolong the life of the enemy nation which was already in the process of exterminating his own nation. Jonah was a statesman, as well as prophet, the most famous man, next to the king, in his nation (2 Kings 14:25).

— Bible Handbook (Amended).

V.5-17 – The story of the violent storm and the actions of the sailors is well known. One of the great outcomes was the sailors' genuine acknowledgement of Yahweh as the true God by making sacrifice to Him.

As for Jonah, he learnt the truth of Ps. 139:7-10 – "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? ...If I ...dwell in **the uttermost parts of the sea**; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and

thy right hand shall hold me." A great fish entombed him "and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" as an unmistakable sign of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This type (along with other slightly more obscure types like Josh. 3:1-2) is the only evidence in the O.T. of this fact (1 Cor. 15:4). There is no direct or plain reference to three days and nights anywhere else, just this sign – "there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonah the prophet" (Luke 11:29).

Hebrews 6

V.1 – "Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity" (ESV). This is not a call to forget the fundamental doctrines of the truth, but a call to grow in understanding and move on to maturity. That was the point made in Heb. 5:11-14. Those in the Hebrew ecclesia in and around Jerusalem who were contemplating a return to the Law had not applied themselves to grow in Christ. This requires diligent exercise of the "senses" (*aisthētērion* – faculty of the mind for perceiving, understanding – Heb. 5:14).

V.4-6 – The Apostle warns the potential defectors that it would be a one way street to doom. Having tasted the powers of the Spirit as an earnest (2 Cor. 5:5 – a part payment) of the future as an immortal, forsaking Christ was a death sentence "seeing they **crucify to themselves** the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

V.7-12 – The antidote was greater application to the Word of God ("the earth which drinketh in the **rain** that cometh oft upon it"). It is noteworthy that while the Apostle is warning, he also encourages with positive exhortation to continue their service to God. In the course of it he incorporates "faith" (V.12), "hope" (V.11), and "love" (V.10) the core themes of life in Christ (1 Cor. 13:13).

V.13-20 – What was slipping in the unstable and uncertain was faith and hope, so the Apostle turns to the promises made to Abraham. He cites Gen. 22:17 (the 7th and final promise), and then adds "after he had patiently endured, he **obtained** the promise." To 'obtain' is different to 'receiving' the promise. When Yahweh swore by His own existence in Gen. 22:16-18, it was to make the promises to Abraham unconditional. He had "obtained" them; i.e. he

was guaranteed a place in the Kingdom and yet he still had some 45 years to live. The rationale was simple. God could not ask any more from a man than he did from Abraham, and that was to do what Yahweh would Himself have to do to redeem the human race via the promises He had made to Abraham, namely, to offer up in sacrifice an only beloved son in faith. There was no way Abraham would turn away from God after that. What about you Hebrews, the Apostle may have said, who have seen the crucified Son of God raised from the dead like Isaac was in a figure? – Heb. 11:19.

Two unchangeable things were involved in God's promise in Gen. 22:16-18. They were (1) Yahweh exists, and (2) He doesn't tell lies. These provided an anchor point within a city of refuge that did not rely on man's ability, or willingness to keep law. For those looking backwards to the Law of Moses, the question was 'what would you prefer – trusting in men to keep the law to ensure your future until the **death of the high priest**, or trusting in a High Priest (Christ) who is alive for evermore?' To ask the question is to answer it.

Hebrews 7

This chapter occupies a massive position in the Book. Consider the importance of Melchizedek to Paul's case starting in Heb. 5:1-11. All 9 occurrences of his name in the N.T. are in Hebrews. Paul introduces him to counter a return to the Law by 'Hebrew' believers (Abraham was a 'Hebrew' – Gen. 14:13), but Melchizedek was greater than Abraham. The crux of Paul's case is that where there is a change of priest, there must also be a change of the law governing that priesthood – Heb. 7:11-12. The Melchizedek priesthood is antithetical to the Law of Moses.

The argument is developed using Ps. 110:1,4 in Heb. 1:3,13; 4:14; chaps 5-7; 10:11-13. His name means "King of Righteousness" (Heb. 7:2). It occurs 11 times in Scripture – 2 in the O.T. (Gen. 14:18; Ps. 110:4), and 9 in the N.T. Interestingly, eleven is the number of inadequacy and Melchizedek was "**made like unto** the Son of God"; i.e. inferior to Christ in the scheme of things despite his greatness.

Bro. Carter's astute exposition of V.1-3 is worthy of inclusion here.

"Made like unto the Son of God"

How, when and where? The answer is that Melchizedek is so made in the record of Scripture. When that Scripture was penned an overruling hand determined its limits, fixed what should be included and what left out. Only the mind that reached forward to Christ, and saw his work and arranged his office, could have delineated the form of the historical record that foreshadows it. We can now see that the prophecy of Psalm 110 had no accidental association with the history in Genesis 14.

The history was written with a purpose which, however, was not evident until the Psalm linked the record in Genesis with another King of Salem who also will be a priest. Then when the Son of God had come, had offered himself, and had assumed the office of priest, the time had come for the unfolding of the hidden meaning of the sacred record.

Four omissions are noted: without father, without mother, having neither beginning of life, nor end of days.

Clearly this is not literally true of the man himself. All four things are essentially part of a mortal man: he has parents, and there is a beginning and an end to his life. But these things are not recorded of Melchizedek in Genesis, and the argument is that their very omissions are divinely intended so that a picture is drawn of the son of God.

Melchizedek is without these things in the record because he is there ‘made like unto the son of God’. He owes nothing to his ancestry – for we know nothing of his parentage. He stands alone in Scripture without a peer: he had neither ancestor nor successor in his office, but stands in splendid uniqueness as the one through whom Abraham received God’s blessing.

Who was Melchisedec? has often been asked. Was it Shem? we do not know; and while it would be interesting to know, the knowledge would spoil the picture. We should have then to interpret the picture in the light of the identity of Melchisedec: and the Apostle’s lessons could not then be deduced. We must be content not to know; and we must follow the Apostle in his attitude to Holy Writ, and so perceive the object of the Divine Author.

Bro. John Carter (Hebrews)

The superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood over the Aaronic is laid out by the Apostle as shown in the chart below. The two essential qualities of the Melchizedek order are revealed in the list of contrasts. The first and indispensable requirement is **righteousness** (a moral quality). The second (a physical quality) is only available to those who have righteousness (imputed and manifested). **Immortality** was bestowed on Christ because of his sinlessness and unfailing obedience to the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8-11). Paul had expressed this same spiritual equation on the Areopagus – “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in **righteousness** by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath **raised him from the dead**” (Acts 17:31).

Intrinsic superiority

| Heb. 7 | Aaronic Priesthood | Heb. 7 | Melchizedek Order |
|--------|----------------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| V.11 | Appointed by Law | V.20-21 | Declared by oath |
| V.16 | Carnal commandments | V.16 | Power of endless life |
| | Ancestral heritage | | Intrinsic right |
| V.28 | Compassed with infirmity | V.26 | Separate from sinners |
| V.23 | Not suffered to continue - death | V.24-25 | Continueth ever |
| V.19 | Law made nothing perfect | V.28 | Perfection of nature |

The two qualities of this order

Moral

- ❖ **Heb. 5:1-10** – Compassion/called – Empathy/right.
- ❖ Christ’s call superior because of **righteousness**.

Physical

- ❖ **Immortality** – **Heb. 7:3,8,16,24,25,28.**
- ❖ **Rom.1:4; Phil. 2:6-9.**
- ❖ **Isa. 61:1-3,6,10-11 (Luke 4:17-19).**

The Apostle had highlighted the quality of **righteousness** in explaining the meaning of Melchizedek’s name – “king of **righteousness**” (V.2); then spoke of the type of **immortality** presented by Melchizedek who was without **recorded** earthly father or mother, or earthly descent. Because Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek acknowledging his superiority, the Levitical order which emanated from Abraham had also in effect paid tithes in him. Therefore, the Melchizedek order was superior to the Aaronic/Levitical priesthood. The Divine oath, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” came into effect. The Levitical was a temporary order (flawed through sin and death – V.23,28); the Melchizedek once instituted at Christ’s glorification is permanent (V.24). Moreover, Jesus Christ was of the tribe of Judah of which “Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.” Therefore, a change in the priesthood required a change in the law governing its operations. This is perhaps the most compelling argument in the N.T.

V.26-28 – Our High Priest is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens,” although morally he was never any different in his mortality (consider the implications of Rom. 6:4). Accordingly, he was always superior to Aaron and his successors who made sacrifice for themselves and the people acknowledging sin and transgression (“daily” in V.27 refers to the Day of Atonement – Lev. 16). However, Christ possessed the identical nature to that which produces sin in all other men (2 Chron. 6:36). He needed redemption from it, just as we do, by a change of nature. This was effected by his perfect obedience leading to resurrection and immortality. Hence, the Apostle later writes, “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without **sin** (i.e. without sinful human nature – used metonymically) unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

December 2

Job 1

There are a number of reliable expositions of the Book of Job. These include study notes produced for the 4th Australian Bible School, and by Bro. Klaus Papowski (accessible on web site <https://jimcowie.info> using the following link – <https://jimcowie.info/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/My-Servant-Job.pdf>). Comments on this vast book will largely be distilled from these sets of notes.

V.1 – “There was a man in the land of Uz, **whose name was Job**; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” – “Job” means “hated, persecuted” (Strong); “The afflicted one” (Ges.). It is cognate with “enmity” (Gen.3:15). Job was a real person (Ezek. 14:14-20; James.5:11); he was a native of the land of Uz to the east of the Jordan River (1:1); he lived during the Patriarchal period preceding the Law of Moses, as no reference is made to its many institutions. The kind of sacrifice described in Job 1:5 was practiced before the Mosaic Law. Also, before the Law the head of the house was the family’s mediator and offered sacrifices on behalf of the family, in contrast to the practice under the Law (Ex. 29:44). It is evident Job lived sometime between Joseph and Moses, and may have been contemporary with Moses during his (Moses’) sojourn in the land of Midian. He was very wealthy (1:3,10), and he and his sons were prosperous homeowners in a large city of the region (1:4; 29:7). Job was a respected and popular judge and benefactor (29:7-25), and was righteous in God’s eyes (1:1,5,8; cp. Ezek. 14:14-20; James 5:11). He lived to an old age in keeping with the character of the patriarchal period (Job 42:16-17; cp. Gen.25:8; 35:29).

V.6 – “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh, and **Satan** came also among them” – Having acted with great sensitivity as a priest and mediator for his family, Job then became the subject of discussion at a gathering of “the sons of God” (those who believe and worship Yahweh in contrast to the rest of mankind who live according to their lusts – John 1:12; Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 6:17-18).

During the patriarchal period, when the head of the family was priest and mediator, it is likely one qualified member of the community was high priest as successor to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18). This “priest of the Most High Ail” was to the people as Yahweh, and to come before him was as if one came before Yahweh Himself. However, there was an adversary present. The Hebrew for “Satan” is *has-sahtahn* = “the adversary”; “an opponent”, from the primary root “to attack, accuse” (Strong). The adversary was certainly personal, as the use of the definite article affirms. He was by reputation one of “the sons of God”, walking “in the midst of them.” He was evidently one of Job’s fellow-worshippers but of little faith. and obviously self-centred. Bro. Thomas commented – “He was nominally a coreligionist, but full of envy and

unfriendly feeling towards Job. This is not an unusual circumstance, even in societies reputed apostolic. In these, Satans too often abound, and become the adversaries of those they cannot imitate. He slandered Job and insinuated that Job's fear of Yahweh had been purchased by extraordinary favours; but that, if these were withdrawn, and he were reduced to poverty, he would curse Him to his face." Yahweh sets about to achieve many things in the events that follow, including the salvation of the adversary (and that may have been achieved – see Job 42:11).

V.12 – "And Yahweh said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power" – How is this to be understood? Certainly, Job does not ascribe his affliction to the Adversary, but realises that it is from Yahweh Himself (Job 1:11,21; 2:3,5,10; 19:6-13,21; 27:2-3; 42:11). Bro. Thomas wrote – "All that was done being 'adverse' to Job, was attributed to the adversary, who was the moving cause; though the efficient cause was the power of Deity Himself."

V.13-19 – "And there was a day" – These ominous words introduce repetitive disasters that take everything from Job except his life and his wife. It is difficult to appreciate how crushing this was to Job and his wife. All their children dead; all their possessions gone.

V.20-22 – Job's response is incredible. Humility, worship and faithful acceptance in the declaration; "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: Yahweh gave, and Yahweh hath taken away; blessed be the name of Yahweh." How rare is that, then or now? "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

Job 2

V.1-6 – "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh, and **Satan** came also among them to present himself before Yahweh" – The ability of men to justify themselves when all the evidence is stacked against them is seen in the insistence of the adversary that Job would finally crumble if he was personally injured. Reluctantly, but of necessity, Job is again at the mercy of the worst the adversary can conceive within the bounds set by the One exercising the power – "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life."

V.7 – "smote Job with sore **boils** from the sole of his foot unto his crown" – The word "boils" is *shechîyn* – Gesenius – "masc. an inflamed ulcer, a boil – Ex. 9:9,11; Lev. 13:18-20, the boil of Egypt (Deut. 28:27,35; Job 2:7); used of a kind of black leprosy endemic in Egypt called by physicians "elephantiasis," from the skin being covered with black scales, and the feet swelling up." The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge comments – "black leprosy, of the Arabs, termed Elephantiasis by the Greeks, from its rendering the skin, like that of the elephant, scabrous, dark coloured, and furrowed all over with tubercles. This loathsome and most afflictive disease is accompanied with most intolerable itching – Job 30:17-19; 30:30; Ex. 9:9-11; Deut. 28:27; 28:3."

V.9-10 – Job's wife had had enough and snapped, her faith and trust gone, but not Job's – ESV – "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" "In all this Job did not sin with his lips."

V.11-13 – Ostensibly out of respect and empathy, Job's three friends sat for a full week in silence with Job clothed in sackcloth. Doubtless they had a genuine love for Job, but they too needed to be purged of false convictions and redeemed from their own weaknesses. One reason for the week long silence was their view that all suffering is due to sin, and as chapter 4:2 reveals, they were reluctant to openly speak their mind knowing it would compound Job's

suffering. The whole affair is about the desire of Yahweh to redeem His people and improve their understanding, faith and character for the Kingdom.

Jonah 2

V.1 – “Then Jonah prayed unto Yahweh his God out of the fish’s belly” – The prayer is not recorded. The psalm that follows from V.2-9 was a psalm of thanksgiving that Jonah uttered after his deliverance. This is obvious from V.7 in which he makes mention of the unrecorded prayer he had uttered. The RV, ASV and Young’s Literal place a full stop (period) at the end of V.1, thus separating the psalm from the prayer. Jonah therefore uttered both a petition and a prayer of thanksgiving. The petition is referred to in V.1, and the prayer of thanksgiving follows. In the latter, Jonah states: “yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption” (V.6) which shows that he composed it after the fish had vomited him out upon dry land.

V.2 – “out of the belly of **hell** cried I” – The use of the word “hell” (*sheol* – the grave) is very significant for the type. In the belly of the fish, Jonah felt death was near and sought a brief moment of communion with God whom he had served faithfully during his life before he lapsed into unconsciousness (V.7), in which state he remained for “three days and three nights,” and after which the fish “vomited out Jonah upon the dry land” (V.10). In a figure (an enacted parable) he had experienced death, burial and resurrection. What a compelling sign that must have been to our Lord (Matt. 12:40; 16:4).

V.4 – “yet I will look again toward thy holy temple” – In his utter desperation Jonah invoked Solomon’s plea of 1 Kings 8:38.

V.8 – “They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy” – It is in the extremity of trial and facing judgement that the folly of empty pursuits becomes apparent – “The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead” (Prov. 21:16). There is nothing like this kind of crisis to galvanize the mind on what is really important in life. Like Jonah, we have scope to get our priorities right when the pressure is on– “But, I, with the voice of praise, will sacrifice unto thee, What I have vowed, I will pay,—Salvation, belongeth to Yahweh!” (Rotherham for V.9).

Jonah 3

V.2 – “Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee” – This second command receives a much more positive response as Jonah contemplated his miraculous redemption, but as the record reveals he still had some way to go to overcome his aversion to Assyria being saved from destruction.

V.3-4 – “Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey” – Nimrod established a mega ‘city’ with four towns at the corners and a wall between them to protect his people from wild animals, for which he was made a god-king (Gen. 10:11-12 which should read (ESV) – “From that land he (Nimrod) went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city”). Hence, this mega city was about 60 miles (100 kms) across and was mostly grazing land for cattle (Jonah 4:11). He went about 20 miles (32 kms) into this ‘city’ proclaiming Yahweh’s message – “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”

This second call to Jonah, also points forward, in type, to the second advent of the Lord. The conversion of the Ninevites will find its complete fulfilment as a type at that time. Christ will deliver his ultimatum from Jerusalem to all mankind, and the “gospel of the age” will be preached to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,” in the words, “Fear

God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgement is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev. 14:6-7). This message, yet to be proclaimed by the antitypical Jonah to all the world, is not unlike that proclaimed by the prophet himself to Nineveh. It will cause many to repent and seek the mercy of Yahweh. Those who refuse to do so will be destroyed (Isa. 60:12), even as Nineveh was warned would be her fate if she did not hearken.

V.5-10 – Remarkably, Jonah’s message had an immediate and universal impact. It is suggested that the Assyrians were in a period of crisis and were susceptible to a sign, and even that the physical appearance of Jonah (with bleached skin from the acids of the fish’s stomach) contributed to this seemingly unlikely response from a hardened and cruel race. Whatever the cause, from the king down, humility expressed by fasting and the termination of their normal violent behaviour was everywhere evident. Accordingly, “God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.” But Jonah did not share the same sentiment. Like the disciples of the Lord later, he had to learn that Yahweh whom he knew to be gracious (Jonah 4:2) could also show mercy to Gentiles who repented of their wickedness and declared His righteousness, despite its ramifications for Israel. There is encouragement in this for we Gentiles who, unlike the Assyrians, have a covenant relationship with Israel’s God.

Hebrews 8

Having established the absolute superiority of the Melchisedek priesthood over the Aaronic, the Apostle now turns to the superiority of the Abrahamic Covenant over the Mosaic.

V.6 – “he is the mediator of a better **covenant**, which was established upon better promises” – That the “better covenant” is the Abrahamic is made clear by the citation of Jer. 31:33-34 in the following verses.

V.7 – “For if that **first** covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the **second**” – The Mosaic Covenant is called the **first** because it was the first to be ratified by blood (Ex. 24:6-8). The Abrahamic which preceded the Mosaic by 430 years (Gal. 3:17) was not ratified until the death and resurrection of Christ – Rom. 15:8. That is why it is called “the second” here as in Heb. 10:9.

V.10 – “and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” – This citation from Jer. 31:33 puts the question of what constitutes the “new covenant” beyond question, for this is itself is an allusion (close to a citation) from Gen. 17:7-8 – “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, **to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.and I will be their God.**” The “new covenant” is the Abrahamic Covenant, ‘new’ to the Apostle’s generation and those to come because they had known only involvement with the Mosaic.

Hebrews 9

The Mosaic covenant (“the first”) was a teaching mechanism. Its Tabernacle and ordinances were a “schoolmaster” (Gal. 3:24) to lead the nation to Christ (V.1-10). One curious statement is made concerning the incense altar – “the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer.” Of course, this was not so. The golden incense altar was in the Holy Place against the veil. The reason for this apparent anomaly is to stress the power of prayer. The incense burnt morning and evening wafted through the veil and into the Most Holy Place as do our prayers – Heb. 10:19-20; Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 3:12.

V.11-28 – The Apostle then launches into a comparison and a contrast between the Mosaic and Abrahamic systems. Blood was essential for redemption (V.22). Blood of itself is not a magical potion, it is a symbol for the life of all flesh (Lev. 17:11). Even Christ needed redemption from Adamic nature and he was the first beneficiary of the work he came to do, namely, our redemption. The absence of the words “*for us*” in italics at the end of V.12 should be noted. The point being made is repeated in Heb. 13:20 – “Now the God of peace, that **brought again from the dead** our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, **through the blood of the everlasting covenant.**” His perfect obedience to the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8) ensured his resurrection and immortalization. Accordingly, he was redeemed by his own sacrifice as the “firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20). He had no moral need (like us), but he needed redemption from the curse of death. This was effected by obedience, death and resurrection to life. No ‘sacrifice **for** nature’ was involved, just the sacrifice **of** the nature. Hence, “now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin **by the sacrifice of himself**” (V.26), and “unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time **without sin** (i.e. free of human nature) unto salvation” (V.28). The “heavenly things themselves” had been “purified” (cleansed) with a better sacrifice than those under the Law.

Anyone doubting that the above is standard Christadelphian teaching is directed to the article by Bro. H.P. Mansfield in the Logos for 1971 in **Appendix 1**.

December 3

Job 3

Here the poetic part of the book begins; for there is nothing in the preceding chapters like it. Hebrew poetry uses a device called **parallelism**. The three most common kinds of parallelism are: **SYNONYMOUS**: a thought is stated in the first line, then repeated in similar language in the second (e.g. Job 4:9); **ANTITHETIC**: the statement in the first line is followed by a contrasting statement in the second line (e.g. Job 16:20); **SYNTHETIC**: a number of related thoughts expand on the statement of the first line (e.g. Job 4:19-21).

In this chapter Job completely despairs – V.1-10 – **IMPRECATION** – He curses the day of his conception and birth; V.11-19 – **LAMENTATION** – He laments his survival; V.20-26 – **CONFUSION** – He expresses his earnest desire for death.

V.25-26 – “For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came” – Sons and daughters of Adam have no rights, except the right to die. Anyone understanding the difficulties and dangers involved in human life because of the curse on the race laid out in Gen. 3:17-19 expects **trouble**, as Job himself later expressed – “Yet man is born unto **trouble**, as the sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7); and “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of **trouble**” (Job 14:1). As the wise man said, “this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith” (Ecc. 1:13). Job’s sensitivity to the activities of his children (Job 1:4-5) reveals his state of mind before disaster struck. In that state of mind he feared what may yet lay in the future. What he did not yet appreciate was that God was to use trouble to perfect him – Weymouth for Rom. 8:20-21 – “For the Creation fell into subjection to failure and unreality (not of its own choice, but by the will of Him who so subjected it). Yet there was always the hope that at last the Creation itself would also be set free from the thralldom of decay so as to enjoy the liberty that will attend the glory of the children of God.”

Job 4

V.1 – “Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered” – His name means “God of gold” (Strong); or “to whom God is strength” (Gesenius). Teman was a grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:11,15) and closely connected with Edom (Jer. 49:20; Obadiah 9; Ezek. 25:13; Hab. 3:3), and thus his origin was from Edom. Teman was traditionally famous for its wise men (Jer. 49:7), and Eliphaz as the senior member of the company (Job 15:10) took the lead.

V.2-6 – “If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?” – Eliphaz acknowledged Job’s well-known virtues and labours for the spiritual welfare of others, and perhaps even hinted that Job himself had once taught the doctrine of Exact Retribution, but he is initially hesitant to hit Job with the hammer blow that had occupied their thinking during those long and miserable days of silence at the foot of the dung hill. Job had doubtless watched their sympathy morph into suspicion as they ruminated on how such an awful outcome could overtake their celebrated friend (1:3).

V.7-11 – “Remember, I pray thee, **who ever perished, being innocent?** or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same” – Finally, the concealed mantra emerged that ‘all suffering is the punishment for sin, and because Job was a great sufferer, he must be a great sinner’ (otherwise known as the Doctrine of Exact Retribution) – a view shared by all three ‘friends’ of Job. The speeches of Eliphaz do show clearer reasoning and more considerate criticism than those of Bildad and Zophar, but he initiated the debate about the veracity or otherwise of this doctrine that occupies the bulk of the book in the numerous speeches that follow.

The First Cycle of Debate – Chapters 4-14

Chaps. 4 and 5 – Eliphaz – First speech
Chaps. 6 and 7 – Job’s reply to Eliphaz
Chap. 8 – Bildad – First speech
Chaps. 9 and 10 – Job’s reply to Bildad
Chap. 11 – Zophar – First speech
Chaps. 12 to 14 – Job’s reply to Zophar

Second Cycle of Debate – Chaps. 15-21

Chap. 15 – Eliphaz – Second speech
Chaps. 16-17 – Job’s reply to Eliphaz
Chap. 18 – Bildad’s second speech
Chap. 19 – Job’s reply to Bildad
Chap. 20 – Zophar’s second speech
Chap. 21 – Job’s reply to Zophar

V.12-21 – “Now a thing was secretly brought to me” – Eliphaz claims special revelation from ‘the unseen world’. It is a manifestation of pride and egotism that was to distort his reasoning and ultimately produce serious allegations against Job’s integrity which were not true, and in fact reflected on Yahweh Himself – Job 42:7 – “ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right.”

The secret ‘messenger’ allegedly emphasised the infinite distance between God and man, and the impossibility of a mortal being accounted just in the presence of divine purity. Of course the suggestion was that Job was suffering the penalty of sin which, though it had eluded human eyes, was naked and open before God. An angel seemed impure against God’s pure light, and if an angel was deficient, how much more man! One wonders how this assertion can be reconciled with passages like Matt. 18:10; Luke 1:19; 20:36. Eliphaz too needed to be humbled and corrected. His intervention only increased Job’s suffering. What would he have thought if he had witnessed the crucifixion of a sinless son of Adam two millennia later? – Luke 23:47 – “Certainly this was a righteous man” (and a very great sufferer to boot!).

Jonah 4

V.1-3 – Rotherham – “it was vexing unto Jonah, with a great vexation,—and it angered him” – The reprieve granted Nineveh so disturbed the prophet that he felt that he would rather

not live. He turned to Yahweh in prayer expressing his displeasure, for he felt he had a just cause despite acknowledging Yahweh's great mercies ("thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil"). Jonah felt his life's work to save Israel from apostasy and consequent destruction at the hand of the Assyrians was now at an end. He had fled to Tarshish to avoid this very outcome. His motives may have been good, and his intentions sincere, but he was unable to see the whole picture, nor understand Yahweh's plan for the inclusion of the Gentiles in His purpose. The prophet was in need of correction and it proved to be painful.

V.4 – "Then said Yahweh, Doest thou well to be angry?" – The gentleness of this challenge by Yahweh towards His servant's frustration and anger revealed the genuineness of the prophet. He needed to be persuaded by circumstance and teaching.

V.5 – "So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth" – Jonah completed his mission by traversing from west to east of the megacity (some 60 miles/100 kms). The Hebrew for "booth" is *sukkah* and is used of those temporary dwellings built by the Israelites at Succoth when they came out of Egypt and the booths erected at the Feast of Tabernacles, that recalled Yahweh's goodness to them in delivering them from Egypt (Lev. 23:41-44). The principle of the succoth is spelt out in Ps. 27:5 – "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his **pavilion** (*sok* – cognate with *sukkah*): in the secret of his tabernacle (*ohel* – round tent) shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock" (*tzur* – great boulder). In other words, the flimsy temporary booth of branches was only secure because of the presence of Yahweh Israel's Rock (*tzur* – Deut. 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31). Jonah had placed some confidence in Israel under Jeroboam II in whose reign the nation experienced much peace and prosperity, but in the absence of spiritual revival. Yahweh was not the foundation of their flimsy structure. In spite of Israel's political power at the time, and the influence of Jonah within the nation, Jeroboam II was a wicked king, and Israel a decadent nation doomed to punishment, as Amos proclaimed (Amos 7:7-17). Jonah was now to receive a powerful lesson by enacted parable.

V.6-8 – "Yahweh Elohim prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief" – Jonah's flimsy booth was augmented by a "gourd" providing complete shade from the burning sun and "so Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd."

Jonah experienced the mercy of Yahweh. But he had done nothing to deserve this; and had not even requested it. In that he was like the Ninevites! The gourd had grown up very quickly, and Jonah had been refreshed by its presence and the shade it afforded. He was "exceeding glad of the gourd," as he was of Israel's rising power at that time (2 Kings 14:25). But who had advanced Israel's power? Was it Jonah? Was it Jeroboam? No, it was Yahweh! He had power both to raise up, and to cast down, as was indicated in the sudden growth and equally quick withering of the gourd. He had advanced Israel in spite of its stubbornness, as he had protected the prophet with the gourd He caused to grow. He had caused Jonah to rejoice in the protection it afforded, as the prophet had also rejoiced in the prosperity of his people; but Yahweh could as easily dry up Israel with a symbolic "east wind" (see Hos. 13:15), with or without the help of Nineveh, as He finally did the gourd. Internal failure in Israel ("God prepared a worm") led to the removal of Divine shelter, as it later did for Assyria (Nahum).

V.9-11 – "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" – Jonah still had some way to go to see things from a Divine perspective. Both Israel and Nineveh would lose God's protection because of internal corruption. God would eat away (like a worm) the kingdom of Israel as He had already begun to do (2 Kings 10:32). Jonah would have spared the gourd which had ministered to his comfort, but was not prepared to spare the Ninevites who had repented, and

had given God honour. He looked at the issue of mercy and severity from a completely personal viewpoint. He would spare Israel whose wickedness deserved punishment; but not the Ninevites whose repentance was a reproach to unrepentant Israelites. Jonah was silenced by the final declaration – “should not I spare Nineveh?” Its universal repentance, though temporary deserved Divine mercy. Israel’s persistent apostasy deserved judgement. Yahweh is sovereign in matters of mercy (Rom. 9:15-16), but always acts in harmony with His own principles. And after all, why destroy unnecessarily innocent children and cattle?

Hebrews 10

V.1-18 – The Law could “never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” This was the point the Apostle made in chapter 9:25-26. The repetitive offering of sacrifices for sin underscored the fact that it was “not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (V.4). That was only to be achieved “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once**.” What was needed was perfect obedience in the offeror that would enable resurrection and a change of nature. That is why Ps. 40:6-8 is then cited. A willing slave with a hearing ear was found in Jesus Anointed. The word “opened” in Ps. 40:6 should be rendered “digged” or “bored” as it a reference to the slave willing to remain with his master having his ear bored with an awl (Ex. 21:6; Deut. 15:16-17). The focus is on willingness to obey – “Lo, I come to do **thy will**, O God” and this is emphasized by a peculiarity in V.7 – “in the **volume** of the book it is written of me.” At face value, this would seem to refer to what is written in the scroll, but the word “volume” is *kephalis* – the knob at the end of a stick on which the manuscript was rolled. This is virtually saying that Christ was not just the written Word revealed, but that he was “the Word made flesh” and like the prominent knob at the head of the scroll was there for all to see. The key to our salvation was his perfect obedience to the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8).

V.19-24 – “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh” – Jesus Christ has entered the “holiest” into the presence of Yahweh as our mediator and representative. The Apostle appeals to the three most important things in the life of the believer (1 Cor. 13:13 – “So now **faith**, **hope**, and **love** abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love” – ESV). **Faith** is mentioned in V.22 (“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of **faith**”); **hope** in V.23 (“faith” in this verse in the KJV is *elpis* = **hope**); and “**love**” in V.24 (“let us consider one another to provoke unto **love** and to good works,” clearly implying that *agape* is about actions/works).

V.25-39 – Having shown conclusively that there was only one way for the forgiveness of sins to be obtained, and one way of life in the absence of ritual, and only one Melchizedek High Priest by whom God can be approached, the Apostle appeals to those who might have been wavering and showing this by non-attendance at the ecclesial meetings to return – “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” Even worse was the possibility of departing altogether and going back to the Law and its rituals. This is what is meant by “**sin wilfully**” after that we have received the knowledge of the truth.” Only judgement and rejection awaits that class. What would be the point of enduring all the persecution of the past to seek temporary relief at the expense of eternal life?

December 4

Job 5

V.1 – “Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?” – This is a further example of the pride of Eliphaz. Why would Job even bother to question his view that Job was worthy of the punishment that he fully deserved on the basis of the theory of Exact Retribution. He is really saying, ‘Who in their right mind would put their hand up to defend Job when it was so obvious he had only received what he deserved?’

V.2-5 – “wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one” – Eliphaz now recounts the disasters that had overtaken Job and his family and attributes it to “wrath” and “envy” in Job while at the same time ‘commending’ his own integrity – “suddenly I cursed his habitation.” Job’s children perished because of him he suggests, and his substance was rightly stolen by storm and thief.

V.6-7 – “man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward” – In this Eliphaz was right. All man’s troubles spring from the perversity of human nature. It is relentless in its bias towards evil (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:14-24), so that Christ possessing it in common with us could declare, “Why callest thou me good? **there is none good** but one, that is, God” (Mark 10:18).

V.8-16 – “I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause” – As if Job had not done so! (Job 1:1). This self-reflecting proposition is indicative of the danger of the false interpretation of Divine principles. The theory of Exact Retribution was just that – a false and baseless theory, and yet it becomes the vehicle for outright condemnation of an upright man. Little wonder Job took umbrage at the claims of his ‘friends’. It was the insistence of his friends that they were right that finally pushed Job over the edge of propriety and placed him in a position of challenging the righteousness of God in self-defence (Job 42:3).

V.17-27 – “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty” – On this matter Eliphaz is perfectly correct as is shown by its use by the Apostle in Heb. 12:5-11. God does chasten as a loving Father; prune a fruitful vine (John 15:2), and finally provides relief (1 Pet. 5:10 – “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”). However, Eliphaz cannot help himself, concluding with words replete with self-assurance – “Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.” If we wish to genuinely help others who are sorely afflicted like Job, we must be less conscious of ourselves. None of us are that important, or as virtuous as we may think (Rom. 12:3; Phil. 2:1-4).

Micah 1

V.1 – “The word of Yahweh that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning **Samaria** and **Jerusalem**” – Micah’s ministry spanned a period of 60 years from the reign of Jotham through to Hezekiah from about BC 750 to BC 686. He was a contemporary with Isaiah whose prophecy shares a good deal with Micah. He was also contemporary with Hosea and Amos who primarily prophesied against the northern kingdom of Israel. Micah shared his work between Israel and Judah, and whilst the bulk of the prophecy is directed towards Judah, the prophecy begins in chapter 1:5-9 with the condemnation of Samaria.

The meaning of Micah’s name is ‘Who is like Yahweh’ and there is a clear link between him and the similarly named prophet Micaiah of 150 years prior who prophesied against Ahab in 2 Chron. 18:14-16. The last recorded words of Micaiah to Ahab and Jehoshaphat were

“Hearken, all ye people” and the first words of Micah are “Hear, all ye people; hearken” (1:2). Neither Ahab or Jehoshaphat hearkened and Micaiah’s prophecy came to pass – “I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as **sheep that have no shepherd**: and Yahweh said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house **in peace**” (2 Chron. 18:16). Micaiah was smacked in the face before being imprisoned and there are clear echoes in the prophecy of Micah; e.g. his prophecy has for its central theme, the regathering of the flock of Yahweh and the giving of the great Shepherd-King of Israel (Mic. 2:12-13; 5:2), who would be smitten upon the cheek with a rod (Mic. 5:1). A chastened and humiliated Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem “in peace” (2 Chron. 19:1) having lost his massive army at Ramoth-Gilead, and Israel was without a shepherd (2 Chron. 18:16) because he had compromised with the Nimrudian Baal worshipper Ahab who hated Yahweh. In contrast, Israel’s future king will destroy “the land of Nimrod” (Mic. 5:6) and finally bring peace to Israel – “this man shall be the **peace**, when the Assyrian (Gog) shall come into our land” (Mic. 5:5). It is fitting the prophecy should conclude with the words “Who is a God like unto thee” (Mic. 7:18) as both prophets bearing that name answered the question.

The bulk of Micah’s prophecy is centred on the appalling 16 year reign of Ahaz who “walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim” (2 Chron. 28:2) which is why we read of him, “For Yahweh brought Judah low because of **Ahaz king of Israel**; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against Yahweh.” He was of course king of Judah, but acted like Ahab king of Israel. While Jotham was personally upright (his name means “Yah is upright”) and very successful, he had virtually no impact on the spiritual condition of his people (2 Chron. 27:2 – “the people did yet corruptly”). Ahaz found a people ready to fall in with his evil and idolatrous ways. It was left to Hezekiah to clean up the staggering mess, and it is clear the prophecies of Micah, together with those of Isaiah had a massive impact upon him (see the evidence of Jer. 26:18-19).

Micah’s hometown, Morashethgath was a little village about 20 miles (32 kms) southwest of Jerusalem in the Shephelah (‘the low country’), and features in Mic. 1:14-15. It was a rural area almost untouched by the bustling and apostate capitals at which Micah takes aim. That is why his prophecy is said to be against “**Samaria and Jerusalem**.” The problem was the corrupt political and religious leadership installed in those ruling centres.

V.2-4 – “hearken, O earth....let the Lord Yahweh be witness against you, the Lord from his **holy temple**” – There are echoes here of the final message of Moses in Deut. 32:1 – “Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.” Just as the Song of Moses and the Law witnessed against future apostasy (Deut. 31:21,26), so Micah’s prophecy was Yahweh’s witness from His “holy temple” against apostasy – Ps. 11:4 – “Yahweh is in his **holy temple**, Yahweh’s throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.” That this means heaven is evident from V. 3 – “Yahweh cometh forth out of his place, and will **come down**, and tread upon the high places of the earth.” This language is always used of dramatic events resulting in massive change through Divine intervention (cp. Isa. 64:1-2).

V.5 – “For the transgression of Jacob is all this” – Jacob is the generic name for **all** Israel, hence, “for the sins of the house of Israel,” and “What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the **high places of Judah**? are they not Jerusalem?” The apostasy of Israel in the north had been preeminent for a long time, but now the same idolatry and wickedness was installed in Jerusalem under Ahaz. These high places existed through the reign of Ahaz and into the early reign of Hezekiah (2 Chron. 28:4,25; 31:1) who destroyed them before his 6th year when Israel went into captivity BC 722 (2 Kings 18:10).

V.6-9 – “Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard” – Judgement is first pronounced on Samaria (capital of Israel in the north). Planting a vineyard requires much preparatory work such as clearing the site of rocks and debris (see Isa. 5:1-2). It is a slow and painful process as was the demise of Israel. Invasion after invasion by the Assyrians finally destroyed them in BC 722. That was not far away.

All the idolatry and its attendant immorality signified by “the hires thereof” (a reference to the prostitution that accompanied the worship of false gods) would be utterly destroyed. Samaria which had promoted harlotry literally and spiritually (Rev. 2:20) would be sold into the hands of another ‘harlot’ – Assyria – “they shall return to the hire of an harlot.”

“Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked” – Micah would model the misery and shame of captive slaves carted off to Assyrian lands, for this was also to be the fate in time of Judah (cp. Isaiah doing a similar thing – Isa. 20:2-4). Accordingly, Micah laments that the wound (sickness) of Samaria which was “incurable” had now “come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem” (in the form of Ahaz). He knew it would not be long before it adversely impacted his own quiet country setting.

V.10-16 – A series of verbal plays on the names of towns in Micah’s own region ends the chapter. “Aphra” means dust, hence, “roll thyself in the dust.” “Saphir” means beautiful or fair, but naked captives led away are anything but. “Zaanan” means to come forth, but they “came not forth.” “Beth-ezel” means ‘neighbour-town’, but they could not be neighbourly because there was no standing room. “Maroth” means ‘bitterness’. They “waited carefully for good: but evil came down from Yahweh unto the gate of Jerusalem.” Moffatt and others give the meaning of “Lachish” as ‘horse-town’. They needed to “bind the chariot to the swift beast” in order to flee coming judgements because the germs of Samaria’s disease had already infected them.

“Therefore shalt thou give presents to Moreshethgath” – The name means “possession of Gath.” The prophet’s own town was once owned by the Philistines. The coming judgements would see it return to its foreign roots. “Achzib” means deceit, hence, it “shall be a **lie** to the kings of Israel.”

V.15 – ESV – “I will again bring a conqueror (namely, Sennacherib) to you, inhabitants of Mareshah (summit or head); the glory of Israel (its rulers and nobles) shall come to Adullam” (fleeing in fear to David’s secure stronghold). All the signs of desperation are here – “Make thee bald, and cut off thy hair, for the children of thy pleasures,—enlarge thy baldness, like a vulture, for they are exiled from thee” = loss of position, power and posterity as they were marched off into captivity bald and naked and bereft of their children.

Hebrews 11

This is a chapter of huge proportions requiring a study of each of the characters of faith in their own right. These comments will be confined to several matters of interest and importance only. Firstly though, a definition of faith.

V.1 – “substance” – *hupostasis* – a setting under, support, foundation, confidence. Bro. Thomas translates – “Faith is the confident anticipation of things hoped for, a full persuasion of things not seen.” RV – “giving of substance to things hoped for.”

“evidence” – *elegchos* – logical proof, evidence, demonstration, convincing argument. In summarizing this verse Bro. Thomas wrote – “Faith is reality and proof. The person who has it, embraces certain things promised as **realities**, and certain transactions as things **proved**.”

V.5 – “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see **death**” – The “death” mentioned here is not natural death, but **violent death** at the hands of Lamech (see Gen. 4:23-24 and Jude 14-16). All sons of Adam die – 1 Cor. 15:22. Enoch was transferred at age 365 (young for that time) to another safe place away from the murderous Lamech because “he pleased God.” God allowed him to live out his days in peace.

V.6 – ESV – “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God **must believe that he exists** and that **he rewards those who seek him**” – Two indispensable elements testify to the existence of true faith. Firstly, there must be an absolute conviction in the reality of the Creator of all things and an appreciation of man’s vastly inferior position to Him; and secondly, there must be a confidence that He will reward faith and the good behaviour and character that are developed by it and results in the continual seeking of Him (2 Chron. 15:2). The phrase “diligently seek” is *ekzēteō* – to seek out, i.e. investigate, scrutinise, and is not something that is done just once.

V.13 – “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were **persuaded** (Passive) of them, and **embraced** (Middle) them, and **confessed** (Active) that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” – The three verbs in **bold** each have a different voice in the Greek which has three voices in its grammar, while English only has two. There is the Passive Voice where the subject is **receiver of the action**; Middle Voice where **the action is done to or for oneself**; and the Active Voice where the subject is **the doer of the action**. This was the process that God used in the lives of the Patriarchs, and it is the same for us. We receive **God’s action** in preaching the Gospel to us via His agents, and we are **persuaded** of its truth; we **embrace** it (meaning in the Greek to throw the arms around it) which is something that nobody else can do for you – you are the doer of the action for yourself; and we **actively** confess our pilgrim status and demonstrate it by lively and dedicated service to God.

V.16 – “God is not ashamed to be **called** their God” – The word called is *epikaleomai* – to put a name upon, **to surname**. It occurs 32 times in the N.T. and 11 of those are translated “surname” as it should be here, for this is a reference to Ex. 3:14-15. God has a **name** = Yahweh, and a **surname** = “the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob.” This may be a lengthy surname, but it is important. It spells out how Yahweh was to fulfil His name through a multitude who would manifest His character eternally. It was a family matter. A Father (typed by Abraham – Gen. 17:5; Rom. 4:17), would work through an obedient sacrificed Son (Isaac – Gen. 22) to produce a family (Jacob the father of the 12 tribes of Israel – Rev. 7:4-9 – The “Israel of God”).

December 5

Job 6

V.1 – “But Job answered and said” – Chapters 6 and 7 provide Job’s response to Eliphaz.

V.1-7 – Deal with the extremity of Job’s suffering. Job feels his calamitous situation had not been properly weighed by Eliphaz who had accused him of impatience (Job 5:2). The inscrutable proverbs used have much the same meaning. The wild ass brays and the ox lows only when destitute of food. That which is insipid is unpleasant, and the white of an egg is loathsome. So with my afflictions said Job. They produced loathing and disgust. Even his food now was disagreeable (V.7). Hence, there was good cause to use the language in his speech which expressed his confused state of mind. He had once believed in exact retribution for sin, but knew this was not true in his own case. His situation deserved better consideration than the presumptive condemnation of Eliphaz.

V.8-13 – Job’s earnest plea for swift death resulted from his perception that God had forsaken him; his friends had condemned him, and that he had no answers or strength of his own. The only answer was to be allowed to die.

V.14-23 – The failure of Job’s friends to provide comfort in his hour of need is exposed in a simile of a deceitful brook – plentiful in winter (good times), but dry in summer (bad times). Where were his friends when he most needed them. With bitter irony, he reminded them that he had never asked them to give him anything (V.22), or ransom him from the hand of robbers (V.23).

V.24-30 – Job’s challenge to his friends was that if they could make him understand where he was wrong (i.e. by detailing the sins which they charged him with) he would submit gladly (V.24), but upright words were required, not worthless arguments (V.25). It was useless to challenge him on the basis of his words in his opening speech – everyone knew that a despairing man uttered many words not to be given the weight of deliberate judgement. It was of no help to avoid the main argument and make him “an offender for a word” (V.26). In reality, their attitude to him amounted to cruelty. He was “fatherless” (the word *yâthôm* properly denotes an orphan – Ex. 22:22; Deut.10:18; 14:29), i.e. unable to help himself (V.27).

Finally, Job challenged them to look him in the face and scrutinize him carefully for any suggestion of dishonesty (V.28), and then, to return to the argument and consider whether it might not be possible there was another reason for his afflictions than his iniquity (V.29). Or did they think his moral sense was so perverted it could no longer discriminate between right and wrong (V.30)? At this point in frustration, Job turned to God.

Job 7

V.1-6 – Deal with the brevity of life and his hopeless condition. Using himself as a means of illustration, Job painted a portrait of man’s travail in the world. His was hard labour, a time of heavy, forced toil, at the unbending will of another, to which the mercenary soldier or hired labourer was condemned (V.1-3). In the same way that a slave, labouring in the sun, craved the shade, or the hireling, his service completed, sought his wages (V.2), so Job’s experience of “months of vanity” and “wearisome nights” were spent awaiting the appointed hour of his discharge i.e. his death.

His condition gave him no rest (V.4). His leprous sores kept forming and discharging (V.5). He dreaded the night, and looked for the day which also sped by without hope (V.6).

V.7-10 – Deal with the finality of death. Overwhelmed with a sense of the hopeless brevity of life; the life of him who desired to do good, fast drew to a close (V.7 – Compare Hezekiah – Isa. 38:10-11). When he was dead, God might inquire after him, but he would be gone (V.8). As the cloud formation vanished, so also would the man who went to the grave (V.9). He vanished altogether (V.10).

V.11-21 – Job’s confusion and unprovoked alienation is displayed. The thought of approaching death and the short time left to him made Job want to give vent to his complaint (V.11). Why was God treating him this way? Was he such a threat to anyone that he must be hedged in and plagued (V.12-14)? He would prefer to die (V.15-16). After all, he was only a man when all was said and done – much too small for God to concern Himself with (Ps. 8:4). Why then would not God let him alone for a moment (V.17-19)? Furthermore, even, supposing he had sinned, what did it really matter to God? Why was it necessary for God to keep on punishing him, so that he became a burden to himself (V.20)? Why not simply forgive the sin, so that the fellowship once enjoyed might be resumed (V.21)? Job is in a very lonely place.

Micah 2

V.1-2 – “Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power (*e/* = might) of their hand” – Some in the ruling class with power to legislate and manipulate laws lay awake at night carefully planning how they could steal the inheritance of the poor and needy – “they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away” (V.2). The religious class in Christ’s day were accused of the same thing – “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses” (Matt. 23:14). The disease of Samaria had crept into Judah. The classic case was the seizure of Naboth’s vineyard by the cruel machinations of Jezebel which resulted in his death, and that of his sons (1 Kings 21; 2 Kings 9:26), in other words the loss of his entire inheritance – land and family – “they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.” Micah could see the same thing happening in his rural community in the Shephelah. The heritage laws (Num. 27:1-11; 33:54) were given to protect family life and ensure a firm foundation for the ecclesia of God (Acts 7:38). The men who devised evil were destroying the very foundations of God’s ‘house’.

V.3 – “Behold, against **this family** do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks” – “This family” refers to the coterie who stole the inheritance of the poor and needy, and the simple farmers of Micah’s region. Their family group would be led away into captivity as slaves under yokes – their lands gone, their families dispersed, and their future ruined just as they had ruined that of others.

V.4 – ESV – “In that day they shall take up a **taunt song** against you and moan bitterly, and say, We are utterly ruined; he changes the portion of my people; how he removes it from me! To an apostate he allots our fields.” Their stolen lands would be passed to others like the Assyrians and Babylonians in poetic justice.

V.5 – Rotherham – “Therefore, shalt thou have none to throw a measuring-line by lot” – Refers to the unknown practice of the day for apportioning land.

V.6-7 – ESV – “Do not preach—thus they preach—one should not preach of such things; disgrace will not overtake us” – Micah’s contemporaries took umbrage at his preaching. They did not want to hear anything that caused embarrassment and disgrace consistent with the approach of their generation (Isa. 30:8-11; Amos 5:10 – “They hate him that rebuketh in the gate”). And this came from “thou that art named the house of Jacob”!! Once again it is a play upon the idea of family life. The RSV translates this, “should this be said by the family of Jacob?” (Isa. 48:1). What would Jacob think of their repudiation of God’s Word? “Is the spirit of Yahweh straitened?” The word means ‘shortened’. ‘Can I shorten the Word of God because you don’t want to hear it?’ “Are these his deeds?” i.e. are the pronounced judgements really what Yahweh wants to do. He wanted to show mercy, but they would not listen. Surely it would be obvious to Jacob’s children that obeying God’s Word brings benefits – “Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly?”

V.8 – LITV – “Even yesterday My people have risen up like an enemy” – They had acted towards their brethren like an Assyrian invader – stripping the outer garment from the unwary ‘who passed by trustingly with no thought of war.’ The outer garment was large and voluminous because it doubled as a blanket at night, hence the law of Ex. 22:26-27.

V.9 – “The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever” – There were many widows in Judah. Ahaz lost 120,000 fighting men in one day (2 Chron. 28:6). These were easy targets for

the manipulative. Their inheritance taken by 'legal' or violent means saw the destruction of the family heritage and Yahweh was robbed of His glory. In response He would remove them from their "rest" – a place in His Land (Ps. 95:11; Heb. 4:9).

V.11 – ESV – "If a man should go about and utter wind and lies, saying, 'I will preach to you of wine and strong drink,' he would be the preacher for this people!" – Human nature in ignorance or rebellion will listen to anything other than the Word of God because it allows them to fulfil their base desires (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

V.12-13 – "I will surely assemble, O Jacob, **all of thee**; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel" – It is characteristic of the prophecy of Micah to counterbalance the awful judgements pronounced with the positive things of Israel's future. This is one such example. He was imbued with the Spirit of his God – "truly I am full of power by the spirit of Yahweh." This prophecy looks to the work of Elijah in the Second Exodus when Yahweh sets "his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people" (Isa. 11:11). All scattered Jews will come out of their adopted countries (Ezek. 20:34), but it will be their children who will enter the Land, the rebels having been purged out (Ezek. 20:38).

"The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it" – RSV – "He that openeth the breach," namely Yahweh. This is expanded in Mic. 5:7-9. Christ "their king shall pass before them" as the great Shepherd of the sheep ("Bozrah" means sheepfold) in the overshadowing power of the Saints (Zech. 9:14) through whom the power of the recalcitrant nations will be broken (Zech. 9:15; Jer. 51:20-23), hence, "Yahweh at their head."

Hebrews 12

V.1 – Surrounded by "so great a cloud of witnesses" as was seen in Heb. 11, there is incentive to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" and "run with patience the race that is set before us." There is the greatest example of all to look to – "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."

V.3-17 – Some Jewish believers were suffering ongoing persecution from family and other Jews (Christ had warned them so – Luke 12:52-53, and Paul noted it – Gal. 5:11; 6:12; 2 Tim. 3:12), and an easy way out was to return to the Law and walk away from Christ. Unlike their Lord, they had not yet been killed for their convictions and needed endurance under trial, for it is the Divine method – "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." There is no other way, as they knew from childhood under disciplining fathers (V.9-10). Escaping to another 'religion' might relieve the pressure but would prove they were "illegitimate children and not sons" (V.8 – ESV). Esau had shown himself 'illegitimate' in God's family – V.16-17.

V.18-29 – The Apostle contrasts those under the Law of Moses with those in Christ. He lists **seven** things of the former (V.18-21), and **ten** things of the latter (V.22-24). There is purpose in this. Seven is the number of covenant and the Law of Moses was a covenant with a limited role – "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). It was "holy, just and good" (Rom. 7:12), but could not give eternal life (Gal. 3:21). On the other hand, the Abrahamic Covenant confirmed by the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 15:8) was complete and accomplished **all** that God had planned (10 stands for **all**). 7 plus 10 = 17 the number of absolute completeness (see Appendix 4 for April – pg. 76-78).

The Diaglott translation of V.23 is correct – “and to a congregation of **first-borns**, having been enrolled in heavens.” Finally, the role of priests will return to where it began with the firstborn of the family, just as it has to God’s firstborn Son.

V.25-29 – “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven” – The Apostle’s final warning to any contemplating turning their back on Christ and returning to the Law is tinged with what has gone before. The frightening exhibition of Divine power at Horeb mentioned in V.18-21 is matched by, “Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven” (V.26), and “our God *is* a consuming fire” (V.29). However, there is nothing to fear from this God if we “hold fast to **grace**” (V.28) “whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

December 6

Job 8

V.1 – “Then answered Bildad the Shuhite” – His name means “son of contention”; “contender,” from the root “to strive” (Gesenius). He was a descendant of Shuah, the youngest son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25:6). Abraham’s children (apart from Isaac) were sent by Abraham “eastward, unto the east country,” which some suggest was near the Euphrates.

Bildad appeals neither to visions nor to his own discoveries, but to the experience and teaching of former generations (V.8-10). He argues from the standpoint of human tradition. With him, this authority is unimpeachable and the rule of truth. He was to cause Job much pain. What Bildad lacked in dignity he made up for in directness. He is more bold, direct, less kind than Eliphaz, almost to the point of cruelty. Bildad repeated the formula that righteousness and prosperity, sin and suffering, are in a mechanical cause-and-effect relationship. Thus, he charges Job with godlessness. He needed himself to be purged of hurtful presumption and pretentiousness and this was finally achieved (Job 42:7-9).

Bildad’s main contentions are that; (a) God never twists justice – V.3; (b) Job’s children may have deserved their fate – V.4; (c) God will not cast away a perfect man – V.20; accordingly, there is no need to dispute plain truths like these. Ask antiquity and consult tradition.

V.1-7 – By claiming righteousness in the face of his afflictions, and expostulating with God because of His treatment of him, Job had virtually charged God with lack of discrimination, and of injustice in His dealings with men (Job 7:12). Bildad made this the basis of his first speech. He first rebuked Job for his stormy words (V.2), and for daring to suggest that God could pervert justice (V.3). If his children had seen calamity, it could only be that they had sinned (V.4), and if Job himself would turn to God in righteousness, God would restore and bless him with even greater riches than he had previously enjoyed (V.5-7).

V.8-19 – Bildad’s position was not an ephemeral one (V.8). It was not his wisdom (V.9). It was rooted in antiquity (V.10), and it taught that, as the luxuriant water plant perished without water, so would the wicked man when God’s favour was withdrawn (V.11-13). His security would be as short-lived as the spiders-web and he would be no more able to keep his house from falling by holding on to it than the spider could by holding on to its web (V.14-15). For a time, he might resemble a luxuriant vine, apparently firmly rooted, but God would destroy him so effectively that even the place where he flourished would deny it ever knew him (V.16-18), and others would take his place (V.19).

V.20-22 – Because God did discriminate and never destroyed an upright man or uphold the evil (V.20), Job could take heart in the joyous prospect before him provided he reformed (V.21),

and in the discomfiture of his enemies; for only the wicked would finally be removed (V.22). In his closing message, Bildad tried to put things right by; (1) separating himself and his fellows from those that hated Job; (2) identify the haters of Job with the wicked; (3) letting Job know that he was regarded as of a different stamp than the wicked.

Micah 3

V.1 – “Is it not for you to know judgement?” – This open challenge to Judah’s rulers exposed their egregious evils. The “princes” (*qâtsîyn* – magistrates) who were supposed to uphold justice and true judgement had routinely perverted it so that it became ‘normal’ practice. They hated the good, and loved the evil as Isaiah also noted (Isa. 5:20 – also a prophecy of the scourge of Humanism in the latter days). They were false shepherds and are sharply contrasted with the Good Shepherd (Mic. 2:12; John 10:11) who would gather his sheep into the sheepfold (meaning of “Bozrah”). By contrast, in V.2-3 he describes those who ought to be ‘shepherds of the people,’ to feed, guard, direct them, but who were their butchers; who did not shear them, but flayed them; who fed on them, not fed them. This is a very similar indictment to Ezek. 34:2-10 which indicates nothing much had changed in the time between – a century or so.

V.4 – “he will even **hide his face** from them at that time” – This came to pass between BC 606 and 587, as it has in the latter days (Ezek. 39:23-24,29). Only when the great Shepherd arrives will this change.

V.5-8 – The false prophets of chapter 2:11 would be of no help when judgement day arrived. The “sun shall go down over the prophets” and they would “be ashamed, and the diviners confounded” for “there is no answer of God.” They preached peace when there was no peace (Jer. 6:14), for there is “no peace, saith Yahweh, unto the wicked” (Isa. 48:22). If only they had listened to Micah who was “full of power by the spirit of Yahweh” things could have been different for “Jacob.” Much is to be made of Jacob’s experiences soon in chapter 4.

V.9-12 – True to those who invert good and evil, the rulers, religious leaders and false prophets would wonder why Yahweh was not with them when calamity came – “yet will they lean upon Yahweh, and say, Is not Yahweh among us? none evil can come upon us.” How blind they were! So said Christ of the leaders of his day – “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind” (Matt. 15:14). Because they had built “up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity,” so shall “Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps.” In AD 70, Roman General Titus (according to Josephus), caused a plough to be drawn over all the courts of the temple to signify that it should never be rebuilt, and the place only serve for agricultural purposes. Emperor Hadrian is said to have done a similar thing on the suppression of the Bar Kochba revolt in AD 135.

Micah 4

V.1-3 mirror Isa. 2:2-4. As contemporary prophets in Judah, they set before God’s people the wonderful vision of Zion’s future glory when peace finally comes to Jerusalem, and all peoples seek to worship Yahweh in “the beauty of holiness” (Ps. 96:7-9; 98:2-9). Zion will be exalted and all peoples “shall flow unto it” (i.e. against the order of nature – uphill). They will seek to learn and understand what they previously rejected – the Word of God – “he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.” But it will only come to pass by severe judgements against rebellion and unwillingness to submit to Christ’s rule (V.3). Then those who once lived by the sword will have perished by the sword of the Spirit (Ps. 149:6-9) leaving only the humbled and willing.

V.4-5 – Jacob’s name is used 11 times in Micah, and already employed 7 times up to chapter 4. Its use in V.2 (“the house of the God of Jacob”) is an important clue to what follows. Jacob (the supplanter) the first and natural name of the one who became Israel by severe trial and tribulation is the pattern not only for his own natural seed, but for all mankind that will have a place when the Kingdom is finally established. The picture painted when “they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree” is picked up in John 1:47-51. Christ declared Nathanael to be “an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile” after he had seen him “under the fig tree.” We know what Nathanael was doing there. He was studying the life of Jacob at the time Jacob was returning to the land of Canaan while losing his favourite wife, Rachel, in child birth of the one who was called ‘the son of the right hand’ (if Nathanael was the bridegroom of the wedding in Cana, as some suggest, this was a fitting consideration). Jacob’s journey had begun 40 years before at Bethel when the dream of angels ascending and descending upon him was given (see John 1:51). Nathanael had gone through a process that all peoples in the future must pass through as we do now in our probation – the overcoming of the natural guile of human nature to become “prevailers with God” (the meaning of the name Israel). The Expositor’s Bible comments correctly on V.5 – Mic. 4:5 gives in a curious way the contrast of the present to that future in which all men will own the sway of one God. “For” at the present time “all the nations are walking each in the name of his God, but we go in the name of Yahweh our God forever and ever” (i.e. a huge change takes place because of judgement and education in Zion and “under the fig tree” symbol of Israel – V.2-4).

V.6-7 – “In that day, saith Yahweh, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted” – The future redemption of Israel is clearly based on the experiences of Jacob returning to the Land as they will under Elijah. Jacob halted on his thigh at Jabbok after it was dislocated by the angel who wrestled with him. He could not hurry to save his family who were about to meet Esau and his 400 men. The guile that had often characterized his past was of no use to him now (the tremendous principles of this story will be left for consideration when Gen. 32 to 35 come along). Jacob had to lean on God – “Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed (meaning of “Israel”): **he wept, and made supplication unto him:** he found him in Bethel (Gen. 35), and there he spake with us” (Hos. 12:4 – see comments November 15). Like their forefather, scattered Israel returning under Elijah in the Second Exodus will have to learn to trust in God and not their own ingenuity as they have done so much in the past. A remnant will survive “and Yahweh shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.”

V.8 – More from the experiences of Jacob follows – “thou, O tower of the flock” (Edar in the Hebrew) refers to Jacob arriving at the tower of Edar after the birth of Benjamin (‘son of the right hand’) and the death and burial of Rachel (Gen. 35:16-21). This, accompanied by the death of Rebekah’s nurse (Gen. 35:8) saw the “Syrian” influence depart from Jacob’s family for a while, and it is only then that the inspired record actually calls him “Israel” even though he had been renamed in Gen. 32:28. The guile of the Syrian was finally removed after 40 years in the grip of “Laban the Syrian” (Gen. 25:20; 29:10), although it was to return soon after (Gen. 35:22). No trust in self was the grand lesson (Gen. 32:32). So it will be for Israel and all nations in the future when “the Son of the Right Hand” appears.

V.9-10 – “why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee?” – Rachel cried out the name Ben-oni (“the son of my sorrow”) in anguish as she died in childbirth (Gen. 35:18), but was overruled by Jacob who named the boy “Benjamin” (“the son of the right hand”). Faithless Judah and Israel (and Rachel was a type of them – Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:18), have cried out in anguish ever since (“Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion”), and will do so until their King arrives to redeem them (Mic. 5:2-4). Rachel was buried in

the field at Ephratah, and so for Israel, “thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon” (in the Babylonian captivity BC 606-587 for God could not bring forth His Son from an idolatrous people – remember Laban’s teraphim found by Jacob in Rachel’s stuff!), but final deliverance will come when they are redeemed from the hand of Babylon the Great by Christ (Mic. 5:5-6).

V.11-13 – “Now also many nations are gathered against thee” – As they will prior to Armageddon, only to be destroyed by Israel’s King at Armageddon and beyond – “for he shall gather them as the **sheaves** into the floor” (Armageddon means “a heap of **sheaves** in a valley for judgement”). The “daughter of Zion” is likened to the ox that treads out the corn – “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass.” This is the work of the Saints guiding Israel in that day – “You shall go out leaping like **calves from the stall**. And you shall **tread down** the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet” (ESV for Mal. 4:2-3). Everything on earth will then be consecrated unto Yahweh and ruled by the Son of His right hand.

Hebrews 13

V.1-9 – The Apostle lists a range of behaviours which have a tendency to be neglected when people are contemplating moving to another ‘religion’ which some Hebrew believers were. These included brotherly love and hospitality (Lot “entertained angels unawares”, but Abraham did not – he knew the principal angel). Those bound (like the Apostle) can be forgotten. Instability and uncertainty can lead to immoral behaviour (V.4), and concern about temporal things can increase (V.5-6). Respect for faithful leaders who are advising against defection to Judaism can suffer (V.7-9).

V.10-13 – He turns to Christ’s sacrifice “outside the camp” (Rotherham) foreshadowed in the Law. Sacrifices whose blood was sprinkled towards the Most Holy Place were burnt outside the camp (Lev. 4:5-7, 11-12, 16-21), not like normal offerings. The shaky Hebrews needed to stay with Christ outside the law of sin offerings that could not save. In V.14-19, he counsels them to make the most important sacrifices – praise, thanksgiving, partnership with the faithful and submission to the guidance of sound leaders. It would not be in vain – V.20-21 – “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

December 7

Job 9

Chapters 9 and 10 contain Job’s response to Bildad’s first speech. Chapter 9 contains:

V.1-10 – The overwhelming nature of God’s power (His majesty, might and wisdom)

V.11-24 – Man’s indefensible position before God’s supremacy

V.25-35 – Job’s desire for reconciliation and the need for a mediator

Bildad had countered Job’s charge that, despite his righteousness, God was unjustly treating him, with a strong affirmation to the contrary. God did not act that way. He did discriminate, a fact supported by the wisdom of the ancients, which, could Job but yield to it, would lead him to renewed happiness and prosperity. In Chap. 8:4, he mentioned the sin of Job’s children, but he did not directly accuse Job of sin. If anything, Job is expected to regard himself as the companion and equal of Bildad, as was pointed out in V.21. At the same time, however, he

must understand that this was a “charitable” view of the matter, for he can only really belong to Bildad’s company, if he confessed and forsook his sins. From a different viewpoint, put a little more bluntly, this was the position adopted by Eliphaz, whose speech dictated the course of the debate, and when Job answers, whilst he does so to rebut Bildad, it is from what Eliphaz said in Chap. 4:17 (“Shall mortal man be just before God? Shall a man be pure before his Maker?” (RV mgn.) that he takes his cue.

His address falls into two parts: (1) Chapter 9 – God awes man with His power and will not allow him to establish his plea of innocence; (2) Chapter 10 – Job’s plea to discover the reason why God is afflicting him.

In Chapter 9, Job first describes God’s majesty and might (V.1-10), the impossibility of man standing up to God (V.11-24), his own plight at God’s treatment of him and the need for an umpire to intervene between them (V.25-35). In Chapter 10, Job expostulates with God for His treatment of him (V.1-7); describes the lavish care which God used in forming him and giving him life (V.8-12); confesses himself non-plussed at the difference between God’s care for him then and His treatment of him now (V.13-17), and, in despair, pleads that God might now leave him alone (V.18-22).

V.1-10 – Bildad was contending for a moral principle in the world whereby the good were rewarded and sinners punished, and had upheld Eliphaz who said that Job was only receiving the consequences of his sin, and that to contend against the law of exact retribution was to charge God with being unrighteous. It was to make this point that Eliphaz asked “How can man be just before God?” But when Job takes issue with Bildad, he uses this phrase of Eliphaz and gives it a different twist. It is true that man cannot be just (i.e. cannot establish his own innocence) before God (V.1-2), not however, as Eliphaz would have it – that God is so Holy and man so impure that the latter cannot live without fault before the former, but because God is so mighty that man, however innocent he might be, would be overwhelmed in His presence (V.3-4). If God chose to do so, he could throw down mountains (V.5); shatter the earth (V.6); prevent the sun rising or the stars shining (V.7), since all of them had their origin in him (V.8-9). In fact, His works were past man’s comprehension (V.10), and here, he used the same words Eliphaz used in chap. 5:9 to describe the inevitability that flowed from the perfect association of God’s omnipotence with His morality. But when used by Job, they meant that God’s exercise of His power was inscrutable – “Which doeth great things past finding out; Yea, marvellous things without number.”

V.11-24 – And if God’s ways were great and inscrutable, how could Job identify them (V.11) or require God to account for His ways? (V.12). His anger was inexorable and if it chose a victim, none (certainly not Job) could withhold it from its purpose (V.13-14). Even in his innocence, all Job could do would be to abandon his plea of innocence and supplicate the One judging him (V.15). Supposing Job called on God to explain His method and God answered his call, Job would find it difficult to believe he had answered (V.16). No, God had shown that He was determined to crush Job and prove him wrong (V.17-20). Yet for all this, Job would maintain his innocence, because he had reached the stage where he would prefer death to life (V.21), and since he was now indifferent to what might befall him, he was free to say that there was no righteous rule as his friends supposed (V.22), but on the contrary, God’s rule was arbitrary and indiscriminate, and if this confusion existed and God was not the author of it, who was? (V.23-24).

V.25-36 – Job’s own case illustrated the confusion observable in the world. In V.21, he had protested his innocence, but contrary to what men normally expected of the innocent, his life was swiftly ebbing away (V.25-26). No matter how bravely he tried to smile through his adversities, it was to no avail (V.27-29). It was no use him even trying to cleanse himself. If he

did, God would immediately plunge him in the ditch so that the mire would cling to him (V.30-31). The whole trouble was that God was not a man and there was no way that a man could approach God in matters of judgement (V.32). There was no point of contact – no “daysman,” i.e. umpire, or arbiter who could “lay his hand upon both,” i.e. represent both God and man in such a fashion as to set forth equitably the claims of both (V.33). Alternatively, justice might be done if God would only cease smiting and terrifying him (V.34), for then Job would speak up and state his case without fear (V.35). Job was in an uncomfortable place.

Micah 5

V.1 – “gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops” – The phrase “daughter of troops” is addressing Judah. The word is almost always used of “bands of men employed in irregular marauding.” The title is employed on account of Judah’s violence, the robbery and bloodshed within her (Mic. 2:8; 3:2). This same violence would later be deployed against “the Son of the right hand” noted in the type of chap. 4:10, and the subject of chap. 5:2-3, for they would “smite the judge of Israel (Christ) with a rod upon the cheek” (Matt. 27:30).

V.2-3 – “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto **me** (son of God) that is to be ruler in Israel” – Cited in Matt. 2:6 of the whereabouts of the birthplace of Jesus Anointed. He would rise out of obscurity to rule the world in due time. This was God’s plan from the beginning – “whose comings forth, have been from of old, from the days of age-past time” (Rotherham). As Christ himself said of his Father – “for thou lovedst me **before the foundation of the world**” (John 17:24). He was always in God’s plan even before the Creation. But first there had to be a painful gestation period and birth typed by Rachel (Mic. 4:6-10) representing (as she did) natural Israel (Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:18) in the bringing forth of “the Son of the right hand” (Ps. 80:17) – “Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth.” God would not allow His son to be born in an idolatrous nation – hence, the captivity in Babylon that eradicated idolatry from the Jews who returned under Zerubbabel.

V.4-6 deal with the Second Advent of Christ when “he shall stand and feed in the strength of Yahweh” and “be great unto the ends of the earth,” because he will redeem Jacob (“then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel”), and crush the nations (V.5-6). Firstly, Gog – “this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian (Gog – Isa. 10:5,24-25; 30:31; 31:8) shall come into our land,” and then the rebellious Catholic nations (called “the land of Nimrod”) over a period of 40 years through the power given to “seven shepherds, and eight principal men” (RV). This is a reference to the saints as **king-priests** (Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9-10; 19:16). Seven is the covenant number, and eight is the number of immortality. Through these Yahweh “will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the nations such as they have not heard” (V.15).

V.7-14 – These verses presage the Second Exodus under Elijah and his companion saints (Matt. 24:31) in recovering all scattered Jews back to the Land of Promise. However, this will require a great deal of purging of rebels as Ezek. 20:33-38 makes clear. That purging is the subject of V.10-14 which, though it had relationship to the primary judgements brought by the Babylonians in BC 606-587, foreshadowed the future described in the previous verses 7-8.

V.7-8 – “the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a **dew** from Yahweh, as the **showers** upon the grass” – Dew is a symbol for **blessing**, inter-alia (Deut. 33:13,28), and “showers upon the grass” is redolent of Ps. 72:6. When Israel under Elijah pass through friendly and submissive nations they will bring a blessing to them, but “the

remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a **lion** among the beasts of the forest, as a **young lion** among the flocks of sheep (religious powers): who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.” The rebellious Catholic nations through whom Israel must pass in the Second Exodus (Ezek. 20:35), particularly those in Europe united under the Papacy (Ps. 2:1-3), will receive terrible judgements at their hand under the guidance of the saints (Zech. 9:14-15; Mic. 7:14-17). It is during that 40 years that the rebels among returning Jews are also purged.

James 1

The Epistle of James is one of the earliest N.T. writings. It is addressed to the Jews of the Diaspora (V.1) and does not mention Gentiles. James was the Lord’s half-brother and the next eldest after him – Gal. 1:19; Matt. 13:55. Initially sceptical of his older brother (John 7:5; Mark 3:21), once converted after Christ’s resurrection he became a “pillar” in the Jerusalem Ecclesia and was one of the most influential brethren of his time. There can be little doubt that the lengthy meeting between Christ and James mentioned in 1 Cor. 15:7 had a massive impact on him. There are between 70 and 80 teachings from the Discourse on the Mount (Matt. 5 to 7) identified in his epistle.

Chapter 1 has three main divisions – (1) The endurance of trial – V.2-12; (2) The source of temptation – V.13-18; (3) Putting into practice the principles of the Word – V.19-27.

V.2 – “count it all joy when ye fall into divers **temptations**” – This word is used in the sense of a trial or a “putting to the proof.” There is usually little joy when experiencing trial (Heb.12:11), so it needs to be **counted** as such knowing there is a purpose in it (Heb. 12:5-7). This exhortation comes from the Discourse on the Mount (Matt. 5:11-12). Trial has a purifying influence (1 Pet. 1:6-9). and is a forcible reminder of what constitutes true values (Rom. 8:19-20; 2 Cor. 4:17). Evidently, serious trials had overtaken James’ scattered brethren, seemingly in some cases from their own Jewish contemporaries (James 5:1-6).

V.3-4 – “let patience (*hupomonē* – endurance) have her perfect work” – Endurance under trial is essential to be “perfect” (*teleios* – complete) and “entire” (*holoklēros* – perfectly sound, a word rendered “perfect soundness” in Acts 3:16, there used of the healed lame man). The essential idea is to be “without blemish” and the root word is translated “whole” in Mark 12:33 when used of burnt offerings. Only then can we be “wanting nothing.”

V.5-8 – “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally” – “Lack” is the same as the word “wanting” in V.4. This is James’ connecting thought. The distress of his brethren suggested a lack of Divine wisdom, and so they did not perceive the purpose of trial. “Liberally” is better rendered “in singleness” (Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22). The word indicates “attitude unreserved,” “wholehearted,” and “free from division of motive and loyalty”, and in this sense is rendered “simplicity” (Rom. 12:8). God who is righteous and consistent, gives only in “singleness” and cannot accept the approach of the doubleminded man (V.8). “But let him ask in faith and have no doubts; for he who has doubts is like the surge of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed into spray” (Weymouth for V.6).

V.9-17 - The RV has the conjunction “but” showing a connecting thought. Mammon is the most common source of doublemindedness. Poverty and riches are temptations of similar danger. Both cause preoccupation of mind (Prov. 30:8-9). Whether rich or poor, all men are subject to the ravages of mortality – “because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.” There are trials for both rich and poor, though the former is greater (Mark 10:23-24). Accordingly, “Blessed is he who patiently endures trials; for when he has stood the test, he will gain the victor’s crown--even the crown of Life--which the Lord has

promised to those who love Him” (Weymouth for V.12). However, human nature is always looking to excuse itself. It is always someone else’s fault that we do not do so well. Some even foolishly blame God – “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.” God cannot be tempted, and will not tempt men to evil – “But when a man is tempted, it is his own passions that carry him away and serve as a bait” (Weymouth for V.14). The pattern of the Fall is repeated time and again – “when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” It is man that is inherently evil; God is perfect and, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change” (ESV for V.17).

V.18-21 – “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth” – “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Hence, “let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” which is the foundation for the rest of the epistle. Hearing through “the implanted word” (ESV) is the subject from V.21-27 where actions (“be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only”) are the key indicators of proper hearing. James 2 is the required outcome of hearing, namely, “faith which works by love.” James 3 amplifies “slow to speak” and James 4 and 5 take up the matter of being “slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (James 3:18).

V.22-25 – ESV – “For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.” The laver was made from the “looking-glasses” of faithful women – Ex. 38:8 – “And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking-glasses of the women assembling” (i.e. for worship). The laver contained water (symbol for the Word – Eph. 5:26) for the washing of hands and feet (Ex. 30:19 – hands = works; feet = walk) and this points to James 4:8 – “Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (i.e. divided walk). The laver was a single item (or body) made from a multitude of brazen (flesh) mirrors (vanity and self-interest). The message is clear – only by leaving behind human vanity and self-interest can we truly become members of the Christ body (the man who, like the laver, was full of the Word – the Word made flesh – John 1:14). This is ‘doing’ the Word.

V.26-27 – “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” – This is imitating God – RV – Eph. 5:1 – “Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children,” for He is “a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation” (Ps. 68:5), and we should be like Him – Isa. 1:16-17 – “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” For God is no respecter of persons, because “he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Hence, the scenario of chapter 2:1-4.

December 8

Job 10

This chapter contains Job’s plea to discover the reason why God is afflicting him. It contains:

V.1-7 – Job’s complaint of God’s treatment: (a) Does He enjoy oppression? – V.3; (b) Is He limited by man’s vision? – V.4; (c) Is He constrained by time? – V.5; (d) Does He play games with temporal power? – V.6.

V.8-17 – God’s creation and care of Job whom He now destroys.

V.18-22 – Job’s cry of despair.

V.1-7 – Job was normally much too pious to talk as he now did, but since God had determined to crush him, and death was impending and all hope seemed gone, nothing was to be gained by restraint (V.1; cp. Chap. 7:11). He therefore appealed to know **why** God was treating him as He was (V.2). In Chap. 7:12-21, Job had examined the problem from his own (man’s) viewpoint, and had asked three questions: (1) Was Job such a threat to humanity that he had to be removed? (V.12-16); (2) What was man, that God should concern Himself with him, anyway? (V.17-19); (3) Even if **man** had sinned, did that burden God in any way? Why should not God pardon him and be done with it, instead of making him a burden to himself and everyone else? (V.20-21).

Now he examined the problem from God’s viewpoint, and he advanced three possibilities – only to reject them as impossible: (1) Did God gain **pleasure** from the exercise of arbitrary power? (V.3); (2) Was it possible God’s view of things was as defective as man’s view? (V.4); (3) Was God Himself **limited in time** to the extent that He didn’t know if Job would remain faithful if left to himself, and was determined, before His own time expired, to force out of Job any “sin” that might be in him? (V.5-7).

V.8-12 – Any of the things suggested by Job would be wholly incompatible with the tenderness and loving care that God had previously bestowed on Job when He had fashioned him in the womb (V.8-10), clothed him with flesh and bones (V.11), and given him life and favour, and maintained it (V.12). In this vivid description of human growth from the embryo is seen the loving care of God (cp. Ps. 139:13-14; Ecc. 12:5).

V.13-17 – Was it possible that God who had so laboured to create and sustain him, was now seeking to destroy him? If so, it could only be that, notwithstanding God’s previous care of him, His intention all-along had been to bring him to this point (V.13) where, whether he sinned or did not sin (V.14,15), God was determined to spring on him as a lion with every-increasing fury (V.16,17).

V.18-22 – In the face of a fate such as this, what advantage was there in living? In such a situation, where was there advantage in being born? So, Job recurred to Chap. 3, and his curse upon his day. If only he had been stillborn, and carried “from the womb to the grave” (V.18,19). His remaining days were few. Why would not God leave him alone, so that he could take what little comfort remained to him from them (V.20), before he went into the grave – “where the light is as darkness” (V.21-22). There seemed to be no light at the end of the tunnel for Job.

Micah 6

V.1-4 – “Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice” – A great court scene is now presented. Yahweh had a controversy with His people and He called upon them to stand in the dock before the perpetual “mountains” and “the everlasting hills” as the jury and witnesses in the trial. Israel is the Defendant (V.2). Micah is the Crown Prosecutor and Yahweh the Plaintiff – “for Yahweh hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.” Yahweh asked Israel to “testify against me.” He challenges them, “Wherein have I wearied thee?” – For “His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3), but Israel routinely wearied Yahweh – “I have not wearied thee with incense; thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities” (Isa. 43:22-24).

“For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” – Israel’s redemption from “the house of servants” was the greatest debt the nation owed to their God. He had kept His promise to Abraham (Gen. 15:13-14) and brought them out of slavery in Egypt. They were never to forget

it – “Then beware lest thou forget Yahweh, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deut. 6:12). He also preserved them in “a waste howling wilderness” (Deut. 32:10; Jer. 2:6) by the sure hand of “Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.” By turning to false gods and allowing the worst evils to prosper, the nation had despised their heritage and dishonoured their Saviour.

V.5 – “O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him **from Shittim unto Gilgal**; that ye may know the righteousness of Yahweh” – Yahweh also reminded them of the other great display of His grace, namely, the frustration of the plan formed by the Moabitish king Balak to destroy Israel by means of the curses of Balaam (Numbers 22-24). The period of Israel’s journeying from Shittim to Gilgal embraces not only Balak’s machinations and Balaam’s prophecies, by which the plan invented for the destruction of Israel was frustrated, but also the defeat of the Midianites, who with Balaam’s counsel, attempted to destroy Israel by seducing it to idolatry; the miraculous crossing of the Jordan; the entrance into the Promised Land, and the circumcision at Gilgal. Through all these events Yahweh had overturned the counsel of Balak, and confirmed the fact that Balaam’s answer was inspired by Him. He had demonstrated that no counsel or weapon formed against Israel would prosper (Isa. 54:17) despite their unworthiness. As Balaam had said – “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel” when in fact Baal-Peor was an indelible blight on that fateful period from Shittim to Gilgal – “Is the iniquity of **Peor** too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day” (Josh. 22:17; Num. 31:16).

The case brought into the ‘court of justice’ is brought to a conclusion with its aim declared, “that ye may know the righteousness of Yahweh.” This is the sum of the address where the case of the plaintiff terminates, the defendants being called on to show why the sentence of the law should not be pronounced against them, as it indeed is in V.9-16.

V.6-8 – “Wherewith shall I come before Yahweh” – Now the people as defendants respond; but instead of vindicating themselves, or attempting to dispute what has been alleged against them, they plead guilty and anxiously inquire how they shall appease the wrath of the Judge, and how they might make atonement for the sins committed. The apostate Judaistic mind always thinks it can **do** something to put God in its debt or appease Him (John 6:28), and meaningless ritual sacrifice is always at the head of the list instead of humility and trembling at God’s Word (Isa. 66:2-3; Jer. 7:21-23). “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to **do justly** (*mishpâṭ* – righteously), and to love mercy (*chesed* – lovingkindness – Ex. 34:6-7), and to walk humbly with thy God?” The order here is important. Doing right is the first and indispensable requirement. Honesty, integrity and truthfulness is the foundation of all the rest. God only shows mercy when His righteousness is upheld, When the guile and self-interest of human nature is put in its rightful place we will be able to love mercy (for we will recognize its need in our own life), and in sacrificing for the well-being of others will display the humility of utter dependence on our God (Phil. 2:1-5). No amount of ritual sacrifice can substitute for that.

V.16 – “For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels” – This formula began with Cush and Nimrod (Gen. 10:8). Cush was the great original prophet of the Babylonian mysteries (adopted by Catholicism) and taught his son to practice them with outstanding results (works). It was also the case with Omri who was counsellor to Ahab who introduced Baal worship (Nimrod) into Israel, and it found its way into Judah through Athaliah who became counsellor to Ahaziah (2 Chron. 22:2-3). It will be noted that Athaliah is called “the daughter of Omri” there when in fact she was the daughter of Ahab. That is because of this formula – the counsel or statutes of Omri became works and

practices that corrupted Judah. The counsel of Balaam (Rev. 2:14) had also produced idolatrous works in Israel at Baal-Peor (Num. 25). It is essential that the 'counsel' be right if the works are to be pure.

James 2

V.1-9 – The scenario of favouring the rich over the poor follows on from chapter 1:27. God is not a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11). To be doers of the Word requires we abandon favouritism in practicing the doing of the Word. Judaism was well known for this characteristic and James is writing to the Jewish Diaspora. He returns to the theme of chapter 1:9-11.

V.10-13 – Breaking one commandment of the Law brought the whole Law down on you. Even Christ was condemned by the Law through no fault of his own, for the Law had said, "he that is hanged is accursed of God." David therefore was doubly guilty, for he committed both adultery and murder. The Law of Moses made no provision for mercy for adulterers and murderers. Death by stoning was the outcome. David was forgiven by God's grace, but only after Nathan had presented a scenario of a rich man and a poor man (cp. V.1-4 with 2 Sam. 12:1-7). Jews wanting to continue under the Law would be condemned by it, but if by faith in the mercy of God ("the law of liberty") there could be freedom from condemnation (Rom. 8:1). The "liberty" we have in Christ is freedom from the Law of Moses which could not save, but only condemn, however, we are not free from law, for we are "under the law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21), namely, the commandments of Christ. It is these that James is setting forth.

David's cry in Ps. 51:1 – "Have mercy upon me, O God" is the basis of V.13 – "For he shall have judgement without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgement." There was no mercy available to David under the Law. Our destiny will be determined by maintaining Christ's edict – "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" – Matt. 6:14-15.

V.14-16 – John the Baptist's teaching about non-discrimination in helping the naked and hungry was, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise" – Luke 3:11.

V.17-26 – "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" – The thoughts about 'hearing' the 'implanted word' and being 'doers of the word' culminate in this section. Real faith, in contradistinction to declared faith, is shown by works of faith, and the key issue is singlemindedness in contrast to doublemindedness. Believers in one God are bound by the ramifications of that fact – Rotherham – Deut. 6:4-5 – "Hear, O Israel: Yahweh, is our God,—**Yahweh alone**. Thou shalt **therefore** love Yahweh thy God,—**with all** thy heart and **with all** thy soul, and **with all** thy might." If God is one, then He must be served "with all." No man can serve two masters (Matt. 6:24), and therefore a doubleminded approach cannot work. Even those said to be 'possessed by demons' believed in "one God" (like Legion – Mark 5:7), so it is madness to think that declaring one's faith is adequate in the absence of acting like the God in whom it is expressed.

It is an interesting reflection that Abraham was commanded to kill (sacrifice) Isaac without being judged by law (V.11); and Rahab the harlot was forgiven 'adultery' because her faith was confirmed by her works.

December 9

Job 11

V.1 – “Then answered Zophar the Naamathite” – His name means “hairy” or “rough” (Young); “departing” (Strong). He was related to Zepho or Zephi, the grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:11; 1 Chron. 1:36). He probably came from the east of Jordan. He relied neither upon revelation, nor upon tradition. His appeal is to common sense and dogma. Zophar is a blunt-spoken dogmatist and moralist and used assertion more than reason. His treatment of Job is extremely cruel, and his attacks are vehement. One of his main contentions is that, God knows iniquity when He sees it (V.11). Whereas Eliphaz had appealed to Divine revelation and Bildad to the wisdom of antiquity, Zophar, in the face of logic virtually abandoned logic (V.6-8) and his ‘passion’ became his ‘persuasion’ as he quickly descended to personalities.

V.1-4 – Two things in Job’s utterances offended Zophar: (1) Job said he was righteous (Chap. 9:21; 10:7); (2) he had expressed his willingness, if necessary, to actually go into God’s presence to discuss the matter. This claim of purity (V.4) and the arguments supporting it were no more than a “multitude of words” from “a man full of talk” (V.2), “boastings,” “mockings” (V.3).

V.5-6 – If only God would take Job at his word and appear and answer him (V.5), Job would soon enough discover the knowledge that he lacked concerning the Divine will and this would enable him to understand that he had really received less than his sins deserved (V.6).

V.7-12 – Job should understand that God was unsearchable, and it was virtually impossible to discover completely why He did things (V.7). The height and depth (V.8); the length and breadth (V.9) of His ways was incomprehensible. If God chose to, no man could stop Him from entering judgment (V.10), and such was His knowledge of vain man and man’s (otherwise unobserved) iniquity, that he did not need to weigh it up carefully. It was immediately apparent to Him (V.11). But it was useless to expect a “vain man” to understand this (V.12). Zophar’s point was obvious. Job was being smitten for a sin of which he was not conscious. How did one repent of something of which one knew nothing? Yet that was Zophar’s next point.

V.13-20 – In the previous section, Zophar had virtually said: “You either agree with my explanation of the incomprehensible Divine wisdom, or you belong to the vain, empty-headed, hollow-minded, numbskull, class!” Coarse though Zophar undoubtedly was, he could see Job would take strong exception to the inference that could be drawn. He therefore immediately tried to blunt the edge of his shaft by implying that he intended Job to be an exception from his “vain man” class. So he used the emphatic personal pronoun: “If **thou** (as distinct from the “vain man”) set thy heart aright..,” thus betraying intellectual dishonesty – a refusal to face the consequences of his own words!

Note the steps contained in Zophar’s exhortation to Job to repent. First, he was encouraged to “set his heart right” and then engage in prayer, i.e. “stretch out thine hands towards him” (V.13). After this, to put away personal sins (“iniquity in thine hand”) and those of his home (“unrighteousness in thy tents” – V.14). Forgiven, his innocence restored, he would no longer fear to lift up his face and his steadfastness would be restored. Job would thereupon forget his calamities (V.16), and even the darkness itself would be illuminated by the light of the truth (V.7). He would once more be able to rest securely (V.18) and people would again come to him for counsel (V.19). In opposition to this picture of the restored Job, Zophar finished by warning Job of the fate of the wicked – blindness, absence of refuge, death (V.20). Eliphaz had held before Job a picture of unalloyed brightness (Job 5:19-26). Bildad referred to Job’s enemies perishing, but Job was not included (Job 8:22), but Zophar said: “If the cap fits, wear it!”

Micah 7

V.1-6 – “Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the firstripe fruit” – Israel is likened to grapes and first ripe figs (Hos. 9:10), and “a basket of summer fruit” (Amos 8:1-2). Micah laments the absence of “good” (*châsîyd* – faithful, kind, godly) men, for “Perished is the man of lovingkindness out of the earth, and, upright among men, is there none” (Rotherham for V.2). ‘Fruit’ of this quality had disappeared from among his people.

Things had come to an awful situation in the nation. Oppression, bribery, and bloodshed, were everywhere in the ascendant. Men wrought evil with both hands. Husbands could not trust their wives, leave alone friends. The language of V.6 is echoed in Matt. 10:21,35-36 with the grounds for the conflict there being violently opposed views on religion. Here the distrust and disloyalty found its motive in gross self-interest. Everyone was set upon feathering his, or her, own nest at the expense of others. Like our times, it was a world of scams, theft and distrust. Every relationship was prickly and dangerous – “The best of them is like a thorn; the (seemingly) upright more than a hedge of thorns.” At such a time there is no refuge for God’s faithful servants except in God (V.7-13).

V.7 – Rotherham – “But, I, for Yahweh, will watch, I will wait for the God of my salvation,—My God, will hear me” – The prophet speaks in the name of the ideal Israel. Things were very bad, but hope sprang eternal because of Yahweh’s promises to the fathers – “Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old” (V.20). That is how Micah concludes his prophecy. The ‘ideal’ Israel will one day be a reality – the firstripe fruit abundant. This is itself the key to dealing with the awful situation facing the final generation when there has been almost a complete breakdown in the morality of society despite its Humanistic character.

V.8-10 – “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, Yahweh shall be a light unto me” – Captive Israelites are introduced as speaking here and in the preceding verse. The enemy are the Assyrians and Chaldeans; the fall is their idolatry and consequent captivity; the darkness, the calamities they suffered in that captivity; their rise and light, their restoration and consequent blessedness.

The mercy of God celebrated in V.18 was manifested in the return of 50,000 captives from Babylon under Zerubbabel, but its greatest manifestation is yet future when the Second Exodus of V.14-17 is undertaken. Then repentant Israel will say, “he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness” (V.9), because Yahweh will have pleaded their cause and executed judgement for them. Then Israel’s great enemy ‘Babylon’ will be destroyed after the pattern set by Cyrus (V.10; Isa. 44:26 to 45:6; Rev. 16:12).

V.11-13 – ESV – “A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended” – The future of Jerusalem and the Land comes into view. The land once occupied by the nations of Judah and Israel will be greatly extended to match the Land promised to Abraham. Scattered Israel will be regathered – “In that day they will come to you, from Assyria and the cities of Egypt,” and from all parts of the earth.

“Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate” – This should be translated in the past tense, “Though the land **had been** desolate;” that is, the land of Israel had been desolate during the captivity, which captivity was the “fruit of the evil doings of them that had dwelt therein.”

V.14-17 – ESV – “Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your inheritance” – The great Shepherd of chap. 2:12-13 will arrive to redeem Israel and Elijah will undertake the Second Exodus (Isa. 11:11-12; Ezek. 20:33-38). As in the first Exodus under Moses, 40 years will be spent in “the wilderness of the peoples” to bring judgements upon them and purge the rebels from among Israel – “According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things. The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might.”

V.18-20 – The great mercy of God to pardon a repentant people both in the Land where Christ will “save the tents of Judah first” (Zech. 12:7), and in the Second Exodus is celebrated by the prophet – “Who is a God like unto thee?” who delights in mercy. He will have remembered His covenant unto Abraham – “Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham” (picked up by Paul in Rom. 15:8-9).

James 3

V.1-2 – RV – “Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgement” – This is consistent with Heb. 13:17 and the principle “unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required” (Luke 12:48). Instructing others is a solemn responsibility that demands consistency with what is taught. The Scribes and Pharisees failed in this regard (Matt. 23:2-3). The well used adage, “If you talk the talk, you must walk the walk” is apposite. There is a need to discern the ‘gifts’ that God has given each disciple (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11) and use them wisely and consistently. This is a challenge because, “**we** often stumble and fall, all of us. If there is anyone who never stumbles in speech, that man has reached maturity of character and is able to curb his whole nature” (ESV). James includes himself in this challenge.

V.3-12 – The dissertation on the power and danger of the tongue develops V.2 Two simple illustrations are used to show the disproportionate power of the tongue for evil relative to the rest of the body. A huge animal turned by a bit in the mouth; and large ships turned by a small rudder – “Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things.” Accordingly, “how great a **forest** is set ablaze by such a small fire!” (ESV). We are all familiar with it, for (ESV) “the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by **hell**” (*gehenna* – the valley of Hinnom = judgement). Men can train wild animals, birds and sea creatures to do their will, but very few can tame their tongue. To do so indicates maturity and the self-control called for in the followers of Christ who under the worst provocation “opened not his mouth” or when he did, spoke like no other man (John 7:46). Most men don’t discriminate, praising God in one breath and cursing fellow man (made in His image) in another. A fountain does not produce sweet and bitter water at the same time, and fruit trees only produce fruit “after their kind” (Gen. 1:11-12). Perhaps another adage is appropriate – “If you cannot say something good about somebody, then don’t say anything at all.” This harks back to chapter 1:19 – “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, **slow to speak**, slow to wrath.” Human nature finds it difficult.

V.13-18 – Understanding and wisdom are revealed in a consistent way of life. Envy and strife arise from selfishness and carnal desires and are totally inconsistent with heavenly wisdom resulting only in “confusion and every evil work.” But “the wisdom that is from above is first (i.e. principally) pure, then peaceable” – there is a nexus between purity or righteousness and peace. Ps. 72:1-3 emphasizes that fact, as indeed does the converse in Isa. 48:22 – “There is no peace, saith Yahweh, unto the wicked.” If one wants peace, then first of all God’s righteousness must be upheld. This is accomplished by good behaviour –

“courteous, not self-willed, full of compassion and kind actions, free from favouritism and from all insincerity,” (Weymouth) and must be deliberately aimed at – “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” Only honest and good intent will succeed.

James 4

V.1-3 – “From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?” – Anecdotally, Jews are well known for arguing and squabbling. It seems some ‘converts’ had not only no control of their tongue (chap. 3), but none over their lusts and desires as well. It led to trouble and wars in the believing community. They could not be blessed by God under these circumstances.

V.4-5 – RV (correctly) – “Ye **adulteresses**, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” Following worldly ways as is described in V.1-3 is regarded as spiritual adultery in the Bride of Christ. Such make themselves God’s enemies. ESV (again correctly translates V.5) – “Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, **He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us?**” We have been given enormous benefits and privileges, not the least a “spirit” (or attitude) of truth, and our God is jealous when we misuse it by consorting with the world and its corrupting evils. Some in that time were even asking God for things to “consume it upon (their) lusts” (V.3).

V.6-10 – “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” – Humility is indispensable to salvation (Isa. 66:2). Submission to the will of God (“trembles at my Word” ESV) and a conscious effort to resist the machinations of the *diabolos* will see some success – “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (the principle of 2 Chron. 15:2). But some to whom James wrote were “doubleminded.” That doesn’t work, as he said in Chap. 1:8. They needed to chasten themselves and afflict their souls in humility in order to be lifted up.

V.11-12 – The litmus test of progress was to take control of the tongue (the spokesman of the heart – Luke 6:45) – “**Speak** not evil one of another, brethren.” By doing this they displaced God – “There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?”

V.13-17 – A key indicator of submissive humility is to recognize the uncertainty of life – “what is your life? It is even a vapour.” Declaring future plans without the acknowledgement, “If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” is fraught with danger, and boasting about it is worse – “all such rejoicing is evil.” Some knew better and jeopardized their future – “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (John 9:41 – “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth”). “God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7).

December 10

Job 12

Chapters 12 to 14 are Job’s response to Zophar’s vindictive speech. This chapter can be divided into three parts: V.1-6 – Job makes a claim of equality with his friends: V.7-10 – Job denounces the worthless wisdom of his friends: V.11-25 – Job demonstrates his superior wisdom and knowledge of God’s power and prudence.

V.1-2 – “No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you” – It is clear Job was not enamoured by the speeches of any of his three friends. His reply indicates he was

deeply injured by Zophar's remarks, which virtually said that, since God was so powerful, as to see what men could not see, and man was so powerless to discern God or his own need for correction, Job neither knew God nor himself. His reply scornfully repudiated his friends' assumed superior knowledge (Chap. 12 to 13:12) and expressed his determination to turn from man and appeal to God (Chap. 13:13-14:22).

V.1-6 – His friends thought they held a monopoly on wisdom (V.2), but he was at least their equal for what they had advanced was commonplace (V.3), although, for the moment (despite his former fellowship with God) he was being ridiculed (V.4). It was an observable fact that those who were prosperous were contemptuous of others who suffered misfortune (V.5), as it was also an observable fact that the wicked often prospered (V.6).

V.7-10 – Were Zophar to question the brute beasts, or the birds of the air (V.7), or even the earth or fishes of the sea (V.8), he would learn that they all testified concerning the absolute power of God (V.9). (Some MSS, for Yahweh in V.9, have Eloah, which better fits the time and setting of the action).

V.11-25 – Job had shown God's absolute power to be demonstrable from observations in the world of natural things. But it was even more demonstrable from contrasting the age of man with the age of God. As a man's palate distinguished taste and quality in foods, his ear separated wisdom from folly (V.11), and the older the man the greater the wisdom (V.12). None was older than God, however, and none therefore was wiser (V.13). If wisdom came with age, absolute wisdom must rest with one whose age was absolute. When men turned to see this wisdom decreed by God, what did they observe? In the world of natural things, they saw God who broke down and shut up (V.14), who at one time gave droughts and at another floods (V.15), but without distinction being made as to those upon whom the calamities came (V.16).

Among the highest in rank, the counsels of the wise and great men were of no avail against God, who led them into captivity, in the same way that He demonstrated the folly of the judges of the earth (V.17). No one was able to stand before God – neither kings (V.18), nor priests (V.19). The cleverest hopes of the wisest of men were disappointed, and though men looked to the aged for wisdom, their counsels (apart from God) proved vain and foolish (V.20). Neither worldly power nor human strength could deliver from the absolute power of God (V.21), whose design and purpose in all this, though doubtless clear to God, was obscured from man (V.22).

Amongst nations, as well as in natural phenomena and amongst great and wise men, the same indiscriminate rule was observable. God brought them to power and then deprived them of it (V.23), as He caused their leaders to grope about in confusion and perplexity (V.24-25).

Nahum 1

The complementary prophecies of Jonah and Nahum reveal that God is not mocked, although He is just in His mercy and holiness, He will by no means acquit the guilty. Jonah the Dove and Nahum the Comforter both typed Christ, but the former in relation to his first advent, and the latter in relation to his second advent; the former as the Lamb, the latter as the Lion.

Nahum's name means "the Comforter" which epitomises his message, for though it is one of destruction and doom to Nineveh, it is one of relief to oppressed Israel that so much concerned Jonah and led to him resisting God's command to preach to the Ninevites.

From Nahum 3:8, it is obvious that he prophesied after the destruction of Thebes in Egypt by Assurbanipal of Assyria in approximately BC 665. Therefore, Nahum would have been a contemporary of Manasseh (Judah's worst king). His ministry was some time before that of Zephaniah in the days of Josiah, who also predicted the complete and utter overthrow of Nineveh.

Micah 5:5-6 demonstrates that Nineveh foreshadowed the military power of the latter-day Gog, to be overthrown by Christ, who will then invade his territory. In history, Nineveh was destroyed before Babylon, and Gog will be overthrown before the Catholic confederacy of Europe will be overcome by the invading forces of Christ's army (Zech. 9:13-17). A further connection is that Babylon was subject to the Assyrian power at the epoch of its destruction, and when the latter day "Assyrian" (Gog) marches into the land of Judah at the time of the end (Mic. 5:5-6), like his ancient counterpart, he will have confederated modern Babylon, or Catholic Europe, within his power. The patterns were set for the latter days in this prophecy.

Nineveh's doom declared – Content: V.1-8 – The character of Nineveh's judge; V.9-11 – The declaration of Nineveh's doom; V.12-15 – The proclamation of comfort to Nineveh's oppressed.

V.11 – "There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against Yahweh, a wicked counsellor" – This almost certainly refers to Sennacherib who through his ambassador Rabshakeh blasphemed Yahweh in letters and before the wall of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 32:17; 2 Kings 18:28-35). He sealed the fate of Assyria by so doing, as well as his own.

Nahum 2

Nineveh's doom described – Content: V.1-5 – The city besieged; V.6-10 – The city overwhelmed; V.11-13 – The city made desolate.

V.1-5 – "He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face" – The margin renders this as "The disperser, or, hammer." Rotherham translates as "He that breaketh in pieces." History records Nineveh was destroyed by the Medes allied to the Babylonians (BC 614-612), but in actual fact, it was Yahweh who overthrew the city. The Medes acted as His army, directed against mighty Nineveh that had dared to challenge Him as an enemy. Previously, Yahweh had used Assyria (as He later did Babylon) as His hammer and sickle against the nations (Jer. 50:16,23). It is significant that the symbol of the latter-day Assyrian is the 'hammer and sickle'.

The prophet graphically describes the state of panic within the city as the enemy successfully prosecuted the attack. This gave him great encouragement because of its ramifications for Judah – "For Yahweh hath restored the excellency of Jacob, like the excellency of Israel" (Rotherham). Nineveh's fall, in ancient times, led to the elevation of Judah under Josiah, but the prophet saw beyond those times to the future when the latter-day Assyrian shall be broken, and true and complete majesty shall come to Israel.

V.6-10 – "The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved" – Diodorus Siculus declared that "there was an old prophecy, that Nineveh should not be taken, till the river (Tigris) became an enemy to the city." In the third year of the siege, the river being swollen with continual rains, overflowed part of the city, and broke down the wall for 20 furlongs; then the king, thinking the oracle was fulfilled, built a large funeral pile in the palace, and collecting together all his wealth, and his concubines, and eunuchs, burnt himself and his palace with them all; and the enemy entered at the breach that the waters had made, and took the city.

"And Huzzab shall be led away captive" – The margin gives the meaning of "Huzzab" as "That which was established." The word signifies "firm" or "bold" and is used as an appellation for Nineveh whose power was so mighty, as to suggest that the city was established upon such a firm foundation as never to be overthrown. Similar appellatives are used for other nations; e.g. Egypt is called Rahab (or the arrogant – see Ps. 89:10); the king of Assyria is called Jareb (or the contentious – see Hos. 5:13); Jerusalem is called Ariel (or El's lion – Isa. 29:1), etc.

V.11-13 – “Where is the dwelling of the lions” – The prophetic symbol for Assyria was the lion (Dan. 7:4; Jer. 50:17). Their stronghold was empty; their ravaging ceased; Assyria’s power was gone.

James 5

Up until this point James had rebuked and warned the worldly class in the ecclesia against the errors of pride, jealousy, contention, and presumption. It is significant that he now turns from the ecclesia to denounce the rich class amongst the unbelievers. V.1-6 are a denunciation of that class of unbelievers who were the persecutors of the brethren of James. The whole tenor of these words show that they are addressed to those outside the truth; and this is evident in V.6 where they are spoken of as having “condemned and killed the just.” This can be compared with James’ earlier reference to the persecuting class who had been responsible ‘for dragging them before the judgement seats’ (Chap. 2:6). The whole passage from V.1-6 in which he denounces the unbeliever is a prelude to his encouragement for those who were the victims of the oppression. The division of thought can be seen in his change of terms from, “Ye rich men” (V.1) to “be patient therefore brethren” (V.7).

V.1 – “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and **howl** for your miseries that shall come upon you” – O.T. prophets used this term “howl” against the nations and their own people at least 28 times. Often after condemning the nations they would turn to their own people with words of encouragement. James follows that pattern here. First condemning unbelieving and oppressive Jews (V.1-6), and then encouraging his brethren to endure their trials (V.7-12).

V.2-3 – Rotherham – “Ye have laid up treasure in days of extremity” – AD 70 was approaching and would impact Jews everywhere. “Riches profit not in the day of wrath” (Prov. 11:4), while the Apostle counsels not to trust in “uncertain riches” (1 Tim. 6:17-19). These avaricious Jews were fattening themselves to be made a sacrifice – “You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter” (ESV for V.5). AD 70 was a just judgement (“fire” V.3) for they had “murdered the Righteous one” (Rotherham) = Christ, and now were oppressing his brethren (V.6).

V.7-12 – “Be **patient** (*makrothumeō* – to be long-spirited) therefore, brethren, unto the **coming** of the Lord” – Three times James uses this word in V.7-8 and a cognate word *makrothumia* at the end of V.10. The word for “coming” is *parousia* = presence and is used of both the ‘presence’ of Christ at the head of the Roman armies in AD 66-70 (Dan. 9:26; Matt. 24:27; Matt. 10:23; John 21:22), and of Christ’s Second Advent. The former was relevant to the Jews to whom James wrote, the latter to us.

Having used the phrase “reaped down your fields” to the rich men in V.4 who withheld the wages of their labourers, James used a familiar scenario for those labourers to emphasize the need for endurance under trial – “the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it.” There was a need to “stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” – the same need exists in the last days which we are enduring. There are many issues, and it is easy to fall into the trap of finding fault – “Do not grumble against one another” – “behold, the Judge is standing at the door” (ESV).

James finds “an example of suffering affliction” in the prophets, and Job. “You have heard of the **steadfastness** of Job, and you have seen **the purpose of the Lord**, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.” There is always a purpose in affliction when God is dealing with His servants (Lam. 3:31-36; Heb. 12:3-8).

V.12 – “But above all things” (connecting with V.10-11). The trial of patience often involves distress and anxiety. Jews at that time were known for flippancy in the use of oaths – Matt. 5:33-37; 23:16-22. James now speaks of the danger of uttering an oath in times of anger and disappointment. He repeats here the teaching of his older brother and Lord on the mount.

V.13-20 – “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray” – In contrast to unthinking outbursts under trial, James counsels resorting to prayer in affliction. It is a sad and curious fact sometimes observed that people in most need of God’s intervention in their lives because of serious afflictions can lose heart and faith and turn their back on Him. James understood human nature very well. Rather than allowing ourselves to wallow in isolated self-pity, he advises the involvement of others who can add to the power of prayer and also provide contemporary treatments for ailments. It is this humble ‘team’ approach of brethren that leads him to then counsel the openness of those who “esteem others better than themselves” – “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.” These do not think more highly of themselves than they ought to think (Rom. 12:3), and embrace their afflicted brethren who suffer in kind with them from human weakness.

It is ironical that James advances Elijah as an example of earnest prayer in this context, for he notoriously saw himself as being the only faithful one left in Israel (1 Kings 19:10,14; Rom. 11:2-3). It is true that “The heartfelt supplication of a righteous man exerts a mighty influence” (Weymouth), because Elijah’s prayer for drought, and then for rain three and a half years later worked amazingly. But he being “a man subject to like passions as we are” then fled to Horeb to earnestly seek the destruction of Israel. How much more effective could his prayers have been if he had joined with the 7,000 who had not capitulated to Baal in seeking to convert more of their faulty brethren – “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

December 11

Job 13

In this chapter, Job continues his response to Zophar and then turns in disgust to God. Where could the solution be found? In a ‘cut and dried’ theory out of harmony with the facts? or in attempted reasoning with God upon the facts? Here is a summary: V.1-6 – Job’s challenge to the failure of his friends; V.7-12 – Job’s severe warning of certain judgement for his friends; V.13-19 – Job’s supreme confidence in God; V.20-28 – Job establishes the grounds for his encounter with God.

V.1-12 – The things testified by Job were things he himself had seen and heard (V.1). In wisdom he was not in any way inferior to his three friends, and the inference from V.2 was that he considered himself decidedly superior. Whereas their theory demanded unquestioning submission even in ignorance, his position was that submission should be reasoned – and to that end, he would speak with the Almighty and reason with Him (V.3). Their own observations concerning the supposed law of exact retribution he had shown to be false (V.4), and their inability to help him was such that, if they **really** wished to be considered wise, they had best remain silent (V.5; cp. Prov. 17:28 – “Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise”). Job thereupon set out to apply logic to the position of his friends. They were invited to hear his “reasoning” (V.6). They had claimed to “speak for God” but “unrighteously” and “deceitfully” in that they had refused to look the facts in the face and had twisted them to suit their theory of retribution (V.7). They were guilty of “respect of persons” by showing partiality for God in concluding that Job **must** be a sinner because God was afflicting him (V.8).

Did they think it possible that God would approve such dishonesty and superficiality? Were God to search them out to determine their motives, did they think they could assume the same 'front' that sometimes deceived men? (V.9). Behind this question there was the larger one – Was it in the nature of God to accept worship that was craven and superficial? The answer could only be that God's uprightness and impartiality were such that He must reject worship based on favouritism, even when that worship is worship of Him (V.10). The very things whence sprang the friends' false attitude (God's "excellency" and "dread") would, because of that attitude fall upon them (V.11). Their "memorable sayings" were without substance – superstitious rather than reasoned – "proverbs of ashes" (Rotherham); and their strong arguments used in defence of God were in reality the voice of the flesh – self-justification – "defences of clay" (ESV for V.12).

Job now turns away from man and appeals to God – Chapter 13:13 to 14:22.

V.13-22 – Job, having arrived at the point where he had shown that the only acceptable approach to God was a reasoned one, there remained the problem of his failure to understand God's ways. Since more mature reflection showed the old theory no longer to be true, but that, on the contrary, suffering was widespread and indiscriminate, what was the explanation of it all? True, it was a daring thing to plead entry into the presence of God, but in view of the failure of his friends' arguments, there was no alternative but to rebuke them sharply and with a sense of resignation (V.13) take his life in his hand (V.14) and wait upon God so as to plead his cause, even though it meant his death (V.15). Yet, whilst the very thought of coming to the presence of God carried with it a sense of awe, he would still argue his cause, secure in this, that no unrighteous person could gain access to the Divine presence (V.16). Job again appealed for attention (V.17). His case had been fully prepared, and he was convinced of his innocence (V.18). If it could be shown that he was not innocent (as his friends supposed his sufferings indicated) he would gladly remain silent and die (V.19; cp. Isa. 50:8). Then, as if suddenly remembering God's omnipotence, he desired two conditions (V.20), firstly, respite from his sufferings, and secondly, that God should not overwhelm him with His terror (V.21). These granted, Job would be happy to appear before God either as responder or appellant (V.22).

V.23-28 – There was no immediate answer to Job's challenge, so Job proceeded to state the case he would have stated had God invited him to do so. What were his transgressions? (V.23). Why had God turned away from him and why was He treating him as an enemy? (V.24). It was like harassing "a driven leaf" (Rotherham); pursuing some "dry stubble." Was he worth all the effort God was putting into his destruction? (V.25). To punish him because of sins committed as a youth, before maturity came, was a bitter punishment indeed (V.26), and even though his body was now "a rotten thing," no better than a moth-eaten garment, God was hemming him in on all sides as one would a criminal (V.27,28).

Nahum 3

History testifies that of all the oppressors of Israel, Assyria was the most brutal. Wherever its armies penetrated, they left a trail of pillage, bloodshed and ruin. From the first, the Assyrians were hunters and warriors (Gen.10:8-12), and when they turned to war, their persistent efforts at conquest gradually hardened the nation into a very efficient fighting machine. The Assyrians were essentially a military people, strongly differentiated in this respect from the commercially inclined Babylonians (Dan. 7:4). One of their kings, Ashurnasirpal, has left a detailed account of his conquests, and they form a catalogue of pitiless torture and destruction: "I took the city, their fighting men I put to the sword, and I cut off their heads. Many I captured alive and the rest I burned with fire. Heaps of corpses and of heads I piled up over against their city gate,

and seven hundred men I impaled on stakes around the city. Their young men and maidens I burned in the fire, and I laid waste their city and turned it into heaps of ruins” (compare the future actions of the latter day “Assyrian,” Gog – Zech. 14:2). The general policy of Assyria was the complete annihilation of the enemy, and this objective was pursued with ruthless brutality. Cities were destroyed, captives were treated with the most barbarous brutality, nations were taken into captivity and scattered into foreign lands, torture was common. Nahum described this in his third chapter. He records that so violent and bloodthirsty were the Assyrians, that the whole world rejoiced at their downfall; they had not a friend to lament their plight (redolent of ISIS). Moreover, so complete was the destruction of Nineveh, as predicted by Nahum, that it undermined the strength of the whole nation which soon disappeared as completely as the city. One historian has written: “The fall of the Assyrian kingdom was followed by the almost complete disappearance of the Assyrian people themselves, which is a phenomenon without parallel in the annals of ancient history. Nor is it possible to discover any lasting Assyrian influence on the history of later ages, unless it be in the political organisation...of subsequent oriental monarchies conforming to the same type of polity” (The Assyrians – C. Winckworth).

This chapter can be conveniently divided into three sections: (1) V.1-4 – The cause of the overthrow; (2) V.6-13 – The lesson of the overthrow; (3) V.14-19 – The certainty of the overthrow. As with the rest of the prophecy, though this chapter primarily relates to Assyria in the past, it also has an application to the “Assyrian” of the latter days (Isa. 10:5,12,24; 14:25; 30:31; 31:8; Mic. 5:5-6) whose destruction is equally assured (Ezek. 38:22-39:5; Dan. 11:45).

V.1 – Rotherham – “Alas for the city of bloodshed! All of it, deceit, of violence full, none releaseth prey!” – This confirms the above and the justice of the judgements about to fall.

V.8 – “Art thou better than populous No” – According to the margin, “populous No” should be rendered “No Amon”. This is a reference to the city of No-Thebes of the god Amon (signifying “populous”). Thebes was considered the most splendid city of Egypt.

V.19 – Rotherham – “all who have heard the report of thee, have clapped their hands over thee, for, upon whom, hath not thy cruelty passed without ceasing?” Assyria’s judgement was poetic and well deserved, as will be Gog’s in the latter days.

1 Peter 1

Peter’s first epistle revolves around “the **keys** of the Kingdom of heaven” given to him for use to both Jew and Gentile (Matt. 16:19 – see comments April 26 on Acts 2). Right at the outset in this letter to the believers sojourning in a strange or foreign place (the meaning of the word “strangers” in V.1), he dives into the theme of the **keys** which he defines in V.11 as “the **sufferings of Christ** (Key 1), and the **glory** that should follow” (Key 2). He began in V.2-4 with reference to the “sprinkling of the **blood** of Jesus Christ” and “the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance **incorruptible**, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.” This golden thread runs right through the epistle:1:19 – “the precious **blood** of Christ,” complemented by V.21, “raised him up from the dead, and gave him **glory**”; again in 3:18 – “Christ also hath once **suffered** for sins” and its counterpart, “but **quickened** by the Spirit”; then in 4:1 – “Christ hath **suffered** for us in the flesh” is balanced by V.11, “that God in all things may be **glorified** through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever”; and 4:13 – “ye are partakers of Christ’s **sufferings**; that, when his **glory** shall be revealed”; and finally 5:1 – Peter was “a witness of the **sufferings** of Christ, and also a partaker of the **glory** that shall be revealed.” The Keys of the Kingdom dominate this epistle.

V.1-5 – In the Greek of V.1 it is *eklektois parepidēmois* – “to the **elect** strangers.” They are the believers, Jew and Gentile, with special emphasis on his Jewish brethren of whom he could say, “hath regenerated us unto a living hope” (LITV), i.e. in contrast to the Law.

V.6-8 – It was a particularly difficult time with bitter persecution being endured by believers throughout the Roman world (5:10). Peter mentions in chap. 5:8 the source of the persecution – “your adversary the *diabolos*, as a **roaring lion**” (clearly a reference to the Roman authorities that Paul mentions to Timothy – “I was delivered out of the mouth of the **lion**” – 2 Tim. 4:17). What was required was unwavering **faith** tested under trial that is said to be “much more precious than of **gold** that perisheth, though it be tried with **fire**, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” Looking for the better day is the key. Trial can bring us closer to Christ “whom having not seen, ye love” and can produce “joy unspeakable.” Many have “searched diligently” the O.T. writings to understand “the spirit of Christ” that is revealed in them. These have been preserved for many more after them (V.9-12).

V.13-25 – The call to holiness concludes this chapter. Saints are called upon to “gird up the loins of your mind” and “be sober” (*nepho* – to be calm and collected in spirit) so that we might as “obedient children” leave behind our former way of life and be “like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living” (RV – V.15). The citation from Lev. 19:2, known so well by Jews, leaves no wriggle room. We are called to high and lofty things that have been ‘purchased’ at an extremely high cost – “with the **precious blood** of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” All blood is essentially the same. What made Christ’s blood precious was its uniqueness among men – a ‘life’ of **perfect obedience**. Blood represents life (Lev. 17:11), and no human life had ever produced, before or since, perfect obedience until he came “a lamb without blemish and without spot” whom the Father had always had in mind. Faith in him can only come from “incorruptible (seed), by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” The Word of God cannot be destroyed. It can be ignored or disbelieved, but it cannot be destroyed like the “grass” of human nature (Isa. 55:11 – “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: **it shall not return unto me void**, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”). If we are products of this “incorruptible seed” in way of life and character manifested by “unfeigned love of the brethren”, we will not be rejected (providing sins have been covered of course).

December 12

Job 14

The following is a summary of the content of this chapter: V.1-6 – Recalling human futility; V.7-12 – Man’s hopeless fate compared with the hope of a tree; V.13-17 – Job’s desire for eternal life and restored relationships; V.18-22 – Job’s despair of present perplexity and hopelessness.

From his own case, Job turned to consider the lot of man as such. Man, as the offspring of one herself weak and doomed to sorrow (cp. Gen. 3:16), must himself be weak and doomed to trouble (V.1; cp. Job 15:14; 25:4). Man’s days were few and evil, resembling a short-lived flower, a fleeting shadow (V.2). Where then, was the equity in the great and powerful God looking so narrowly upon weak, frail, short-lived man? With language borrowed from the courts of justice, Job saw the whole controversy conducted on his part with great disadvantage (V.3), an inequality emphasised by the universal sinfulness of man, his inability to cease from sin (V.4). According to A.B. Davidson, verse 1 reads: “O that a clean might come out of an unclean. There is not one” (see RV margin). In that case, Job said “If only man did **not**

inherit, by birth, those impulses which are native to the flesh and which account for mankind's universal sinfulness, he might have some chance of standing before God, and of being acquitted. But alas, it is not so!" (cp. Gen. 6:5; Isa. 6:5; Job 4:17). As Job pursued his logical analysis of the situation, its seeming injustice bore in upon him heavily. If God exacted punishment for every deviation when man was virtually unable to help himself, and if man's time was known in advance and strictly limited by God (V.5), wouldn't it be more just if God "looked away from him" (by removing his afflictions – cp. V.3; 7:19) so that he could take from life what little enjoyment was left him after his day of toil (V.6). If it came to the point, a tree was better off than a man, for if it were cut down, there was hope of a renewed life (V.7). Though its stump might be dead and its roots old (V.8), it could give birth to new life through "the scent of water" (V.9). But man was different. He died and was laid prostrate. He expired and vanished (V.10). As the inland sea evaporated and the river dried up (V.11), man was completely extinguished, never again to live (V.12; cp. Jer. 31:35-36; Ps. 89:29,36,37).

V.13-15 – It was at this point where Job's hopelessness reached its lowest ebb, when death and finality had come, so it seemed, that his sense of the inevitability of justice sustained him, and he reached out in hope for another day. Job fully expected to die – he would come to the grave because God's wrath would run its course. If only he could remain there for "a set time" until God's wrath had spent itself, and then be revived (V.13; cp. Ps. 102:13; Isa. 26:19-20). Could he be assured that he would live again, he would gladly bear unto death all the hardships life imposed on him (V.14). God would lovingly remember the work of his hands, and Job would at once respond. This must be, for God did have "a desire to the work of His hands" (V.15; cp. Ps. 104:31; 138:8).

NOTE: The final clause of V.15 represents the touchstone of Job's conviction at this point. Rotherham translates: "For the work of thine own hand thou shouldst long." The same sense is given in the RSV, whilst Bullinger (Companion Bible) translates, "For thou wilt yearn toward thy handiwork." To Job's mind, the same God who had lavished such care upon man (Chap.10:8-12), must have a more exalted purpose with him than his own sufferings would suppose, and, to describe God's feelings, he used the Hebrew *kasaph* which means "to be, or become, pale; hence, to pine, to long after anything so as to become pale." Job perceived that God's tender longing for His creation would itself require to be vindicated.

V.16-22 – Whatever may happen **then**, the picture **now** was one of unrelieved gloom. God scrutinised his every movement to detect his every sin (V.16; cp. Chap. 13:27). Not only so, but these sins were "sealed up in a bag" lest any should be lost, and that the penalties for all of them might be visited upon him (V.17). Under this treatment, he must perish, for even the strongest of objects, as mountains, rocks and stones, crumbled from repeated assaults or persistent pressure (V.18,19). In the unequal struggle, God prevailed and man succumbed in death (V.20). In death, he knew nothing of his posterity; of their subsequent prosperity, or poverty (V.21). For the moment, however, he felt only the pain of his own body, and he was sorry only for himself (V.22).

Habakkuk 1

The following introduction to the Book of Habakkuk from the Expositor is a helpful summary of its content.

Habakkuk lived in days that were remarkably like the present. It was an age when Divine standards were relaxed and gross permissiveness permitted in human conduct (Chap. 1:4). This attitude on the part of the people of God distressed the prophet. He could see that there was no future in it; that a people of privilege who abandoned the terms of their call faced personal and national tragedy. He pleaded with Yahweh to intervene; and he pleaded not in

vain. Yahweh revealed to the prophet the nature of the coming judgement, and the revelation appalled the prophet. A crisis was impending that would bring the nation to an end: the Divine punishment would be decisive and overwhelming. This distressed the prophet more than ever. He had a deep and abiding love of Israel, and wanted its conversion, not its destruction. He now pleaded the cause of the people and urged the need of mercy and forbearance. In response, he was told that the Gentiles would triumph only for a time, and that ultimately Divine glory would succeed over Jewish rebelliousness and Gentile darkness. In his final vision, he was taken into the future, and witnessed the triumphant march of Christ and the glorified saints from Sinai into Jerusalem; he saw that ultimately the light of truth will conquer and destroy the forces of darkness. The words of the prophet had commenced with a sob, but they ended in song! So it will be with all those who put their trust in Yahweh: “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” – Ps. 126:6.

The basic message of the prophet is: “The just shall live by his faith” (Chap. 2:4). These words are a complete summary of the doctrine of the Atonement, and, indeed, of all religion and revelation. They are associated with the one who will come to establish it. The prophet was told: “Though it (the vision) tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” The Septuagint renders this: “Though **he** should tarry, wait for **him**; for **he** will surely come, and will not tarry.” The words in this form are cited by Paul and applied to Christ (Heb. 10:37), suggesting that the original Hebrew conformed thereto. Christ, as the Word made flesh, is the personification of the vision given to the prophet (cp. Hab. 3:3). The One who will come is the Mighty One from Teman – Christ in glory; and the prophet was exhorted to wait for the glorious consummation he will effect.

Summary of the chapter – **A burden – Frustration – Chap. 1:1 to 2:1**

V.1-4 – Question: Why does not Yahweh intervene against rampant evil?; **V.5-11** – Answer: Yahweh is not unmindful – Evil does not go unpunished nor virtue unrewarded; **V.12-2:1** – Question: Shall the persecutor of Israel prosper?

V.1-4 – “O Yahweh, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear!” – Habakkuk’s “burden” appears to have been delivered during the reign of Jehoiakim when things were really bad in Judah after Josiah’s ‘skin-deep’ reformation (Jer. 3:10) had dissipated. The prophet found the unrestrained wickedness of Jehoiakim’s rule unbearable. It was characterized by injustice, oppression, violence and apathy (Jer. 22:13-17). True to his name which means “Embracer,” or “Wrestler,” he was wrestling with why Yahweh had not intervened to arrest the decay.

V.5-11 – “I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land” – This was an answer the prophet did not expect or want. He is invited to consider the signs of the times and to see in the rising power of Babylon the means that Yahweh would use to discipline His people. Nebuchadnezzar was Yahweh’s “servant” to perform His will against the nations (Jer. 27:5-6). In the third year of Jehoiakim (BC 606), Nebuchadnezzar took away the first captives, including Daniel, to Babylon. So began the series of invasions that led to the fall of Jerusalem in BC 587. The efficiency and rapidity of the Babylonian army is then amplified in V.8-11. They proved to be an irresistible force that brought deserving judgement upon Habakkuk’s corrupt nation.

V.12-17 – Rotherham – “Art not, thou, from of old, O Yahweh, my God, my Holy One? Thou diest not!” (translated correctly) – Though greatly perplexed by the answer received to his question, Habakkuk respectfully asks for further clarification of God’s intentions. He acknowledges Yahweh’s greatness and glorifies His name in the process. He acknowledged

Babylon was Yahweh's selected weapon, even as, previously, the Assyrian had constituted the "rod of Yahweh's anger" (Isa. 10:5), but was it appropriate to use a nation far more ungodly than Judah to punish them? The answer was 'yes' on the Scriptural principle that "to whom much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). Israel had been given much and Yahweh had every right to expect more from His people than He had received.

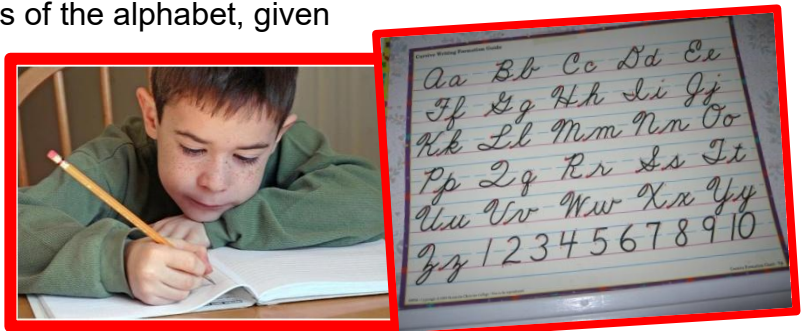
"And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them?" – Judah with no effective ruler were likened to the fish of the sea to be hooked by Babylonian 'fishermen' or gathered in Nebuchadnezzar's great 'net' to which he would burn incense as a god. Could this be Yahweh's method and will, seeing He was "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity"? (V.13). Habakkuk was mystified.

1 Peter 2

V.1-12 – Given that most of Peter's readers were Jews who had newly come to the truth in Christ, there was a need for growth in the Word apart from what they had grown up with, namely, rabbinical instruction – "their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men" (Isa. 29:13) by a repetitive method – "the word of Yahweh was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:13). Hence, he counsels – "As newborn babes, desire the **sincere milk** of the word, that ye may grow thereby." It is this that builds a knowledge of, and consequent relationship with Christ the "living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious" (V.6 is cited from Isa. 28:6). The privileged position they now enjoyed was to be laid as 'living stones' in God's house (the ecclesia) squared away alongside the chief corner stone and "built up a spiritual house, an holy **priesthood**, to **offer up spiritual sacrifices**, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." As priests in preparation for the Kingdom, they do not operate on behalf of others, but for themselves offering up prayers, labours and service to God in Christ that they might be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that" they "should shew forth the praises (virtues) of him who" had called them "out of darkness into his marvellous light," as he did Israel in Ex. 19:5-6 from whence these words are drawn. Combining words from Hosea 1:10 and 2:23 ("in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God"), Peter beseeches his readers to live "as strangers and pilgrims" and eschew the moral corruption and dishonesty that marked their time, as it does ours.

V.13-25 – The challenge of obeying the Divinely installed authorities from whence came some of the persecution they were enduring now comes into focus – "For this is thankworthy, **if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully**. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" because it was what His son did – "because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an **example**, that ye should follow his steps." The word "example" requires attention. It is *hupogrammos* – a writing copy, including all the letters of the alphabet, given to beginners as an aid in learning to draw them; an example set before one (it only occurs here) – illustrated at right.

We must 'understudy' Christ's example. That example was patient endurance, and absolute rectitude



under the severest trials and persecution.

V.24 – “Who his own self **bare our sins in his own body** on the tree” – Christ suffered all the weaknesses of human nature in order to be a representative of all men, and he overcame them all and never sinned. This is the principle of metonymy where the container is put for the thing contained and vice versa. It is why Paul could say in Rom. 6:6 – “that **the body of sin** might be destroyed.” The “sin” here is the bias in human nature towards sin. Christ shared that bias so that “we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

Bro. Roberts once wrote that Christ “partook of the common nature of our uncleanness—flesh of Adamic stock—in which, as Paul says, there ‘dwelleth no good thing’ (Rom. 7:18); a nature the burdensome of which arises from its native tendencies to foolishness and sin. This burden is felt in proportion as higher things are appreciated.”

December 13

Job 15

The second cycle of debate – Chapters 15-21

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| (1) Eliphaz – Second speech – Chapter 15 | Job’s reply – Chapter 16 & 17 |
| (2) Bildad – Second speech – Chapter 18 | Job’s reply – Chapter 19 |
| (3) Zophar – Second speech – Chapter 20 | Job’s reply – Chapter 21 |

In the second debate, whilst Job’s three friends maintain the old concept of retribution, they make no real progress from their earlier position. They simply re-state it, but from another direction. Previously, they had dwelt on God’s character, Eliphaz upon His moral purity, Bildad upon His discriminating uprightness and Zophar upon His Omniscience, revealed in His dealings with men. Now they fixed upon how God governed His world, describing more meticulously the fate of the wicked – their clear object being to hold up a picture and to have Job see in it himself. Previously, they offered Job prosperity upon repentance (Chap. 5:17; 8:20,21; 11:13-19). Now, no reference to either was made in Chaps. 15,18,20.

The characters remain constant throughout. The more refined, dignified, gentlemanly Eliphaz, the cruel Bildad and the coarse Zophar each in his own way contended for a doctrine of retribution that was true as a matter of general principle, but not universally true or true particularly as to Job. If they made no progress in their understanding, Job had made outstanding progress. Earlier to him, “vindication” was an idea, perhaps a “logical necessity.” Now it was a “certainty.” Earlier, he had demolished their concept of religion based on superstitious reverence for the greatness of God (Chap. 13:1-2). Now, he demonstrated the falsity of their theory itself. Throughout, however, he is the centre of suffering and tribulation.

V.2-16 – Job had claimed a wisdom greater than his friends (V.7; Chap. 12:3, 13:2). In view of this, Eliphaz asked whether one possessed with wisdom talked as Job did (V.2), reasoning with unprofitable talk or speeches without good purpose (V.3). Such talk was inconsistent with religious feeling and reverence (V.4), and could only emanate from one whose lips reflected his inner impiety (V.5) and were in themselves a practical demonstration of his guilt (V.6).

If Job really claimed superior wisdom, on what did his claim rest? Wisdom, it was conceded generally, went with age. Was Job the first man born? Or perhaps he was here before the first man, before God made the hills? (V.7; cp. Ps. 90:2; Prov. 8:25; Gen. 49:26). Had he listened in on God’s counsel, and did he now reserve all wisdom to himself? (V.8). Irony and sarcasm

aside, to ask such questions was to answer them, for if Job could claim he was not behind them in wisdom (Chap. 12:3; 13:2), they could make the same claim against him (V.9). If, indeed, wisdom went with age Eliphaz was older than he, and on that account, presumably, wiser. Davidson offers as the probable correct translation of V.10 – “Among us is one both grey-headed and very aged, one older in days than thy father.”

As the Oracle of God (Chap. 4:12), Eliphaz had tried to console Job (Chap. 5:8), but it seemed that such gentle and conciliatory thoughts were regarded by Job as of little value (V.11). On the contrary, his decisions were dictated by strong emotion – not reason (V.12) and his angry words were really spoken against God (V.13; cp. Chap. 4:9; Prov. 16:32; Isa. 25:4). Come, then, said Eliphaz, “Let us be reasonable. ‘What **is** man, that he should be clean?’” and he instantly reverted to the point of his previous address (cp. V.14-16 with Chap. 4:17-19). Whereas in Chap. 4:16, however, he directed attention to man’s “house of clay,” his frailty, here he directed attention to his corruption, his readiness to seize it and drink it down like water. His words were general, but his intention was particular. Job was invited to see himself!

V.17-35 – With biting sarcasm, Eliphaz had rejected any claim Job might make to the wisdom of antiquity (V.7-10). Now he claimed it for himself (V.17-19). Possessing the wisdom that went with age, it was not his own authority, but that of the ancient wise which he invited Job to hear (V.17), a wisdom handed down from their fathers to wise men (V.18), pure in origin and uncorrupted by foreign admixture (V.19). There followed the “wisdom” itself, which some have supposed consisted of an ancient fragment rehearsed by Eliphaz as containing the sentiments of a purer age of the world. It was made up of a series of pointed, pithy sayings and maxims, all of which meant that God would punish the wicked, or that they would get their deserts.

In the first instance, they suffered the misery and terror of an evil conscience, and were constantly assailed by presentiments and the dread of coming disasters (V.20-24). Pain continually dogged the footsteps of the wicked man and he could not rely on having a long life (V.20). While he lived, he was continually alarmed, and even when he thought himself safe, retribution was close by (V.21; cp. 1 Thess. 5:3; Ps. 37:35, 36; 73:18-20). His was a world of darkness and mental torment, from which he never really escaped, and always there was the fear that, if he dared emerge from his ‘prison’ of obscurity, the sword was waiting to claim him (V.22). Suddenly, he was reduced to poverty and forced to beg for food (of which he had deprived others), and he was filled with foreboding – the day of calamity was at hand (V.23). He would not be able to defeat the combined might of trouble and anguish, which like a king in full battle array, was irresistible (V.24).

There were two reasons why the wicked faced this mental torment, each introduced by the word “because,” and they were: (1) his defiance of God – in insolent arrogance he had set himself in battle order against God and had virtually defied him (V.25). With haughty spirit, he had rushed into battle armed with his shield, treating God as his foe (V.26); (2) his sensual life – in habitual self-indulgence, he had filled himself with his ill-gotten spoils and become gross (V.27), and he had become so insensitive to God’s decrees that he ignored them (V.28; cp. Deut. 13:13; Josh. 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34). Because of these actions, it was inevitable that disaster should befall the wicked man (V.29-35).

Though such a man might aim to be rich, his aim would fail. His substance would not continue, nor would “their produce bend to the earth” (RV) – there would be no crops of heavy grain bending under their own weight (V.29). God’s judgements would devour him (V.30) and having sown vanity (moral evil) he would reap the same (physical evil – V.31). God would not allow him to see out his days but would interrupt his life of luxury to pour this upon him (V.32). Since his branch had prematurely withered, it would fail to nourish the fruit thereon, and as the olive tree cast its flowers, his fruitfulness would perish (V.33). [“The olive is the most prodigal of all

fruit-bearing trees in flowers. It literally bends under the load of them. But then not one in a hundred comes to maturity. The tree casts them off by millions, as if they were of no more value than flakes of snow, which they closely resemble.” Thomson, ‘The Land and the Book’ page 34]. Expressed in literal terms, the godless would be unproductive, and fire would consume the possessions of the perverters of justice (V.34). In a word, the “iniquity” that befell them was what they had conceived and nurtured (V.34). Retribution was exact!!

Habakkuk 2

V.1 – ESV – “I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint” – This verse belongs to chapter 1, as having put his proposition to God, the prophet now takes his stand waiting for the response. The Berkeley Version renders this – “What answer I shall receive concerning my complaint.” Habakkuk, while concerned about Judah’s future due to Yahweh’s words in chapter 1 is nevertheless prepared to accept whatever the response was.

V.2-4 – “Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it” – Habakkuk was instructed to write the vision so clearly, that none who desired to study and understand it, would be hindered from doing so. The Word of God expresses lofty, Divine principles that flesh and blood find difficult to comprehend, for “the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). The principles and truths enshrined in what follows in V.4 are fundamental to salvation and must be understood and practiced.

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak” – Paul declared on the Areopagus that God “hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained” (Acts 17:31). This essentially answered Habakkuk’s query in chap. 1:2 – “how long shall I cry?” The real answer to the problems of the present is the guarantee of the future when Christ returns to establish the Kingdom. All else in between is incidental. For the balance of V.3, the Septuagint renders – “Though he should tarry, wait for **him**; for **he** will surely come, and will not tarry.” These words, in this form, are cited by Paul and applied to Christ in Hebrews 10:37, and clearly refer to Christ’s return to judge.

“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him” — The Septuagint renders this: “If he shall draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.” Paul uses the LXX translation in citing the verse in Hebrews 10:38. It is a warning there against a lack of faith among believers leading to defection from the Way.

“The just shall live by his faith” – The statement is of such significance, that Paul cites it no less than three times as epitomising the theme and aims of the Gospel, in Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38. He does so, apparently, with three different aspects in view, and with the emphasis on each occasion placed on a different word. To the Romans, he emphasised the ultimate destiny of the faithful: “The just shall **live** by his faith.” To the Galatians, he drew attention to the means: “The **just** shall live by his faith” (by the pursuit of righteousness). To the Hebrews, he stressed the power of faith: “The just shall live by **his faith**” (precedes Heb. 11, the chapter declaring the critical importance of faith, without which it is impossible to please God – Heb. 11:6).

V.5-19 – In this section, the character of the Chaldean dictator is described; and **five woes** are pronounced against him. The prophecy relates primarily to the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar

upon Judah, and to the punishment which was ultimately inflicted upon the Babylonians through Cyrus “the anointed of Yahweh” (Isa. 45:1). Cyrus was a type of Christ in his role of conqueror of Babylon the Great in the latter days, so that the prophecy has a double application. The Chaldean is designated as “a proud man” who “keepeth not at home.” As such he typed Gog of the latter days; and the five woes pronounced will have a latter-day manifestation. They are: (1) Woe to pride and greedy ambition – V.6-8; (2) Woe to covetousness and materialism – V.9-11; (3) Woe to power politics and ruthlessness – V.12-14; (4) Woe to religious superstition and error – V.15-18; (5) Woe to idolatry and popery – V.19-20. Here is a complete answer to the question of the prophet: “Shall they be always slaying the nations?” (Chap. 1:17). The guarantee that these things will be accomplished “at an appointed time” is in V.14 – “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea,” and V.20 – “But Yahweh is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.” That Day is at hand.

1 Peter 3

V.1-7 – “**Likewise**, ye wives, be in subjection (*hupotassō* – to subordinate) to your own husbands” – The word “likewise” harks back to the example of Christ (chap. 2:21-25). The difficulties faced by wives whose partner was not in the truth was a trial to be endured by quiet submission and a consistent example. Nagging was to be avoided – “if some do not obey the word, they may be won **without a word** by the conduct of their wives” (ESV). No one can be “won” **without** the Word (chap. 1:22-25; 2:2). Outward adorning would not help, but rather an inward adorning of “the hidden man of the heart” (namely, Christ – Eph. 3:17). A “meek and quiet spirit” like that of “holy women” of old like Sarah is key because even Abraham acted like an unbelieving husband in abandoning her twice to the harems of foreign kings for his own safety’s sake. In that extremely difficult duplicated trial she did not fear “with any kind of consternation” (Darby) because of her implicit trust in God. Peter has Abraham in mind when he counsels, “**Likewise**, ye husbands, **dwell with them** according to knowledge (which he did not do), **giving honour** unto the wife, as unto the **weaker vessel**” (which he failed to do). Prayers can be hindered even with “heirs together of the grace of life” (as they were) when fundamental conjugal obligations are not fulfilled.

V.8-18 – “Finally, be ye all of **one mind**, having compassion one of another, love as brethren” – This will exclude callousness, rudeness and revenge among brethren who thereby will “inherit a blessing” – the message of the substantial citation from Ps. 34:12-16. Interaction with an evil world will invariably produce some tribulations (even suffering “for righteousness’ sake”), but readiness to explain the reasons for our way of life (V.15), and consistency in “walking the talk” is following the example of Christ. It may produce bitter opposition, but “it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.”

V.19-22 – “**By which** also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison” – For a full treatment of this ‘difficult’ passage see ‘Wrested Scriptures’ page 113. “Spirits in prison” is an expression for a person in bondage to sin and death. “Prison” has this association in Isa. 42:6,7; Isa. 61:1; see also Eph. 2:1,2 and 1 Pet. 4:6. The passage does not state that Jesus personally preached to the spirits in prison, but rather, “by which” spirit he did so. It was the “spirit of Christ” in Noah which preached to the spirits in prison (living persons in bondage to sin and death) many years before Jesus was born. By means of the Holy Spirit given to the prophets (2 Pet. 1:21) they were able to speak as though they were Christ (1 Pet. 1:11).

1 Peter 4

V.1 – ESV – “Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with **the same way of thinking**, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin” – The ESV correctly omits “for us” and translates “same mind” as a “way of thinking.” Peter returns to the example of Christ considered in chap. 2:19-25 and 3:17-18. It is only by understanding the purpose of suffering and aligning ourselves with Christ’s example that it can be endured faithfully and patiently. Sin takes a back seat when this way of thinking is present.

V.2-11 – Leaving behind the past way of life is much easier with that “way of thinking” (“the will of God”), and former and current acquaintances “think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot,” criticizing those who must give account to Christ at the Judgement Seat. Understanding that ‘sublimation is better than repression,’ the wise who know that day is coming “continue to love one another fervently” (ESV), and “use hospitality one to another without grudging.” They also contribute as required to ecclesial life and its obligations to minister and teach – “If anyone speaks, let it be as the words of God; if anyone ministers, as by strength which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (LITV – V.11).

V.12-19 – “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” – There were periods during the 13 year reign of the maniac emperor Nero when persecution against Christians was terrible. To endure it with the thinking of Christ (V.1) would ultimately lead to glory – “when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” The final verses of the chapter are a revelation about the Judgement Seat of Christ – see **Appendix 2** (pg. 138).

1 Peter 5

V.1-11 – A sorely persecuted Brotherhood needed wise and reliable leaders who could “feed the flock of God which is among you.” Its shepherds needed to be willing to take the responsibility with “a ready mind” and not in self-interest. The “chief Shepherd” would ultimately reward them. Humble respect for sound leadership by the younger folk in difficult times would not go unrewarded when judgement begins at “the house of God” (4:17) – “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” As their “adversary the devil (*diabolos* – the accusing Roman authorities), as a roaring lion, walked about, seeking whom he may devour,” they needed to do as Peter counselled – “All your anxiety, casting upon him (Yahweh), because he careth for you” (Rotherham). That care would eventually lead to some release from persecution – “**after that ye have suffered a while**, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, **settle you.**” This is God’s method. Patience and longsuffering are required, but rest will finally come.

V.12-14 – Peter concluded his letter with some final greetings, one of which seems to suggest he was in Babylon (to the east) with an ecclesia of exiles there.

December 14

Job 16

Job’s reply to Eliphaz’s second speech – Chapters 16 and 17

These chapters contain the ‘crisis’ of Job’s misery and of his spiritual problem. As Job saw it, God had deserted him, and his friends, quite lacking the bond of sympathy, unreasonably rejected his claim of innocence and sided with God against him. He was alone. He was unable to accept such ‘consolations’ as Eliphaz offered when they were based on the supposition of

his guilt and he knew himself to be innocent. Thus, from scornfully repudiating his friends' so-called 'consolations' and again charging God with the relentless persecution of him, he returned to the concept that God (however arbitrary He might be in one sense) **must** be **just**, and that, therefore, **justice** must prevail; further, that if only God would hear him, He would right him. He therefore appealed from God (his Judge) to God (his Vindicator, or Righter-of-wrongs) and knowing that his sufferings could only end in death, he called upon God to avenge his blood unjustly shed.

V.1-5 – Job scornfully rejects his friends' advice – There was not a new thing in what Eliphaz said. To repeat it was “wearisome” (RV margin V.1-2). And if there is nothing new to add, why not let the matter drop, as Job had besought them in Chap. 13:5? Was there no end to “words of wind”? (YLT V.3). If they exchanged places, it would not be difficult to “join words together” (ESV) like the string of maxims Eliphaz had put together in Chap. 15:20 to overwhelm the afflicted, or to use gestures ('shake the head') expressive of astonishment, or contempt (V.4). Eliphaz had said “I would seek after God” (Chap. 5:8), and Job rejoins that they were doing no more for him than he would do for them if their positions were reversed – he would with well-selected words “strengthen” and “assuage” (V.5). [The “But” of V.5 in the AV and RV should not be there].

V.6-17 – God's treatment of Job – its inexplicable character. But the fact remained, their positions were not reversed, and he was suffering. Whether he spoke or remained silent made no difference. His pains continued (V.6). God had wearied him, and estranged him from his erstwhile friends (V.7). God had sent afflictions upon him which all interpreted as “witnesses” to evidence his guilt (V.8), and had acted towards him with lionlike ferocity (V.9), whilst men (lesser foes), thought to do God service by persecuting him (V.10; cp. Ps. 22:13; Mic. 5:1; Heb. 4:14; 1 Kings 22:24). Thus, in effect, God had delivered him into the hands of the ungodly (V.11). Moreover, God's attack upon him was completely unexpected and destructive. Job was at ease when he was seized by another of overwhelming strength and lifted up and dashed to pieces; and, in addition, God made him a mark for his arrows (V.12) so that God (the Archer) poured His arrows into him, cleaved his heart and poured out his life-blood upon the ground (V.13 – “The Oriental speaks of the gall and the gall bladder as we might speak of the blood and the heart” – Davidson).

In another way, Job saw himself as a fortress subject to repeated attacks led by a mighty warrior and gradually overcome (V.14; cp. Isa. 42:15). The result was that Job sewed sackcloth upon his skin. To put on sackcloth was to express mourning, but to sew it on the skin was to say it was a garment to be worn constantly – never to be removed (cp. Gen. 37:34, 2 Kings 6:30). And as “exalt the horn” is a figure of increased power, so to “lay one's horn in the dust” is to describe Job's deep humiliation (V.15; cp. 1 Sam. 2:1; Ps. 89:17,24; 92:10; 75:4,5). Job was in the depths of humiliation, and, as well, he suffered intensely from his leprous infection, so that, gradually, light was fading as death cast its shadow over him (V.16). This, in spite of his innocence (V.17; cp. Isa. 53:9).

V.18-22 – Job's desperation; his desire to meet God (Chap. 16:18 to 17:9) – Thus to die, in innocence, as though judged guilty, was against all equity. Even the thought of it was too much to bear and Job cried out that his blood might remain uncovered, and his cry never cease to be heard, until justice was done (V.18; cp. Gen. 4:10). So convinced was he of the essential justice of things, that notwithstanding God's treatment of him, his witness in heaven who knew all things and therefore knew of his integrity, must one day vouch for him; i.e. declare his innocence, or vindicate him (V.19). His friends scorned him, but he would continue to appeal for vindication to God (V.20). There were but two things he wanted; that his right would be maintained with God, and with his neighbour; i.e. that it might be shown that; (1) God had

wrongly held him guilty; and (2) his neighbours had wrongly held him guilty by reasoning from God's treatment of him (V.21). Now, however, he was about to die (V.22), and he was ready to die (Chap. 17:1).

Job 17

V.2-9 – What his friends offered him in promises of restoration was mockery, as their exhortation to the innocent to repent was provocation from which he could find no relief (V.2). He had two thoughts; (1) he was going to die; (2) there was an eternal justice which must be asserted. The idea of death without justice, however, seemed itself inequitable, and Job therefore prayed that God might “give a pledge” (i.e. that He might deposit something as a guarantee that his name would be cleared), and to stand “as surety” for him with God's own self). And in Chap. 16:21 (cp. Heb. 7:22), it was God who required the surety; so the appeal was made to God Himself to act as surety (cp. Isa. 38:14). And when Job asked, “Who is there that will strike hands with me” (RV) – to “strike hands” meant to ‘agree to perform’ (cp. Prov. 17:18; 6:1; 11:15; 22:16).

God would have to speak for Job's integrity, for none of his friends understood his cause. Their hearts (as the hearts of all others) had been blinded and their cause (i.e. Job's guilt under the doctrine of exact retribution) could never be realised (V.4). The Cambridge Bible presents the essence of their position in proverbial form (V.5) – “One invited friends to partake, while his children's eyes fail,” i.e. “the friends have no understanding, but they invite Job to partake of their wisdom, while they have not enough wisdom to supply their own needs at home.”

So far as Job himself was concerned, he had become a byword (Deut. 28:37; 1 Kings 9:7; 2 Chron. 7:20; Ps. 69:11; Jer. 24:9) of the peoples (plural, cp. Isa. 63:3). He was “an open abhorring” (RV – V.6). His vision was blurred and shadowy, and he himself was but a shadow (V.7). This apparent perversion of all morality (evidenced in Job's case) astounded upright men, and roused their indignation against the prosperous wicked (V.8; cp. Ps. 37:1; 73:2); but no matter what the apparent injustice, the righteous would never be deflected from his uprightness, for righteousness had a value in itself. No matter what the difficulty, he would “hold on his way” and “wax stronger and stronger” (RV – V.9). He might not understand the ramifications of justice. He certainly did not understand his own position, but he was absolutely convinced about **justice** itself. Neither enigma nor suffering would turn him aside from his pursuit of it.

V.10-16 – **Job's repudiation of false hopes of recovery – death draws near** – From this exalted view of righteousness, and his stated inflexible determination to follow it come what may, Job turned, and addressed a final word to his three friends, inviting them to restate their explanation of his condition, but convinced their previous lack of wisdom would again be demonstrated (V.10). Far from renewal of past prosperity, which they held out on condition of his repentance, he knew his day was over and that he had nothing left to live for. Life with all its cherished purposes and ambitions was cut off (V.11). Yet, despite death's inevitability, they “changed night into day.” By promising life and renewed prosperity, they ignored the realities and misappropriated the facts (V.12). Contrasting their view of current restoration, his own was that he had to die. Barnes ('Job', Vol. 1, pg. 351) translates “Truly I expect that the grave will be my home” (V.13). Job then personified the grave and spoke to it – “I have called (AV mgn.) to the pit (RV mgn.), ‘Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister’.” (V.14).

Such was the advanced state of Job's disease, that he might be said to be the child of one mouldering in the grave, and kindred to the worm that feeds on putrefaction. Job felt he belonged to the grave, and was destined for corruption. So corrupt was his body, so afflicted

and diseased, that he seemed to belong to the family of the putrefying, and of those covered with worms! If such were his condition, where was the hope his friends held out? (V.15). All his hopes of life and happiness would go down to the grave, and with him, would rest together there (V.16; cp. Isa. 38:10; Ps. 9:13; 17:18). The Companion Bible translates this verse – “With me to Sheol would they (i.e. hope and blessedness) both go down, and rest together, with me, in the dust.”

Habakkuk 3

V.1 – “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth” – The prayer of Habakkuk is actually a psalm with a superscription (“Shigionoth” = songs that are enthusiastic and soul-stirring) and subscription (“To the chief singer on my stringed instruments” V.19). This, along with Isa. 38:9-20, proved key to J.W. Thirtle unravelling the misplaced subscriptions in the Psalter. It is a psalm of the triumph of Christ and his saints over the nations, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God after 40 years of conflict beyond Armageddon.

V.3 – “God came from Teman” – The title of Deity used is Eloah signifying ‘the mighty one’ and is clearly a reference to Christ. See use of the word in Dan. 2:44. Of this mighty one it is said in Hab. 3:13, “Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed.” The anointed of this verse are the glorified, thus fully anointed saints, (2 Cor. 1:21). Teman simply means the south, i.e. south of Israel or the region of Sinai. It is important to note that though this verse appears in the past tense it should be translated in the future tense, hence Bro. Thomas translates, “Eloah shall come in from the south.” The word *yahvo* occurs in the text and should read “shall come in,” being in the future tense. That Habakkuk speaks of future events is obvious from the latter half of the verse. Once again the starting point of Messiah’s advance into the Land is from the region of Sinai, the place of judgement (see Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17 which contain the same message).

“and the holy one from mount Paran” – Compare these words with Deut. 33:2. The march of Christ and his saints takes them through the region of Paran just south of Kadesh-Barnea.

“His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise” – Habakkuk proceeds to the ultimate purpose of the work commenced in Sinai – to fill the earth with Yahweh’s glory manifested in Christ and the saints.

V.4 – “And his brightness was as the light” – Rotherham – “And a brightness as light appeareth.” This parallels with the analogy of the sun found in Deut. 33. Christ and the saints “the kings of the sun’s rising” (Rev. 16:12) will dawn upon a darkened world like the rays of the sun rising over the horizon at the dawn of a new day.

“he had horns coming out of his hand” – The word “horns” is *qeren* – horn (as projecting); the word can mean a ray of light. Hence Rotherham translates, “rays out of his hand hath he.” The Jerusalem Bible translates, “rays flash from his hands.” Again the figure used is that of the sun. The rays or “horns” which emanate from the hand of the mighty one are symbolic of the saints in glory. Both the horn and the hand are symbols of power, hence, “there was the hiding of his power” – The word “hiding” is *chebyown* signifying a concealment. Thus, the Jerusalem Bible translates, “that is where his power lies hidden.” There is another remarkable correlation of ideas here with Deut. 33:2 – “From his right hand went a fiery law for them.” The saints will be the ministers of judgement to the nations – Ps.149; Jude 14.

The evidence of Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Hab. 3:3-4 seems quite conclusive. Sinai is the place of judgement, made so by Divine decree, historical associations and admirable suitability for the purpose. From verse 3 of this chapter, Habakkuk describes the power and movements of

Yahweh Sabaoth or the 'Mighty One' (Eloah) who originates from Teman (the south). The prophet presents a picture of the Multitudinous Christ striding forth from Sinai to "drive asunder the nations" and reveals in verse seven the first peoples to feel the power of his judgement.

V.7 – "I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction" – Rotherham translates "under distress saw I the tents." The term "tents" implies a nomadic people. As they are the first peoples encountered by 'the Mighty One' in his march from Mount Sinai it is evident that they dwell in and around the area of the Sinai Peninsular. Cushan or Ethiopia was originally situated to the north (modern Iraq – Gen. 2:13), but Cushites migrated south to Ethiopia (modern Abyssinia). However, there was a third Cushan identified with the land of Midian, adjacent to Teman. Moses' Midianitish wife, Zipporah (Ex. 2:15-21), is styled a Cushite, or Ethiopian in Num. 12:1. In Ezek. 38:13, Sheba and Dedan can be identified with the Arab peoples, and also with Cush. In Gen. 25:3, they are described as descendants of Abraham, whilst in 1 Chron. 1:9 they are traced from Cush. It appears that through the intermarriage of descendants of Abraham through Keturah with descendants of Cush the line of descent became confused. Obviously, the "tents of Cushan" relate to the Arabian descendants of Cush through Abraham, dwelling in the region of Sinai.

"the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble" – The land of Midian is adjacent to the Gulf of Aqaba, stretching along the Red Sea coast – Ex. 2:15; 3:1. Hence, again this description relates to Arab peoples inhabiting the area of Sinai. A terrible manifestation of supernatural power will be brought to bear upon the Arab peoples resulting in their complete subjugation to Christ. They will be the first to feel the sword of the 'Mighty One' from Teman.

For further comments on the remainder of the chapter, refer to the Habakkuk Expositor pgs. 47-63.

2 Peter 1

V.1-2 – "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ" – Peter began his first epistle with "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." Why then this change? In the first epistle his theme was "living stones" set against the "chief corner stone" (Christ). As he reached towards the end of his ministry (V.14-15), and the truth came under attack from within, there was a need for stability and firmness to withstand apostasy. "Simon" (Simeon) means "hearing" and "Peter" a moveable stone. Peter had learnt the only power capable of bringing stability into life was the Word of God – 1 Pet. 1:23-25. What the Word had begun needed to be built upon so that deep conviction in the "exceeding great and precious promises" they had believed would lead to stability of faith and consolidation of character – V.3-11.

Life in Christ is not static – it is a building project requiring focus and effort (Phil. 2:12-13). This is quite distinct from works of law. There are those who say that works are not required for salvation, but "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26), and we will be judged on our "work" (Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 22:12). The motivating power is faith in the promises of God who "hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life (i.e. eternal life) and godliness (8 virtues = immortality through character), through the knowledge of him



that hath called us to glory and virtue.” If these virtues are absent we will be found “barren” and “unfruitful” in the day of account.

V.16-21 – Peter had been present on the mount of Transfiguration and saw Christ in glory, but he now makes a point that is relevant for all time – **men are not changed for the Kingdom by miracles**. As Christ said of his generation, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe,” but they did not even believe them. Peter had heard God’s voice on the mount, but that was not the motivating power of his life. It was “the more established prophetic word, in which you do well to take heed, as to a lamp shining in a murky place” (Green’s Literal for V.19). It is the Word of God that creates and maintains faith – Rom. 10:17. We can be sure of it because “no prophecy in Scripture will be found to have come from the prophet’s own prompting; for never did any prophecy come by human will, but men sent by God spoke as they were impelled by the Holy Spirit” (Weymouth for V.20-21).

2 Peter 2

V.1-3 – Peter could see the apostasy emerging. His prophecies of how it would arise, and where it would end up became the basis of Jude’s epistle in which he demonstrates the accuracy of Peter’s words in this chapter. It would be through incomplete ‘conversion’ to the truth. The old ways would not be left behind and the heretics would corrupt the way of truth while remaining in the brotherhood of Christ for their own benefit – “through **covetousness** shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.” It came to pass.

V.4-11 – Peter advances several examples from history that Jude later develops in his epistle. These are Korah, Dathan and Abiram (V.4); Noah’s generation out of which God saved 8, incorporated in one man – “Noah the eighth” (V.5); Sodom and Gomorrah out of which God could only save one (V.6-9); and the Samaritans who sought to undermine the truth but were opposed by Michael the archangel (V.10-11; Jude 9).

V.12-22 – Much of what follows is picked up by Jude as it had come to pass in the time between Peter’s epistle and his. All of these behaviours were due to incomplete ‘conversion’. They were fake brethren who had not left behind their old worldly ways as Peter testified – “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

December 15

Job 18 – Bildad’s second speech

In his first speech (Chap. 8), Bildad had revealed a hardness of tone that was unfeeling. In this speech, easily the severest of any so far, Bildad’s insensitivity becomes cruelty as he describes the fate of the wicked in such matters as disease (V.12,13), brimstone; i.e. “the fire of God” of the prologue (V.15), absence of posterity (V.19). Now, as then, he relied on the ancient wisdom, consisting solely of proverbial sayings – not reasonings. Then he had held out to Job the prospect of deliverance, but now no such declaration was made. It was obvious Job’s remarks concerning his friends (Chap. 16:2-5; 17:10) had injured Bildad, but although he became more brutal, his character was maintained. Thus, his opening words “How long” (V.2) were the same as his earlier opening (Chap. 8:2). Whilst his subject matter did not greatly alter, he became angrier in tone, more harsh. There are two main divisions in the speech.

V.1-4 – Bildad’s rebuke of Job for insulting language

How long would Job “lay snares for words?” (RV). To Bildad’s mind, Job’s arguments were artificial. He resembled someone so destitute of argument that he had to lay traps for an

elusive quarry, as was evident from his far-fetched concept of appealing from God as Judge to God as Vindicator (Chap. 16:18-19; 17:3). Again, in Chap. 17:4, Job had challenged their “understanding.” Bildad now put it that, if Job himself would understand (“consider” RV) he must first submit to their theory of retribution. If he were not prepared to do this, it would be virtually pointless to continue discussing the matter (V.2). That Job should not only have abandoned all of them without exception was bad enough, but he had gone to the extent of suggesting others who were not suffering (like Bildad) had become “unclean” (Chap. 17:4, 10), whilst sufferers like himself and others had “clean hands” (Chap. 17:9). It was unaccountable (V.3).

Far from God “tearing” him (Chap. 16:9), Job’s wounds were self-inflicted. He was “tearing himself” (cp. Chap. 5:2). The earth itself was founded on moral principles, and the rock, the foundation stone of those principles was that “as a man sows, so he reaps” – there was exact retribution. Was God now going to “forsake the earth?” (i.e. cease to exercise control in accordance with the established moral principles). Did Job honestly think that for his sake God would ‘remove the rock’ (i.e. abandon those moral principles themselves)? (V.4; cp. Chap. 16:18).

V.5-21 – The barbs of Bildad – The doctrine of Exact Retribution

In spite of what Job might think or do, that “rock” would remain, and Bildad graphically described the principle and its operation upon the life of the wicked in a series of propositions:

V.5-7 – The principle of operation

V.15-17 – The extinction of his posterity

V.8-11 – The sinner’s discomfiture

V.18-21 – His disaster a lesson for all

V.12-14 – His inevitable destruction

Job 19 – Job’s reply to Bildad’s second speech

In his final words, Bildad held up his description of the fate of the wicked as a mirror in which Job might see himself. Every detail was for Job. The consumptive disease (V.13), the brimstone (V.15; cp. Chap. 1:16), dried up roots and withered branches of a tree (V.16) – all showed Bildad’s ruthlessness, and as never before, Job was made to know his complete isolation from friends as well as from God, and he lamented his position. From the strong conviction of his own innocence, he rebuked his friends and repudiated their explanation of his sufferings, and went on to say that his sufferings were entirely due to God’s treatment of him and of the way men took their cue from that treatment. He cried out for pity and asked that his protests be engraved in rock. Then, passing on, he uttered his conviction that he would – after death, be vindicated, and that he would see his vindicator, something of which his friends, because of their treatment of him, should take note; “For I know that my **redeemer** liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me” (V.25-27).

V.1-6 – Job rebukes his friends’ prejudice

V.1-3 – He rebukes his friends’ verbal affliction

V.4 – They have no evidence of sin against him

V.5 – He scorns their superior attitude, and their condemnation of him

V.6 – It is God who surrounds and assails him

V.7-12 – The object of God’s judgement

V.7 – God is silent while assailing him on every side

V.8 – Portrays his plight and utter futility – walled in by a fence; set on a dark path

V.9 – Stripped of his “crown” (righteousness) and his “glory” (godliness)

V.10 – Broken into rubble; uprooted like a tree

V.11-12 – Counted as an enemy; under siege by a mighty army

V.13-20 – The pit of humiliation

V.13 – Estranged from brethren and acquaintances, because of God’s pursuit of him, and his friends’ persecution (Ps. 69:8; 88:18)

V.14 – Failed by relatives, forgotten by friends

V.15 – Alienated by maidservants

V.16 – Ignored by menservants

V.17 – Rejected by his wife, repulsed by his own brothers

V.18 – Despised by urchins

V.19 – Abhorred by friends, and betrayed by loved ones

V.20 – His piteous condition – the cause of his absolute desertion

V.21-24 – Job’s cry for compassion and justice

V.21 – A cry for compassion in view of the heavy “hand of God”

V.22 – Their presumptuous persecution was that which properly belonged to God

V.23 – Since justice was not forthcoming, he would that his claims to innocence were written in a book

V.24 – So that his claims to innocence would endure eternity, he would they were engraved in rock and filled with lead

V.25-27 – The pinnacle of faith

V.25 – Job’s confidence that God will vindicate him – “For I know that my redeemer liveth.”

V.26 – Death and corruption are imminent, but true justice requires his bodily presence and hence his resurrection (Job is focused on vindication, not resurrection)

V.27 – When his vindication is complete, his estrangement from God will cease

V.28-29 – Job’s warning of judgement and Divine retribution

V.28 – His friends’ persistent false charges

V.29 – Their danger of Divine judgement

The office of the **Redeemer** (*ga’al* = to redeem from difficulty or danger) was in existence in the time of Job, prior to the Law of Moses where the redeemer had an extensive role. Pre-eminently, as the redeemer of His people, God was the *ga’al* Job had in mind. He believed that his innocence gave him a right to be vindicated, and since there was no kinsman prepared to stand on his behalf, God would reveal Himself as Job’s vindicator. Job could speak of his Redeemer (Yahweh) being revealed in “the latter day upon the earth.” He will be revealed in the person of His son.

Zephaniah 1

A full set of Bible marking notes on the Prophecy of Zephaniah can be found in **Appendix 3**.

The prophet Zephaniah prophesied early in the reign of Josiah, Judah’s greatest reformer. Josiah, doubtless encouraged by Zephaniah, commenced the cleansing of idolatry out of Judah, a work completed by Yahweh 40 years later through His servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. The Land, and particularly Jerusalem, was filled with every form of idolatry with an emphasis on the astral worship of Babylon. This was favoured by Manasseh who for 50 years presided over the worst apostasy in Judah’s history – a deliberate and orchestrated campaign

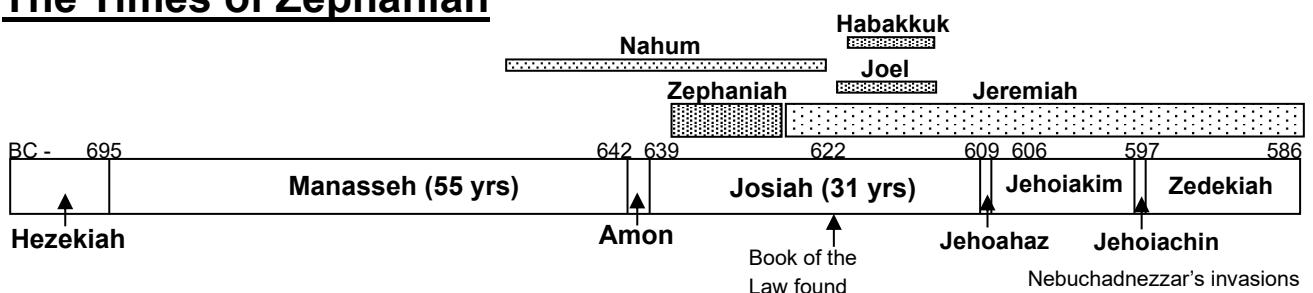
of corruption and murder. For this Yahweh eventually sent Manasseh into captivity to Babylon where he was cured of idolatry. In this he was a forerunner of his people who 40 years later were likewise sent to Babylon for the same purpose.

Manasseh endeavoured on his return from captivity to undo the effect of 50 years concerted effort to corrupt the worship of Judah. The little progress he made before his death was quickly reversed by Amon his son, and when he was violently removed two years later, Josiah as an 8 year old king ruled a land filled with the relics and doctrines of Babylonian idolatry. Even the faithful prophet Zephaniah did not escape the taint of this deep corruption. His father's name was Cush! Who in Judah's royal line would ever call their son Cush? Only someone deeply affected by the ways of Babylon. Cush was the great original prophet of the Babylonian mysteries. His son Nimrod became by his prowess as a hunter the first god-king of the kingdom of men based in Babel (or Babylon) and then in Assyria. Nimrod and his wife Semiramis established a higher order of priests for the god Janus, god of doors and hinges, who wore red. From these ultimately developed the Roman Catholic cardinals (Latin – *Cardo* signifying hinge). The lower order of priests who tended the sacrificial fires wore black robes. These emerged later in Judah as the Chemarims (Zeph. 1:4) and are duplicated in the black robed priests of the Catholic Church of today.

The name Cush appears three times in the book of Zephaniah (1:1; 2:12; 3:10 – the last two translated “Ethiopia”). As a land it is identified with the north and with Assyria (Zeph. 2:12-13). The original Cush was the land of the rivers of Eden (Gen. 2:10-14). This was the land of Nimrod and the beginning of the kingdom of men (Gen. 10 & 11). Babylon had been effectively transferred to the land of Judah during the reign of Manasseh. Consequently, the prophecy of Zephaniah has both a short term and long range application. The prophet warns of the onset of the day of Yahweh to completely denude the land of its corrupt people and their false gods, and this happened with the Babylonian invasions. However, it is clear that Yahweh looked down the corridor of time to the day of judgement when He would completely reverse all that Nimrod accomplished so long ago in his defiance of Yahweh's truth. So while the name Nimrod does not occur in Zephaniah there are many allusions to him. As the founder of the Papal system which will soon rule the kingdom of men as “Babylon the great”, Nimrod's shadow stands in the background of this far-reaching prophecy. Zephaniah is therefore a giant stepping stone between Genesis and Revelation.

Zephaniah warns of impending judgement on Judah, but his vision sweeps on to the return of Christ to judge the world in the great day of Yahweh. He speaks of the impending judgement on the nations, with emphasis on Cush (Babylon) and Assyria, in language redolent of the Apocalypse, and concludes his message with the turning of all peoples to a pure language and the worship of Yahweh in truth. At the head of these is Israel redeemed from their dispersion and brought into harmony with their God. Thus Nimrod's rebellion will be utterly reversed.

The Times of Zephaniah



For details on chapter 1, refer to the Bible marking notes in **Appendix 3**.

2 Peter 3

V.1-4 – Steadfastness is the theme of Peter’s final words, and remembrance is the key to maintaining it – “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of **remembrance**.” Being “mindful” of what we have been taught is paramount to maintaining a steady course to the Kingdom. Scoffers like the class referred to in chap. 2 will cast scorn on the suggestion that Christ will soon appear, just as Christ said would happen prior to his second advent – Matt. 24:48-51. The words Peter puts in their mouths require careful analysis – “Where is the **promise** of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the **creation**.” Three times in this chapter Peter refers to a “promise” (singular – V.4,9,13). This is not a reference to the “exceeding great and precious **promises**” (plural) of chapter 1:4. The clue is in the reference to “the **creation**” in V.4, and in V.5 – “the earth standing out of the water and in the water” (i.e. day 3 of Creation). Inherent in the 6 days of Creation and a seventh day of rest was a prophecy of God’s 7,000 year plan with the earth using the “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years” principle of V.8 (why else would this formula be here?). For example, Peter mentions the Flood in V.6 which occurred in the second millennium after Creation typified by the events of the second day of Creation. This is important to us because we live in the final days before the close of the 6th ‘day’ in which there must be a wedding of “the last Adam” to his bride (Gen. 2:22-24; Eph. 5:31-32), when there will be, according to that “promise” a “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” That prospect which is clearly looming makes the exhortation “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be **diligent** that ye may be found of him in **peace, without spot, and blameless**” even more relevant than when Peter wrote it. Each word in bold is important. The English word “speed” is derived from the Greek word for “diligence” (*spoudazō* – to use speed, that is, to make effort, be prompt or earnest). To be “in peace” means to be in fellowship with God. To be “without spot” is the same as James 1:27 – “Pure religion and undefiled before God” is “to keep himself unspotted from the world” (i.e. to be separate from its evils – John 17:15 – “that thou shouldest keep them from the evil”). To be “blameless” is to have all sins forgiven. Jude describes this condition as God being able to “present you **faultless** before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” Given the signs around us, there is a need to pick up speed towards the Kingdom.

V.15-18 – The danger we face is losing patience waiting for that great Day which seems to drag on way beyond the expectations of we finite mortal creatures. We need to “account that the longsuffering of our Lord is (unto) salvation” – i.e. providing opportunity to be ready (1 Pet. 3:20). There is an appointed day (Acts 17:31). We need to “grow in grace” and not “fall from your own steadfastness.”

December 16

Job 20 – Zophar’s second speech – “The way of the wicked”

Zophar’s character, as the roughest and coarsest of Job’s three friends, is well maintained in his second speech. His lack of refinement was intellectual as well as moral. He had no hope of grasping Job’s thought and argument, and as though to compensate for this intellectual failure, his language became more coloured and more crude – doubtless (as so often happens) in the mistaken belief that strongly expressed conviction might serve as an acceptable substitute for reason! So much of Job as he was able to comprehend in no way flattered him. He therefore burst into the fray, resentful of Job’s reproof, to re-state the old doctrine of retribution, to emphasise once more, more callously than Bildad had, and with greater urgency, the fate of

the wicked, their brief triumph and speedy judgement. He would make Job see in the words thus presented, a portrait of himself and the truth of his mantra – “The triumphing of the wicked is short” (V.4-5). The speech contains the following propositions and arguments:

V.6-11 – The joy of the wicked is brief

- V.6-7 – His fall is great
- V.8 – His name will disappear
- V.10 – His children will suffer
- V.11 – His death will be premature

V.12-19 – The sin of the wicked is self-destructive

- V.12-16 – His evil desires turn to poison
- V.17 – His dreams will not come true
- V.18-19 – His ill-gained profits will bring no joy

V.20-22 – The judgement of God is sure

- V.20-21 – The conscience of the wicked condemns him
- V.22 – The success of the wicked repudiates him

V.23-28 – The destruction of the wicked is imminent

- V.24-25 – God will impale him
- V.26 – Darkness will cover him
- V.26 – Fire will consume him
- V.27 – Heaven will expose him
- V.27 – Earth will resist him

Zophar's conclusion: “This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.”

Zephaniah 2

The first three verses of chapter 2 properly belong to chapter 1. They contain an urgent call to repentance given the bearing down of “the day of Yahweh” (chap. 1:7-18) – “The great day of Yahweh is **near**, it is **near**, and hasteth greatly.” That day came in the conquests of Babylon over Judah beginning in BC 606, but also has a latter day application.

V.1 – “Gather yourselves together” – This entire phrase is just one word *qashah* signifying sapless through drought; to forage for wood (Num.15:32,33). It occurs twice in the verse emphasizing the urgency of the call. Rotherham translates it “Collect your thoughts, aye collect them” (Cp. Luke 23:31; Jude 12). The nation was spiritually ‘dry’ and drastic action was urgently required as judgement loomed upon them.

“O nation not desired” – The word “desired” is *kacaph* – to be pale through shame. Gesenius says it means “a nation without shame.”

V.2 – “Before the decree bring forth” – Rotherham – “Ere yet the decree have given birth.” (“bring forth” is *yabad* – to beget). They were living on borrowed time – “before the day pass as the chaff” is literally, “like the chaff shall pass the day” and signifies an ephemeral status soon to end.

V.3 – “**Seek** ye Yahweh, all ye **meek** of the earth, which have wrought his judgement” – The word “seek” is *baqash* – to search out; to strive after (cp. 1:6 – “sought”). There are 3 occurrences in the verse, again stressing the need for urgent action even by the “meek” – *anayv* – depressed; humble, lowly, meek (1st occ. Num. 12:3 of Moses. Cp. Ps.76:9; Isa.11:4). Rotherham – “all ye lowly of the land.” This was an appeal to those who had tried to do what was right in a time of apathy and idolatry – Rotherham – “who have wrought what he appointed” (4 occs. V.3:5,8,15. Cp. Jer. 5:4-5).

“seek righteousness (*tsedeq* – the right), seek **meekness**: it may be ye shall be **hid** in the day of Yahweh’s anger.” The word “meekness” here is *anavah* (cognate with *anayv* – condescension, and occurs in 2 Sam. 22:36; Prov. 15:33; 18:12; 22:4). Rotherham – “seek humility.” This is the opposite attitude to 1:4-12 (cp. Josiah – 2 Kings 22:19). There is a play

on the prophet's name here. The word "hid" is *sathar* – to hide (by covering). Rotherham – "peradventure ye shall be concealed." It is clearly an allusion to Zephaniah's name which means "Whom Yahweh hid" (cp. Isa. 26:20-21; 1:15. See also the root word in Ps. 27:5; 31:19-20). God graciously "hid" Josiah from the terrible judgements about to fall – 2 Kings 22:20.

V.2-15 deal with judgement on the nations surrounding Judah who would also suffer from the invasions of Nebuchadnezzar. These judgements presaged the latter days. This is evident from V.11 (RV) – "Yahweh will be terrible unto them: for **he will famish all the gods of the earth**; and **men shall worship him, every one from his place**, even all the isles of the nations." This can only be in the Kingdom Age. All the gods of the earth will have been "famished" by losing all their devotees. No one will worship false gods in that great day.

The importance of V.4-11 is that it is one of three passages that inform that there will be a "nation" called Palestine in the Gaza Strip prior to Armageddon. They are Joel 3:4; Zeph. 2:4-7; Ezek. 25:15-17. "For **Gaza** shall be forsaken" – It is significant that "Gaza" is listed first. "Woe unto the inhabitants of the **sea coast, the nation** of the Cherethites!" – The name means "executioners" ("Cherethims" is used in Ezek. 25:16 after an amazing description redolent of the events of 7 October 2023 – "Because the Philistines (Palestine is derived from Philistine) have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy it for the old hatred"). This "nation" is on the "sea coast" (see Ezek. 25:16 – "I will cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast"). What these three passages indicate is that there will be a Palestinian State in the Gaza Strip (not in the West Bank which will be part of Israel proper as required by Ezek. 38:8,12; Isa. 10:24-34).

V.12-15 – ESV – "You also, O **Cushites**, shall be slain by my sword" – The first occurrence is in Gen.2:13; then Gen. 10:6,7,8. It refers to the original Cush, the source of idolatry and religious corruption (note reference to "north" V.13).

"and destroy **Assyria**; and will make **Nineveh** a desolation" – Nimrod (the first god of the earth = the papacy – Rev. 11:4) established Assyria (Gen.10:8-11). That region was the origin of all the idolatry that found its way into Judah. "Nineveh" means "the place of habitation" and enshrined all Nimrod stood for (Gen.10:11-12; Gen.11), his power to subdue men and beasts. It is that power that is destroyed – "the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for **beasts** to lie down in." The "beasts" include the remnant of Israel (Zeph. 3:13) who possess Nimrod's original territory, but other displaced peoples who have submitted to Christ's rule will be given a possession in the vacated territory of spiritual latter day 'Assyria' and 'Babylon' (Isa. 34:11-17; Rev. 19:17-18).

1 John 1

John's first epistle begins in a very similar vein to his Gospel account. The "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) and the Apostles had heard and handled "the Word of life" in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ (V.2-4). He was "the light of the world" (John 1:9), and light represents truth. The truth was under attack when John wrote his epistles towards the end of the first century. The rise of the Gnostic heresy had brought about division in the brotherhood (1 John 2:19), but their influence continued to cause trouble as they travelled around peddling their false doctrine (2 John 9-10). One of their theories was that Jesus and Christ were not the same. They argued the 'Christ spirit' came upon Jesus at his baptism and left him before he died. This is why the epistle begins the way it does, and why so

much emphasis is placed throughout on the truth that “Jesus **Christ** (i.e. the same person – one entity) is come in the flesh.”

V.5-10 – The Gnostics were given that name because the Greek word for knowledge is *gnosis*. They believed they had a superior knowledge, and that knowledge raised them above everything, even the need for moral purity. One of their own wrote “as gold deposited in mud does not lose its beauty, so they themselves whatever may be their outward immorality, cannot be injured by it, nor lose their spiritual substance.” This is the problem John is addressing in this section of the chapter. With that kind of thinking, why would anyone confess their sins? – “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (V.10).

The epistle may not seem to be structured on casual reading, but there is a structure on closer examination. The following table from ‘The Lampstand’ magazine July-August 2012 is useful to gain an overall perspective.

| 3 themes | God is light (1:5) | Born of God (2:29) (God is life) | God is love (4:8) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Righteousness and Sin | 1:5-22 | 2:29–3:10 | 5:16-17 |
| Love and Hate | 2:3-17 | 3:10-24 | 4:7–5:3 |
| Truth and Error | 2:18-28 | 4:1-6 | 5:4-13 |
| | Knowledge | Baptism | Living the Truth |

1 John 2

V.1-6 – John expands upon chapter 1:5-10 calling Jesus our “advocate with the Father, **Jesus Christ** the righteous” through whom confessed sins can be forgiven. However, acknowledgement of sin also brings with it the need for avoidance, and that can only be achieved by obedience to Christ’s commandments. The Gnostic view completely undermined that process and allowed liberty to do as one’s ‘superior knowledge’ dictated. Walking in the light confirmed a “love of God.”

V.7-14 – There was nothing new in this. Truth does not change. What the believers had been taught through the Apostles remained true. Christ had given “a new commandment” – John 13:34-35 – “A **new commandment** I give unto you, **That ye love one another**; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. **By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples**, if ye have love one to another.” The Gnostics had turned this on its head. They hated their brethren who opposed the new doctrine and the danger was that the faithful brethren would through much debate and defence of the truth become a little like them. Defending the truth, as did the Ephesian brethren, can lead to hardening and the loss of “first love” (Rev. 2:4). Patience is necessary in dealing with those who are wavering from the ‘straight and narrow’ – “the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves” (2 Tim. 2:24-25). John appeals to “fathers” (ecclesial elders), and “young men” (active brethren) and calls them his “little children” as their aged father in the truth to maintain their course and avoid falling victim as the Gnostics had to the machinations of the flesh – “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” – V.15-17.

V.18-27 – The Gnostic doctrine that Christ had not come in the flesh is called “antichrist” meaning anyone who either was or claimed to be in the place of Christ, or one who, for any cause, was in opposition to him. Their ‘Christ’ was said to be an emanation from God, but not a man, and this theory probably ended up in the Trinity of the Apostasy.

The “unction” (a very Orthodox term) is actually an anointing. First century believers had “tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit” and the truth of the Apostle’s teaching had been confirmed by its operation in their midst (Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3). They needed to hold strong with the truth in the face of the Gnostic challenge, because the “anointing” constituted them the children of God – V.28-29. The Gnostics were not.

December 17

Job 21 – Job’s reply to Zophar

In the **first cycle of speeches**, which had centred on God and His power, it had been contended against Job that God’s judgement of him, evidenced in his calamities, should be unquestioningly accepted, until Job struck this weapon out of their hands by showing that worship of God, to be acceptable, must be reasoned not superstitious.

In the **second cycle**, where the subject had moved from God’s treatment of Job to man’s treatment of him, Job contents himself with discussing the principles of the matter, never attacking his opponents’ premises, until as in the first cycle, the pointed coarseness of Zophar made it dreadfully apparent to Job that every argument his friends had used was pointed directly at him, and that, if he were to survive these attacks, he must come down from the realm of high principle and set about examining the facts. This is what he does in this chapter.

A summary of Job’s lengthy reply to Zophar

V.1-6 – Job’s appeal for a fair hearing

V.1-4 – Stop the attack!

V.5a – Look at me!

V.5b – Listen to the facts!

V.7-13 – Job’s dilemma at the prosperity of the wicked

V.7 – They grow old and are rich and powerful

V.8-9 – They are blessed with maturity for their children and safety for their homes

V.10-12 – They experience increase in their herds and joy in their family

V.13 – They have wealth in their days and ease in their death

V.14-15 – A profile of the wicked

V.14 – They reject God and resist His ways

V.15 – They refuse to serve Him and ridicule the value of prayer

V.16 – A profile of Job – Job has never turned away from God, The way of the wicked cannot account for his suffering.

V.17-21 – Why should the children of the wicked suffer?

V.17-18 – The wicked are not immediately punished. Exact and immediate retribution is false!

V.19a – The error of Job’s friends concerning the children of the wicked (cp. Job 18:19-20; 30:10,28)

V.19b-20 – The wicked bear the punishment for their own sin (cp. Deut. 5:9-10)

V.21 – It is wrong to punish the children of wicked instead of the wicked themselves. Delayed retribution is false!

V.22-26 – Why do the wicked not suffer in death?

V.22 – God’s moral rule in the heaven the earth

V.23-26 – There is no set difference between the wicked and the righteous in death. Either may die young or old, easy or in pain, prosperous or in poverty.

V.27-29 – Why do you include me among the wicked?

V.27-28 – Job confronts them with the fact that he knows that all their thoughts and schemes, inferences and innuendoes are directed personally at him.

V.29 – Job charges his friends with prejudice and provincialism. Their judgement is limited by their own ignorance and narrow world.

What comfort could Job's friends offer him? Job had disproved all their "answers." The only remaining thing was "falsehood" or "faithlessness" (RV mgn.).

V.30-33 – The challenge of the large perspective

V.30 – The wicked are “spared” in the day of calamity, and “led away” (safely) in the day of wrath

V.31 – The wicked seem to be immune from retribution

V.32-33 – The wicked are as prosperous in death as they are in life

V.34 – Job's conclusion – The friends who came to counsel Job have only brought empty words and false answers

Zephaniah 3

The chapter begins with a scorching rebuke and condemnation of the character of Jerusalem and its inhabitants. Four significant failures are identified in V.2 – (1) Refusal to heed Yahweh's messengers; (2) Repudiating any thought of correction; (3) Showing no trust in Yahweh; (4) Departing from God through disbelief.

V.1 – “Woe to her that is filthy (*mara* – to rebel. Rotherham – “rebellious”) and polluted, to the oppressing (*yana* – to rage; be violent) city!” – This harks back to chapter 1:4-6.

V.2 – The antidote to the failures listed above reveal the four elements essential to salvation:

1. Harkening to the Word – “hear” is *shama* – to hear intelligently (Jer. 7:23-24).
2. Acceptance of correction – *muwcar* – chastisement. Roth. “accepted no correction.”
3. Trusting in Yahweh – Prov. 16:20 – “whoso trusteth in Yahweh, happy is he.”
4. Drawing near to God – James 4:8 – “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”

(Four is the number of righteousness and God manifestation)

V.3-7 – The reasons for the failure and its wider ramifications are spelt out – “Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow” – i.e. those in power were rapacious and ruthlessly grasped what was not theirs, like wolves leaving nothing when the new day dawned (V.3). Similarly, “Her prophets are fickle, treacherous men; her priests profane what is holy; they do violence to the law” (ESV V.4). In sharp contrast – “Yahweh, the Righteous One, is in her midst, he dealeth not perversely,—Morning by morning, his justice, bringeth he forth the light” (Rotherham V.5). Characteristic of this prophecy, having condemned Judah's irreversible apostasy, the judgements to fall on them are shown to have serious ramifications for other nations both then and in the future.

V.6 – “I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate” – Seeing Nimrod lurks in the shadows of this prophecy which condemns the adoption of Babylonian idolatry by Judah, reference to the “towers” is significant (see a similar reference in Isa. 33:18 in the context of the overthrow of Nimrod's religion). Yahweh's attempts to reform His people failed (V.7). If that could not be achieved with a covenant bound people, what could be done with ignorant apostate nations? Wiping the slate clean (2 Kings 21:13) and starting again is the answer. Hence, what follows in V.8 is the most unique sentence in the O.T.

V.8 – This verse contains every letter of the Hebrew alphabet including the five ‘final’ letters – $22+5 = 27$ (3×9) = total fullness and finality. It is the Spirit’s way of guaranteeing the certainty of the outcome prophesied – the complete eradication of what Nimrod established.

“Therefore wait ye upon me, saith Yahweh, until the day that I rise up to the **prey**: for my determination (*mishpat* – verdict, judgement) is to **gather the nations**, that I may **assemble** (*qabats* – to grasp; collect, i.e. for Armageddon) the kingdoms” (*mamlakah* – dominions. 1st occ. of this word is in Gen. 10:10 of the kingdom of men) – Nimrod became a god-king as a mighty hunter (Gen. 10:9). He was responsible for establishing the kingdom of men and scattering the nations through the rebellion of the building of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). Yahweh now becomes the hunter of the “prey” (cp. occs. of “prey” Gen. 49:27; Isa. 33:23), to reverse Nimrod’s scattering. The nations will be assembled for judgement with the aim of returning (ISV) “to the peoples a pure language” (*sahphah* – lip. This is the word used in Gen. 11:1; Mal. 2:6,7. It refers to a single tongue leading to a pure religion).

V.9 – “For then will I turn to the people(s) a pure **language**, that they may **all call upon the name of Yahweh**, to serve him with one **consent**” (*shechem* – to shoulder a burden). This is the last occurrence of *shechem* in the O.T. The first occurrence as a proper name is in Gen. 12:6. Yahweh set out to reverse Nimrod’s corrupting of true religion by calling Abraham out of the very heart of Nimrudian darkness – Ur of the Chaldees. When Abraham finally arrived in the land of Canaan, the first place he is recorded as stopping was Shechem (“Sichem” in KJV). There Yahweh appeared to him and gave His second promise of the Land to his “seed” (Christ – Gal. 3:16). Abraham responded by making sacrifice and moving on to a place between Bethel (“the house of God”) and Hai (“ruin”) where he made a solemn choice and “**called on the name of Yahweh**” (Gen. 12:8). This is the same process that will be used to redeem both Israel and all the nations created by Nimrod’s rebellion. Hence....

V.10 – ESV – “From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering” – This is a reference to the Second Exodus of Israel. Elijah will bring them through “the wilderness of the peoples” (Ezek. 20:33-38; Isa. 11:11); i.e. through Europe where Catholicism will be in revolt against the rule of Christ because they will be adhering to Nimrod’s religion whose catechism was developed by Cush (the father of Nimrod – Gen. 10:8), the great original prophet of the Babylonian mysteries. The shame, acknowledgement of transgression and redemption of the remnant of Israel follows in V.11-13.

V.14-20 – The rejoicing of redeemed Israel and the exalted position they occupy among the nations is the subject of these verses (see **Appendix 3** for detail). In the process, the sharp contrasts between Nimrod (“the god of the earth”) and Yahweh is clearly set out (see chart at right).

V.17 – Rotherham – “Yahweh, thy God, in the midst of thee, as a **mighty one** (*gibbor*) will save,—will be glad over thee with rejoicing, will be **silent in his love**”

– Silent, because He will have no criticism to make as He did when He “hewed them by the prophets” (Hos. 6:5).

V.19 – “I will save her that halteth” – Compare Mic. 4:6-7 where this language is also drawn from the life of Jacob returning crippled but much improved to the Land of Promise.

| Contrasts | | |
|--------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Nimrod | | Yahweh |
| (Papacy) | | (Christ) |
| Gen. 10:8,9 | Gibbor | Zeph. 3:17 |
| Gen. 10:10 | King | Zeph. 3:15 |
| Gen. 10:9 | Hunter | Zeph. 3:8 |
| Gen. 11:4 | Name | Zeph. 3:12,19,20 |
| Gen. 11:9 | Language | Zeph. 3:9 |
| “confusion” | | “pure” |

1 John 3

John had stated the purpose of the epistle in chap. 2:26 – “These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.” The Gnostics taught that indulging in immoral behaviour did not affect one’s relationship with God. In chapter 3:1-3, John shows that to be called children of God requires moral behaviour like that of His son – “Beloved, now are we the sons of God” ...and “when he shall appear, we shall be like him;...And every man that hath this hope in him **purifieth himself**, even as he is **pure**.” This was antithetical to Gnostic teaching and practice.

V.4-10 – In further countering the Gnostic mantra that if the mind is steeped in light it doesn’t matter what the body does (very similar to the libertine Corinthian brethren who frequented the harlots’ temple – 1 Cor. 6:13), John recalls the teaching of Christ in John 8:34 – Green’s Literal Translation – “everyone **practicing sin** is a slave of sin.” That is how V.4 is translated by Green – “Everyone **practicing sin** also practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” This is not about sins committed through weakness, but rather about a chosen way of life. All men sin (1:8), and sins can be forgiven (1:9), but a life of lawlessness such as the Gnostics promoted was ‘unforgivable’ (V.8). It is important from here on in this context to interpret such phrases as “Whosoever abideth in him **sinneth not**”; “He that **committeth sin** is of the devil”; “Whosoever is born of God **doth not commit sin**,” etc. as meaning slavery to sin; i.e. a way of life committed to sin which many Gnostics were promoting. God’s children practice righteousness (V.7,10), and He sent His son to destroy the *diabolos* (Heb. 2:14); i.e. human nature biased towards uninhibited slavery to sin.

V.11-24 – People who live for themselves to fulfil the desires of the flesh (chap. 1:15-16), do not live for the benefit of others. People, like the Gnostics who seduce the believers (2:26) to live lawlessly do not “love the brethren.” That is John’s message in the balance of the chapter. Cain feigned ‘religion’ but was of the lawless one (the *diabolos*) and slew his brother. The antithesis was “let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” This produces a clear conscience “and in this way we shall come to know that we are loyal to the truth, and shall satisfy our consciences in His presence” (Weymouth for V.19). For if our own conscience tells us we are not fulsome in our approach (and we have a deceitful heart naturally – Jer. 17:9), then God will certainly not be deceived, we will be condemned. On the contrary, “he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him.”

1 John 4

Doctrinal purity is essential to salvation – Gal. 1:8-9. Having fully exposed the Gnostics moral failure, John now turns to their doctrinal teachings. It is essential to test strange doctrines with the Word of God. There is always harmony in truth. No true teaching of the Word can be contradicted by a different interpretation of another passage. The Apostle Paul knew that some would arise “speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:3) and “pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:7). The Gnostics were doing that by teaching that Christ had not come in the flesh – “every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.” This divided the Saviour from those he came to save. There is a dichotomy between “the spirit (teaching) of truth, and the spirit (teaching) of error” (V.6).

V.7-21 – “God is love.” This could be questioned if He had not sent His son “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3) to redeem a death stricken race, but His love was revealed in Jesus Anointed – “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” who “took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like

unto his brethren” (Heb. 2:16-17). We need to reflect God’s love toward us by our love for the brethren. He seeks to save, so should we – not like the Gnostics who sought to destroy men’s lives. If God dwells in us we can have “boldness (frankness of speech) in the day of judgement: because as he is, so are we in this world” (V.17) for “there is no fear (*phobos* = dread) in love; but perfect (*teleios* = complete) love (*agape* – sacrificial love of the will) casteth out fear (dread): because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” We manifest God’s love toward others out of sincere gratitude – “We love him, because he first loved us” (V.19-21). The Gnostic apostasy did the opposite.

Appendix 4 provides several citations from Eureka Vol. 1 on the doctrines and influence of the Gnostics.

December 18

Job 22 – The third cycle of speeches

- (1) Eliphaz – Chapter 22 and Jobs reply – Chapters 23 & 24
- (2) Bildad – Chapter 25 and Job’s reply – Chapter 26
- (3) Job’s monologues – Chapters 27 to 31

Job’s final speech in the second debate destroyed the foundations of his friends’ argument concerning retribution. At the same time, there had been awakened in Job himself a profounder knowledge and keener faith, a conviction concerning Divine Justice that carried with it future assurance, the inevitability of God’s intervention to right his wrongs – and under the power of this conviction, Job’s turmoil lessened and his serenity returned. Their thesis gone, it was inevitable that the three friends should be driven from the field of argument. In this final debate, we notice how they were quickly silenced. A desperate last defence by Eliphaz, filled with wild, unsupportable accusations, a reply from Job that easily confuted him, a few words (mostly heard before) mumbled by Bildad, a brief reply by Job, and Zophar – failed to come forward. He had twice been mauled by Job, and twice was enough. Far better to take Job’s advice to him in Chap. 21:3, than try a third time. Discretion was the better part of valour. With Zophar’s failure to come forward, Job was left the master of the field to wind up the debate in a series of monologues.

The third speech of Eliphaz

V.1-3 – The tyranny of a private vision (cp. Job 4:17-21) – God does not take pleasure in man’s righteousness.

V.4-5 – Job pronounced a sinner – God is not punishing Job for his righteousness, therefore he is suffering for his sins.

V.6-9 – Eliphaz’s catalogue of Job’s social sins

V.6 – Unjust exaction of pledge; stripping the naked of clothing

V.7 – Refusing water to the weary; withholding bread from the hungry

V.8 – Favouring the rich and powerful

V.9 – Sending widows away empty; crushing the fatherless

V.10-11 – God’s retribution for Job’s

great sin – snares, fears, darkness, and flood of sorrows are God’s punishment for Job

V.12-20 – Eliphaz’s sophistry (Eliphaz twists the truth concerning the ungodly and the wicked) Eliphaz accuses Job of concocting the idea of God’s absence in order to cover his secret sins:

V.12 – God is remote

V.13-14 – His vision is obscured by cloud

V.14b – He is on a journey away from home

V.17 – Eliphaz misquotes Job (V.13; cp. Job 21:14-15)

V.15-20 – Job is not only a great sinner, but is the personification of evil

V.21-30 – Eliphaz’s lilting psalm of redemptive hope – Admonishes Job to repentance and restoration to God’s favour

V.21-23 – Return to God, receive instruction, forsake iniquity

V.24-27 – Discard all ill-gotten gains; make God your treasure

V.28-30 – Promise of authority, wisdom, confidence, humility, power and purity

Haggai 1

The chronology of the times of Haggai and Zechariah is important background information to these prophecies.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| B.C. 606 | 1st invasion by Nebuchadnezzar. The captivity begins and is to last 70 years (Jer. 25:11-12; 27:8). |
| B.C. 589-7 | Final invasion by Nebuchadnezzar in the 9th year of Zedekiah which resulted in a two years’ siege (2 Kings 25: 1-2; 2 Chron. 36:21). |
| B.C. 535 | 2nd month. The foundation of the Temple laid (Ezra 3:8). |
| B.C. 535-20 | Samaritan opposition — the work ceases until the completion of 70 years from the final invasion B.C. 587, when the Temple was destroyed (Ezra 4). |
| B.C. 529 | Cyrus died — succeeded by Cambyses his son, then by Smerdis and Darius Hystaspes (522), a relative of Cyrus who reigned 35 years. |
| B.C. 520 | 2nd year of Darius. Haggai (6th month), and Zechariah (8th month) prophecy. The work is renewed amid blessing (Hag. 2:19). By a new decree, Darius supported the Jews (cp. Ezra 4:24 with Ch. 6). |
| B.C. 516 | Temple completed and dedication celebrated (Ezra 6:15). |

V.1 – “In the second year of Darius the king” – The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah are carefully dated. The two prophets laboured in conjunction with each other, rousing the people to give themselves completely to the work before them. They ministered in the second year of Darius, king of Persia (Haggai 1:1; Zech. 1:1; Ezra 4:24; 5:1). Significant dates of this year are as follows:

6th Month – Haggai’s first prophecy (Hag. 1:1-15)

7th Month – Haggai’s second prophecy (Hag. 2:1-9)

8th Month – Zechariah’s first prophecy (Zech. 1:1)

9th Month – Haggai’s 3rd and 4th prophecies (Hag. 2:10-23)

BC 519 11th Month – Zechariah’s 2nd prophecy (Zech. 1:7)

BC 518, 4th year of Darius – Zechariah’s 3rd prophecy (Zech. 7:1)

BC 516, 6th year of Darius – Temple finished (Ezra 6:15)

V.2-6 – “This people say, The time is not come, the time that Yahweh’s house should be built” – Based on the prophecy of Jeremiah that the desecration of the Land and Temple would last for 70 years (Jer. 25:11-12), the people justified their inactivity by claiming that the time had not fully come for the Temple to be built. That was true, but like David who was not permitted to build the temple, they should have been preparing materials and doing all the ground work for it to be completed. Instead, they were focusing on improvements to their own houses – “Is it a time that, ye yourselves, should be dwelling in your own paneled

houses? and, this house, be in ruins?” (Rotherham). So, Yahweh intervened to produce a ‘cost-of-living’ crisis – shortage of the fundamentals of everyday life and raging inflation impoverished them. They needed to think about why these things were happening – **“Apply your heart unto your own experience.** Ye have sown much, but have brought in little...he that hath hired himself out, hath put his wages into a bag with holes” (Rotherham V.5-6). The exhortation is that when many things go awry in life and multiple fundamental things fail, it may be time to reflect on whether our priorities are right.

V.8-11 – “Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it” – Their priorities were wrong and God had intervened to force them to consider their experiences of privation – “Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith Yahweh of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.” If they changed their attitude and put effort into building His house things would change for the better. The drought that caused the harvests to fail and denuded the table would be lifted.

V.12-15 – Led by Zerubbabel and Joshua, “all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of Yahweh their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet” and came and worked on the temple project a little over three weeks after he delivered his message. However, there was a trial period of three months to test faith and endurance (cp. V.15 with chap. 2:10.19).

Haggai 2

V.1 – “In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of Yahweh by the prophet Haggai” – Just under a month after the work was resumed on the temple an encouraging vision of glory was presented via Haggai. Nothing had yet changed in daily life. Shortages of food and clothing persisted. An important principle was at work that is just as relevant today. The question is: when we have made significant changes to our attitude and return to involve ourselves in the building of God’s house, but nothing seems to change in our daily circumstances, do we continue in faith or grow tired and revert to our old ways. It is a test of faith. This is what happened to Jeremiah’s contemporaries who said, “since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine” (Jer. 44:18). They were impatient and lacked faith in the Word of God.

V.2-9 – “Who is left among you that saw this house in her **first glory**? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?” – There were two major problems for the builders. Their tables were still empty and their daily life still hard. Secondly, the project they were involved in bore no comparison with the grandeur and organisation of Solomon’s temple. An important clue is provided here. God saw the new building as being the old one! It had a “first glory” that was not matched by the second iteration, but was still the same temple. There would be a third iteration, even the “house of prayer for all people” (Isa. 56:7) which would be greater than both – “The **latter glory** of **this house** shall be greater than the former” (ESV V.9). However, this would not come without Armageddon and its subsequent wars – “Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land” (V.6 is cited in Heb. 12:26-28 and clearly refers to Christ’s Second Advent). This “shaking” is the work of Yahweh’s “signet” seen in the type of Zerubbabel in V.20-23 (he having replaced Jehoiachin in Messiah’s line of succession – Jer. 22:24). Christ and his saints will fulfil this prophecy, and of them it is said “the delight of all the nations, shall come in,—and I will fill this house with glory” (Rotherham V.7); or as Brother Thomas renders it: “The Excellency of the

nations, they shall come in.” **This house** has a great future. The vision can sustain us through extended trials and a long wait.

V.10-19 – Three months after the work was resumed and continued in faith the scene was changed – “from this day will I bless you” (V.19), but not before a powerful lesson as to why the dearth had fallen upon them was delivered by Haggai posing two questions concerning the Law. He presented two dead bodies: one slain in sacrifice called “holy flesh,” the other dead through natural causes. Anybody touching the former was constituted holy, though that holiness could not be passed on to others; each had to make personal contact with the holy flesh for himself. On the other hand, anybody touching the body dead through natural causes was not only defiled thereby, but also defiled anyone he touched. A twofold lesson was brought home to the people: (1) As a nation they had been previously spiritually dead and defiling; but now having sacrificed their self-interest to serve Yahweh they had manifested the attitude required of ‘the holy nation’; and (2) It is far easier to defile than to make holy.

V.20-23 – “In that day, saith Yahweh Tz’vaath, will I take thee, O **Zerubbabel, my servant**” – ‘He who will become armies’ will be manifested in the Multitudinous Christ typed here by Zerubbabel. Christ has become a “signet” (bearing his seal of office) to fulfil God’s purpose “in that day.”

1 John 5

The table below (copied from June 16) shows the subjects of chap. 5 in relation to the themes of the epistle. The first three verses complete the section on love and hate from chap. 4:7. V.4-13 deal with truth and error.

| 3 themes | God is light (1:5) | Born of God (2:29) (God is life) | God is love (4:8) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Righteousness and Sin | 1:5-22 | 2:29-3:10 | 5:16-17 |
| Love and Hate | 2:3-17 | 3:10-24 | 4:7-5:3 |
| Truth and Error | 2:18-28 | 4:1-6 | 5:4-13 |
| | Knowledge | Baptism | Living the Truth |

V.4 – “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world (2:15-16); and **this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith**” – Faith is indispensable to salvation, and can only be created and sustained by the Word of God – Rom. 10:17. Wrong doctrine undermines and misdirects faith, as had happened with the Gnostics who John says “went out from us, but they were not of us” (2:19). He fortifies his brethren with sound doctrine concerning the redemptive work of Christ.

V.6-12 – This bracket of verses contains an acknowledged interpolation by Trinitarians who had manipulated the text used by the KJV translators. The words in V.7-8 of the KJV “*in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth*” are spurious and should be crossed out. It should read as the RV and others translate – “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one.” There are many proofs that an interpolation has occurred. These include; (1) It is missing in all the earlier Greek manuscripts, for it is found in no Greek manuscript written before the 16th century; (2) It is missing in the earliest versions, and, indeed, in a large part of the versions of the New Testament which have been made in all former times; (3) It is never quoted by the Greek fathers in their controversies on the doctrine of the Trinity – a passage which would be so much in point, and which could

not have failed to be quoted if it were genuine; and it is not referred to by the Latin fathers until the time of Vigilius, at the end of the 5th century.

All critical matters of judgement under the Law had to be determined “at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established” (Deut. 19:15). The three witnesses John advances that Jesus Anointed had come in the flesh in contrast to Gnostic doctrine were “the **Spirit**, and the **water**, and the **blood**.” The Gnostics taught that Jesus was not the son of God as Scripture testifies – Luke 1:31 – “thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name **JESUS**”; and Luke 1:35 – “**The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee**, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called **the Son of God**.” So, the **Spirit** was integral to his existence, and was given to him without measure at his baptism (**water**) – John 3:34. The **Spirit** was also present in his resurrection and glorification – Rom. 1:4; 6:4,9; John 5:21,26; 10:18. His Father was his primary witness (John 5:32), and the **power of the Spirit** through which he performed miracles was from his Father (John 5:36). Jesus Anointed was baptized in **water** and the Spirit which is symbolized by water (John 4:14; Mark 9:41; Eph. 5:26) descended upon him with the declaration “This is my Son the beloved, in whom I am well pleased.” His sacrifice (**blood**) is the third and final witness for “without shedding of blood is no remission” of sins (Heb. 9:22). Perfect obedience even to “the death of the cross” created “the precious blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:19) and ensured resurrection to life eternal as the Apostle states – Heb. 13:20 – “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the **blood** of the everlasting covenant.” If we are found in him there is a sense “that God hath given to us eternal life” (not experienced in fact yet, but promised with assurance to the faithful).

V.13-21 – “this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing **according to his will**, he heareth us” – The will of God is clearly expressed in the Word. Asking for something that is opposed to that will only leads to rejection of the request. This was Elijah’s experience when he sought the destruction of Israel against God’s will (Rom. 11:2-4). The Gnostics were asking for things that were totally antithetical to God’s will; e.g. freedom to do as the flesh pleased. They were not being heard. “There is **a sin unto death**: I do not say that he shall pray for it” – This sin is what John mentioned in chap. 3:4, namely, allowing sin to dominate one’s life (the Gnostic mantra). “Every one who hath been begotten of God doth not sin” (i.e. become a willing slave of king Sin), because “the whole world lieth in wickedness” and sons of God must “keep yourselves from idols.”

December 19

Job 23 – Job’s reply to Eliphaz’s third speech – Chapters 23 & 24

It was not until later (Chap. 27:1-6) that Eliphaz’s shameful charges of sin against Job were answered. For the moment, Job, because he was convinced of his own innocence, was absorbed by the problem of God that this presented to him, firstly in his own case because of his calamities, and secondly, in the world about him. God, he thought, had determined to destroy him personally (V.13), something which, in view of his desire for God, melted him and made him fearful (V.15-17), but men everywhere had the same problem. No one could understand what God was doing or why He was doing it (Chap. 24:1) for God “gives no heed to wrong” (V.12). Job began “Even to-day,” thus possibly implying that the debate had extended over a number of days. His “complaint was rebellious” (RV); i.e. Job the rebel against God’s Providence, as Eliphaz alleged, was going to continue to be “rebellious” – an ironical expression, so frustrated was he.

Chapter 23 – Job considers God’s treatment of him incomprehensible

V.1-7 – Job’s desire for an audience with God

- V.2 – His suffering and bitter complaint
- V.3-4 – His appeal to God that he might present his case
- V.5 – Job speculates that, once his case had been presented, there would be agreement between God and himself
- V.6-7 – God would not use His great power to make the hearing a mismatch

- V.8-9 – Job’s desperate search for God
- V.10 – Job realizes the purpose of his suffering (God is not punishing – but testing)
- V.11-12 – Job confirms his upright ways
- V.13-14 – The trial continues from God who is: Unique; unchangeable; unfettered; inscrutable; sovereign
- V.15-16 – Fear, weakness and terror overcome Job
- V.17 – Job feels hemmed in by God

Job 24

From looking at his own circumstances, Job turned to consider the world about him, and found that whereas he was an innocent sufferer, all around him were instances of the wicked who went free and who prospered at the expense of the poor. So, experience entered a disclaimer against the supposed law of exact retribution, as he proceeded to show.

V.1 – The dilemma of God’s moral rule

V.2-8 – Tyrants prosper against the helpless

- V.2 – Removed landmarks, seized flocks
- V.3 – Fatherless and widow oppressed
- V.4-8 – The plight of the poor

V.9-12 – Evil profiteers against the poor

V.13-17 – Rebels against the light (the wicked who count on darkness to cover their sins, viz. murderers, thieves, and adulterers – cp. John 3:19)

V.18-20 – Job states Eliphaz’s theory

- V.18 – The lives of the wicked should be brief, their portion cursed
- V.19 – Their graves should go unmarked

V.20a – Forgotten by family, eaten by worms

V.20b – Their name is erased and evil stopped

V.21 – Their threat to society and the innocent

V.22-24 – Eliphaz’s theory destroyed by reality

V.22 – God makes no distinction between the wicked and the righteous

V.23 – The ways of the wicked are seen by God

V.24 – God will act in His own time and in His own way

V.25 – Job’s perceives his victory over Eliphaz (his arguments being overthrown)

Zechariah 1

Zechariah lived at a most significant epoch of Jewish history. The seventy years captivity in Babylon, prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:12; 29:10; Dan. 9:2) had come to an end. Babylon had fallen before the Medo-Persian onslaught, and after reigning jointly with Darius for two years (Dan. 5:31), Cyrus had assumed sole authority over the Empire. He immediately introduced a policy of religious tolerance. One of his first acts was to issue a decree inviting the Jewish exiles to return to their homeland, and rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2). This fulfilled the two hundred years’ old prophecy of Isaiah who had actually named Cyrus as the one who would open the way for the Jews to return (Isa. 44:28). Two men, Zerubbabel and Joshua, undertook to organise the return. Zerubbabel (known also as Sheshbazzar – cp. Ezra 5:16 with Zech. 4:9) was a descendant of David (1 Chron. 3:9-19), and the acknowledged

leader of the people; Joshua was high priest. Together they represented the civil and religious authority of Israel and were declared “men of sign” (Zech. 3:8).

V.1 – “In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of Yahweh unto Zechariah” – This was BC 520. The lengthy reign of Darius the Persian was from BC 521 to 486. Both Haggai and Zechariah had returned from captivity in Babylon, and were prophesying during his 2nd year (Ezra 4:24-5:1; Haggai 1 and 2) encouraging Zerubbabel to finish the work of reconstructing the temple, which had been started in BC 536 but lapsed through apathy, and completely stopped on the decree of the imposter Gomates during his 7 month usurpation of the throne in BC 522 (Ezra 4:17-24).

The name “Zechariah” means “Yah has remembered” and his father “Berechiah” means “Blessing of Yah.” His grandfather “Iddo” has a name that means “timely” and it was now time to bring an end to the temple’s 70 years of desolation (BC 586 to 516), as promised by God in Jer. 25:11. Yahweh had indeed ‘remembered’ and granted a ‘blessing.’

V.2-3 – “Yahweh hath been sore displeased with your fathers” – Past disobedience had resulted in well-deserved captivity in Babylon (Isa. 5:13; Jer. 15:2).

“Turn ye unto me, saith Yahweh Tzvaoth” (“He who will become armies”) – The use of the militant title of Deity indicates that in return for their newly shown obedience (Hag. 1:15), God was promising His full support in the trials ahead during the four years it would take to complete the temple. As it turned out, they needed the army of heaven. But first, there is a warning not to repeat the disobedience of their fathers.

V.4-6 – “Be ye not as **your fathers**, unto whom the **former prophets** have cried” – Their fathers had not listened (2 Kings 17:13-14), and oppressed God’s prophets (2 Chron 36:15-17), thus judgement overtook them – “Your **fathers**, where are they? and the **prophets**, do they live for ever?” Both “fathers” and “prophets” were dead, but the prophet’s words (such as Jer. 29:10) had come to pass, as evidenced by their having returned to their land in BC 536 – “my words and my statutes...did they not **take hold** (*nâśag* – to reach, overtake) of your fathers?” The punishment had happened (Lam. 2:8,17). Zechariah used this lesson from history to strengthen his appeal for obedience to God’s words now.

V.7-17 – **1st Night Vision – The man among the myrtle trees** – Between Zech. 1:7 and 6:8 the prophet records **seven visions** that he received during the course of one night. They are commonly called “the night visions.” They began on the 24th day of Sebat (11th month relating to end of January and February) of BC 520.

V.8 – Rotherham – “I looked by **night**, And lo! **a man** riding upon a **red horse**, and he was standing among the **myrtle trees**, in the **shade**; and, after him, were horses, red (bloodshed), bay (famine), and white” (pestilence) – The “man” is described as the messenger (“angel”) of Yahweh in V.11, thus pointing to Christ (Heb. 3:1). He will fulfil this prophecy at the head of an army represented by the four horsemen. The horse is a vehicle of warfare (Rev. 19:11), and **red** is a symbol for war and bloodshed (Job 39:19-25; Prov. 21:31). Ultimately, peace will come to the world as a result of warfare waged by Christ and the saints (Rev 19:11-16).

The ‘**myrtle tree**’ is a symbol for a restored and repentant Israel (Isa. 41:19; 55:13), and was used in the Feast of Tabernacles (Neh. 8:15), a feast to be reinstated in the Kingdom Age (Zech. 14:16) for the Gentiles to keep. The “shade” (“bottom” in KJV is *metsullah* = shade) and represents peace in the Kingdom Age.

V.11 – The “man” of V.8 is here styled an “angel” because he is representative of Christ clothed upon with Divine nature. He is described as standing “among the myrtle trees” to distinguish him from the presiding angel (Michael – Zech. 3:1.5; Jude 9) who explained the vision to Zechariah. This is curious because Christ is called “Michael” in Dan. 12:1. He has taken over Michael’s presiding role managing the angelic host.

“We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, **all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest**” – This is the outcome of the intervention of Christ and his saints after the judgements of Armageddon and beyond have accomplished their purpose. God, now and in the past has used the angels as his “eyes” (Ezra 5:5; Dan. 4:17; Gen. 18:21; 2 Chron. 16:9; Zech. 4:10). In the future He will use the glorified saints in that role and their first work is one of conquest (Mal. 4:1-3; John 18:36; Rom. 16:20).

V.12-17 – The future of Jerusalem is confirmed “with good words and comfortable words.” Its future is assured, for “I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy” and “with a great displeasure, am I displeased with the careless nations” (Rotherham) who overstepped their commission to punish His people. The promise now was – “I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it” (He means in the future by Christ), and “My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and Yahweh shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.” O, for that Day!

2nd Night Vision – Four horns and four craftsmen – Israel triumphant over her enemies

Zechariah’s attention is drawn to **four horns**, and he is told that these represent Israel’s enemies. He is then shown **four “carpenters”** (*chârâsh* – craftsman, artificer) and is told that these would overthrow the oppressors of Israel.

V.18-19 – “behold four horns” – The horn is a symbol for power. These are the four world empires of Dan 2 and 7 that had, and would continue to crush Israel (V.21; e.g. Rome – Dan. 8:24).

V.20-21 – Rotherham – “Then Yahweh shewed me Four Craftsmen” and said, “these are come to **fray** (*chârad* – cause to shudder with terror – Micah 7:16-20) them, **to cast out the horns of the Gentiles.**” The chief “craftsman” is Christ accompanied by the glorified saints, all sharing the work of judgement upon the nations (Dan. 2:35,44-45; Ps. 149:5-9; Rev. 2:26; 4:6). This is how “all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.”

2 and 3 John

These two epistles are follow up letters to John’s first epistle. The first is to a faithful sister and her family whom John loved “in the truth.” The repeated use of the word “**truth**” (*aletheia* – 5 times in this letter and 6 times in the third letter) confirms the purpose of the first epistle was to uphold the truth in both doctrine and practice. That is why he writes that he “rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth (doctrine) that is in thee, even as thou walkest (practice) in the truth.” There is a nexus between doctrine and practice – 1 Tim. 1:9-10. Invariably, wrong doctrine at some point produces unsound behaviour.

V.4-11 – The commandment “which we had from the beginning, that we love one another” did not mean compromise with the teachers of error, for “if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine (that Christ came in the flesh), receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed (i.e. provide material support): For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (by supporting the spread of error).

The **Third Epistle** similarly commends the “well-beloved Gaius” for his faithful upholding of the truth in both doctrine and practice, but the same could not be said of “Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them (the ecclesia to whom John had written), receiveth us not.” John foresaw the need to visit the ecclesia to which Gaius belonged and to deal with the troublemaker Diotrephes whose name was a misnomer meaning “nourished by love,” for he was guilty of “prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the ecclesia.” Gaius at least had the support of other faithful folk, including Demetrius (V.12). This scenario is not unknown in modern times.

Careful consideration of the three epistles of John demonstrate that as the last living apostle reached towards the end of his life and ministry, the truth was under attack from within and without – from those who had left the Brotherhood but continued to harass it with their false doctrines, and from within by those who were sympathetic with them. (See **Appendix 4** for quotations from Eureka on the Gnostics)

December 20

Job 25 – Bildad’s third speech

The sheer pressure of Job’s logic, when applied to the incontrovertible facts of experience, left nothing to be said in favour of the theory of retribution. But it should be remembered Job himself had been a subscriber to the theory, and that it was on the basis of his acceptance of it, that he had charged God with injustice. Therefore, though victorious, his victory was a hollow one that pulled down the old concept but put nothing in its place, and if his friends were defeated, he was bewildered!

Bildad could do nothing to defeat Job’s reasoning on the facts of experience, but he still felt it was wrong. The problem was, of course, where? All of the facts Job had set forth seemed to be against Bildad, but was this so, really? Was it not rather just another of those anomalies that was more apparent than real? What lay at the base of Job’s reasoning? Was it not his claim to innocence? If it could be shown that he was not innocent, and could not be innocent, because it was not in the power of man so to be, he might then capitulate. It was this speech that conceded the whole position to Job, for, when pressed to its logical end, it could only mean that though man might think he was innocent, he was not innocent and could not be. And if Job was being punished for sins of which he had no knowledge, he would be fully entitled to say God’s treatment of him was to him unintelligible.

V.1-3 – God is unapproachable

- Rules over all authority.
- Radiates all light.
- Maintains all peace.
- Perfects all holiness.
- Commands all forces.
- Possesses all purity

V.4 – Man is unredeemable (God omnipotent – man impotent)

V.5 – Creation is imperfect (If the moon and stars are considered insignificant, how much less man)

V.6 – Man is insignificant and is a worm – *rimmah* – creeping worm that feeds on putrefied matter, a maggot. Son of man a worm – *toleah* – fem. coccus worm used for scarlet dye.

Job 26 – Job’s response to Bildad’s third speech

Whatever the Holy Spirit would set before later generations in answer to Bildad’s final speech, it had to be admitted that everything he then said had been said before – and had either already been endorsed or replied to by Job. Job pointed this out (V.1-4), and then proceeded

(V.5-13) to a description of God's power that showed another view of the material universe than that presented by Bildad and his companions. Bildad had contrasted the glory of God's creation with the greater glory of God himself so as to prove man's ineffectuality and the inevitability of his sin (and thus, by deduction if not by evidence, to convict Job of sin).

V.1-3 – Job taunts Bildad with failure

- How did you ever develop a reputation for giving-sound advice?
- Who do you think you are talking to?
- What prompts you to speak with the tone you do?

V.5-14 – Job's instruction on God's stupendous power

- The far-reaching and incomprehensible works of God demonstrate the immeasurable greatness of God. V.14 – Rotherham– “Lo! these are the fringes of his way, and what a whisper of a word hath been heard of him! But the thunder of his might who could understand?”

Job 27 – Job's conclusion

To begin with, Job had himself been a believer in the doctrine of retribution, which had given him security and serenity in happier, more prosperous days, but he now rejected the theory as not in accordance with the facts or experience, and because he still clung tenaciously to his integrity, he had of necessity to believe that there was something 'unequal' about God, who in one sense was arbitrary and remorseless and determined to bring him to the grave.

On the facts as they stood, Job's friends had been worsted and the old theory of retribution had been demolished. Something had been broken down, but nothing concrete had been put in its place. In proportion as Job had gained control of his passion, his three friends lost theirs until, at the end, they retired in confusion (Zophar making no further contribution). No agreement had been reached. What could be done to carry the matter further? It was obvious it could not be left where it was. It seemed to Job that what had to be done was to gather in, summarise and present the issues of the debate and then, perhaps, make a final personal appeal to God, and wait quietly for the revelation of His wisdom and mercy.

V.1-6 – **Job's instruction on the fear of God**

- Job, with a solemn oath, proclaims his confidence in his innocence, integrity, and righteousness.

V.7-12 – Job's instruction on God's justice

- V.7-10 – Job would that they receive a taste of their own justice
- V.11 – Job warns them of the implications of his previous warning (19:29) if their roles were reversed

V.12 – Accuses his friends of behaving toward him with 'complete nonsense'

V.13-22 – Job taunts his friends with their view of him

- V.14-15 – Devastation for his family
- V.16-17 – Dust for his riches
- V.18 – Destruction for his house
- V.19-20 – Dread and death
- V.21 – Dissolution for his name
- V.22 – Deserved destruction by God

“Job gives back to his friends the doctrine they have fully imparted to him. They have held the lot of the evil-doer before him as a mirror, that he may behold himself and be astounded; he holds it before them, that they may perceive how not only his bearing under suffering, but also the form of the affliction, is of a totally different kind.” F. Delitzsch

V.23 – Job's conclusion was that, based on the views of his 'friends,' all men would signify their approval of his fate by derision and mockery. To whom could he now look but God?

Zechariah 2 – 3rd Night Vision – Jerusalem’s down-treading limited

In his first vision, Zechariah saw that Yahweh from the shadows, overlooked the destiny of Israel, and through His Divine army he would move for its redemption. In his second vision he was shown the means whereby the Gentiles would be terrified and overthrown. Now he is shown that Jerusalem’s persecution is limited, and its exaltation to the dignity of Yahweh’s throne is sure (Jer. 3:17). The prophet saw a man with a measuring line, and learned the purpose of his labours: Jerusalem shall be inhabited, Israel shall be restored and the glory will return. Again, the vision of the night had relation to the labours of the day, for “a man with a measuring line” must have been a familiar figure to the workers in the Temple. Here, then was a message of encouragement for them as well as for us.

V.1 – “I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a **man** with a **measuring line** in his hand” – Refers to an angel in charge of administering affliction upon Israel. Angels manipulate world events to produce either pain or joy upon God’s chosen people, as required by God. The “line in his hand” is a *chebel* = a twisted rope, a measuring line, or a noose, ruin. It comes from *chabel* – to wind tightly, i.e. to bind. The implication is of an unpleasant experience as in 2 Sam. 8:2; and Amos 7:8,17 where it used in the sense of measuring for punishment.

V.2 – “To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof” – This indicates that a time limit is placed upon Jerusalem’s afflictions, and though the time is not specified, there is a “set time” to favour Zion (Ps. 102:13).

V.3 – “the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him” – The first angel is the one supervising the visions seen by Zechariah, and informs him what is happening in the visions that he sees Zech. 1:9,13,14,19. The other angel is directed by the supervising angel to hasten to “the man” of V.1 to cease the “measuring” of Jerusalem’s affliction. The time for blessing had come.

V.4-5 – “**Jerusalem** shall be inhabited as towns without walls” – Jerusalem is here used representatively of Israel as a whole as it is in other places; e.g. Ezek. 23:4; Zech. 8:8. Thus the context speaks of Jerusalem as “towns (plural) without walls” (*perazah* = open country – see Ezek. 38:11). Israel, not Jerusalem was to be a plurality of towns in open country.

“For I, saith Yahweh, will be unto her a **wall of fire** round about, and will be the **glory** in the midst of her” – Such a wall protected Israel when the nation left Egypt (Ex. 14:19-20). It served as a visible token of the Divine presence. It is promised here again (see Isa. 26:1; 4:5). The Shekinah glory had departed from Solomon’s temple (Ezek. 8:4; 9:3; 10:18-19; 11:23), and there is no mention of it in the Second Temple. It will not return until the Temple of Ezekiel’s prophecy is built, and God’s glory will be manifested in the glorified multitude of Christ and the saints (Ezek. 43:1-5).

V.6-7 – “Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the **north**” (*tsâphôn* – properly hidden, that is, dark; used only of the north as a quarter – gloomy and unknown). This is a call for Israel in the future to depart from “Babylon” (Rev. 18:4). They were scattered to “the four winds of the heaven” (referred to by Christ in Matt. 24:31), but will be gathered by Elijah and the saints with him in the Second Exodus. However, there is a call for those still then in Babylon to escape and return to the Land – “Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon” for only 50,000 had returned under Zerubbabel and Joshua.

V.8-9 – “**After the glory** hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple (“pupil” – Rotherham) of his eye” – After Christ is glorified in the presence of his saints, the work of humbling and subduing the nations who have

oppressed Israel will begin. They will learn that no one can touch the people of God with impunity for they are the “pupil of his eye” (LITV).

V.10-13 – “I will dwell in the midst of thee” – Through Christ, God’s glory will again dwell in Israel (Jer. 33:7-17). Christ is the “me” of the context. The nations will then be embraced in the Abrahamic Covenant (“shall be my people” – cp. Gen. 17:7-8).

“Yahweh shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land” – Brother Sulley’s exposition of Ezek. 48:7-9 shows that “the Holy Oblation” called Yahweh’s “portion” encompasses the north ½ of Judah’s ancient territory. The Kingdom will have been fully established and the time will have come for the long-looked for Day – “Be silent, O all flesh, before Yahweh: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.”

Zechariah 3 – 4th Night Vision – The process of salvation

The vision follows the preceding one in natural sequence. Chapter 2 showed Yahweh dwelling in Jerusalem, filling it with Divine glory. Chapter 3 reveals the qualifications and nature of the Priest who will “bear the glory” (Zech. 6:13) and bring salvation.

V.1-2 – “he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Yahweh, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him” – This is the scene of Ezra 4:1-6 and is the basis of Jude 9 (see comments on Jude below). Even the phrase “is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” is picked up in Jude 23. “Satan” (*śāṭān* – an opponent) is a reference to the Samaritans who sought to undermine the building of the temple (Ezra 4:1,7-9).

V.3-5 – “Now Joshua was clothed with filthy (*tsô’* – soiled) garments” – Working in the grimy environment of the temple, Joshua’s garment was soiled like that of his brethren. In the type, this represents the possession by Christ (Zech. 3:8) of human nature from which he needed redemption by a change of nature as we do. Hence, what happened here some five centuries before the crucifixion of Christ became a ‘practice run’ for Michael and his attending angels for the resurrection of Christ described in John 20:3-8. Michael, the presiding angel, instructed the ministering angels to take away the soiled garment and give Joshua a change of raiment. That this had a higher meaning than a mere change of clothing is evident by the following words – “Behold, I have caused thine **iniquity** (*‘āvôn* – perversity) to pass from thee.” Jesus Christ committed no sin, but he did possess a perverse nature in common with his brethren (Jer. 17:9), which is why he said – “Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God” (Mark 10:18). The language used is metonymical; i.e. the thing contained is spoken of as the container and vice versa (see use in 2 Kings 4:40; Rom. 6:6).

“He (i.e. Michael) also said” (Young’s Literal), “Let them set a fair mitre upon his head.” The first thing that the angels did was to give Joshua a fair mitre (*tsānīyph* – a head dress, i.e. a piece of cloth wrapped around). In the type this was to signify the source of Christ’s victory over sin and death. So, in John 20:3-7 when Peter and John arrived at the empty tomb they found the grave clothes dumped in the middle of the sepulchre (that is why John only saw them when he looked in without entering), but when Peter entered he saw something else – “the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but **wrapped together** (*entulissō* – to roll up, wrap together) in a place **by itself**.” Meticulous care was taken by the angels to roll up the napkin that had been around his head and separate it from the grave clothes that had been wound around his body, because it spoke of the source of his triumph – his mind. It is obvious that having been unwrapped, Christ needed a new garment (literally), but the very presentation of that new garment required a change of nature at the same time. (For an explanation of John 20:17, see comments on John 20 on 24 October).

V.6-10 – Rotherham – “So then the messenger of Yahweh did solemnly affirm unto Joshua” – To receive a reward requires obedience. Michael set forth the basis upon which the greater ‘Joshua’ would rule in God’s House (the ecclesia). Perfect obedience saw his exaltation (Phil. 2:8-11). He would have “right of access among” angels (RSV) as their ruler and manager. Hence, Joshua was a forerunner to Christ as he and Zerubbabel were “men to serve as sign” (Rotherham V.8), even for “my servant the BRANCH” (*tsemach* – branch or sprout. Not as in Isa. 11:1, but as in Isa. 4:2; Jer. 23; 33:15). Thus, he is the beautiful branch, the righteous sprout of Yahweh. He is also called “the stone (*eben* – family building stone) that I have laid before Joshua; upon **one stone** shall be seven eyes,” namely, the saints who will become, like the angels today, the “eyes” of Yahweh (Zech. 4:10; 2 Chron. 16:9). Christ is the foundation corner stone of God’s house (1 Pet. 2:4-8; Matt. 21:42; Eph. 2:20; Isa. 28:16; Gen. 49:24). In Zech. 4:9, Zerubbabel is also identified with this stone setting forth the two aspects of Christ as a Melchizedek King-Priest. It was Yahweh’s work – “I will engrave the graving thereof” which He did in raising Christ from the dead and glorifying him (see Eureka Vol. 5 pg. 343-4 – Logos Edition). It was by his great sacrifice that Yahweh could “remove the iniquity of that land in one day” as He will do ultimately for all the world when Mic. 4:1-4 comes to pass – “they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree.”

Jude

Jude’s epistle is late among N.T. epistles (he quotes 2 Peter 3:2-3 in V.17-18), as it was written between the death of Peter AD 65 and AD 70 (“the last time” – V.18). It was written to demonstrate the fulfilment of Acts 20:29-30 and 2 Peter 2. A full set of verse by verse notes can be found in **Appendix 5**.

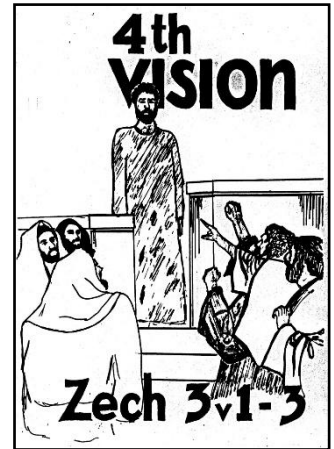
V.3 – Wishing to write on fundamentals, Jude was compelled to write about growing apostasy in the Brotherhood – “it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should **earnestly contend** for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” – The phrase “earnestly contend” is one word in the Greek – *epagonizesthai* – to struggle for; to contend about, or for, a thing as a combatant. It comes from two words – *epi* – over, upon; and *agonizoma* – to struggle; to compete for a prize – a literal translation would be “super-agony”. The word occurs only once and is said to be the strongest word in the N.T. Its use in the Present Tense and Middle Voice indicates the need for continual personal effort.

V.4 – “For there are certain men **crept in unawares**” – *pareisduno* – to settle in alongside; to lodge stealthily; to slip in; insinuate oneself – Cp. Gal. 2:4; 2 Pet. 2:1. They were not Gnostics (these developed later and appealed to Gentile converts), but Jewish brethren who having been delivered from the strictures of law had swung to the other extreme of Libertarianism. Their dictum was “Let us continue in sin that grace may abound” – Rom. 3:8; 6:1. Their mantra was “extreme Grace”. There were **three major issues** that Jude addressed in the following words – “ungodly men, (1) changing the favour of our God into licentiousness, (2) denying the only **sovereign** (*despotes* – sovereign – from *deus* – to bind; and *pous* – the foot. Hence, denied in walk), (3) and our Lord (*kurios* – supreme in authority; i.e. controller. Jesus ‘anointed’ to manifest God) Jesus Christ” (Diaglott) – There are three issues here: (1) God’s grace turned to license; (2) The Atonement not lived; (3) The call to God manifestation ignored.

Jude puts these false brethren on trial before the bar of Divine justice for examination. The **Judge** is Christ representing Yahweh; the **Crown Prosecutor** is Jude and his assistants – Peter and James; the **witnesses** were Israel (the Wilderness generation); Korah, Dathan & Abiram; Sodom & Gomorrah; Michael; Cain; Balaam; Korah; Lamech; and Enoch. Trial

exhibits were hidden rocks; clouds; fat shepherds; dead trees; withered fruit; foaming waves; and meteors. The **victims** were the doubtful; endangered; and defiled (spotted). The **Jury** are Jude's readers, then and now.

V.9 – “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the **devil** he disputed about **the body of Moses**, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee” – The “devil” here is a reference to the Samaritans in Ezra 4:1-6 who opposed the building of the temple in the days of Zerubbabel and Joshua, who with their brethren constitute “the body of Moses” – Israel was called the “ecclesia in the wilderness” Acts 7:38 as they were “baptized unto Moses” – 1 Cor. 10:1-2 (cp. 1 Cor. 12:27). The scene is drawn from Zech. 3 where Michael the archangel ‘contends earnestly’ against the Samaritans on behalf of Israel, and says “Yahweh rebuke thee, O Satan.” However, only his fellow angels heard that rebuke. Joshua and his companions, and the Samaritans did not hear it. This makes an extremely important point.



In times when God chooses not to directly intervene in disputes between defenders of truth and their enemies, the responsibility falls to the defenders to “contend earnestly for the faith.” That is the way Yahweh’s rebuke is heard. That is what Joshua and Zerubbabel did – Ezra 4:3.

V.12-16 – After setting forth six graphic metaphors in V.12-13, Jude advances Enoch as one great example of contending earnestly against those who turn God’s grace into license. He is called “the seventh from Adam” for a reason, because his contemporary Lamech (Gen. 4:19-24) sought to kill him for his testimony (Heb. 11:5) consistent with his boast to his wives – “For a man, **have I slain** in dealing my wounds, Yea, a youth, in smiting my blows: If, sevenfold, be, the avenging of Cain, Then, of Lamech, seventy and seven” (Gen. 4:23-24). A blatant murderer and man of the flesh, he considered himself far more worthy than Cain of Divine grace. He actually claimed to be “the seed of the woman” of Gen. 3:15. There could be no greater “swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration” than that.

(For more detail and exposition of the remaining verses – see **Appendix 5**)

December 21

Job 28 – Job’s monologues – chapters 28-31

The remainder of the dialogue to the end of Chapter 31 consists of two monologues by Job. In the first of these (Chaps. 27 and 28), the essence of the debate is presented by setting in opposition his own claim of innocence (Chap. 27:1-6) against their claim of his guilt (V.7-23) and stating the conclusion to which Job had been forced, that man, despite his cleverness, was unable to discover the principles of Divine Wisdom (Chap. 28).

In the second monologue (Chaps. 29 to 31), Job reviewed his own case, contrasted his former happiness with his present sorrow, repudiated all crimes which might be held to account for his sufferings and cried to God to meet Him.

V.1-11 – Man’s discovery of the hidden treasures of the earth (man’s ingenuity, persistence, curiosity, and inventiveness in mining earth’s riches).

“I will teach you concerning the hand of God,” said Job (Chap. 27:11), and continued here “For (as in RV mgn.) there is a mine of silver, and a place for gold which they refine.” There was a mine from which man extracted silver, and a refinery where gold, similarly

extracted, was purified by him (V.1). Man took iron out of the earth and he smelted brass (copper) from stone (V.2). He went deep into the mine and brought light to the darkness there, so setting “an end to darkness;” and he probed the darkest recesses of earth’s interior, reaching unto “the furthest bound” (RV – cp. Chap. 24:10; 11:7), even to the impenetrable wall of stone and “the shadow of death” (cp. Chap. 24:17) where he could go no further (V.3). He opened a mining shaft and men descended it far from the dwellings of their fellows, so that those who walked earth’s surface were unaware of what was transpiring below them. They penetrated the dark depths of the earth (V.4). Whilst on earth’s surface there continued the peaceful aim of food production, the miner underground feverishly burrowed, upturning everything (so as to cause the resemblance of a destructive fire) in his quest for earth’s hidden treasure (V.5), and carrying off rich treasures in the form of sapphires and lumps of gold (V.6).

No “falcon” (RV), the bird of prey with keenest sight, could discern the path along which the miner burrowed into the bowels of the earth (V.7), nor could the proudest and fiercest of earth’s creatures venture there (V.8). But man put forth his hand and in his mining operations literally grappled with “the flinty rock” and “overturned the mountains by the roots” (RV for V.9). In his pursuit of the vein of precious mineral (“every precious thing”) he cut passages (as in RV mgn.) among the rocks (V.10), and bound “the streams that they trickled not” (RV – V.11) – still a mining hazard.

V.12-19 – Wisdom is beyond the discovery of man (it is neither to be found nor purchased)

Man’s energy and enterprise in exploiting the precious things of earth was truly profound, and the prizes he gathered in the process were unquestioned. But what of wisdom? Where could he discover the principles underlying God’s rule in the world (V.12). Wisdom was not an article of merchandise on which men could put a price, nor could one discover it as one discovered, worked for and won silver and gold (V.13). Neither in the depths nor in the sea could it be discovered (V.14). Valuable though gold might be it could not purchase wisdom, neither would weight of silver (V.15). If it were put into the balance and weighed against “the gold of Ophir” (1 Kings 9:28; Isa. 13:12; Ps. 45:9), “the precious onyx, or the sapphire” – none could reach its value (V.16). Neither gold nor glass (most precious to the ancients) could equal it, nor would one barter it for “jewels (RV mgn. “vessels”) of fine gold” (V.17). Nothing one could name, whether coral, crystal, rubies (V.18), topaz of Ethiopia, pure gold (V.19) was of value in the search for wisdom. Wisdom’s value was far above them all.

V.20-28 – Wisdom belongs to God alone – If, then, wisdom could not be acquired by man with any of the things at his disposal and which he had laboured so assiduously to acquire, whence did it come (V.20)? Neither man nor bird could discover it, for it was hidden (V.21). And though one pursued it to “destruction and death,” one was hardly closer to it at death than in life (V.22). Wisdom just could not be found, neither in the bowels of the earth, nor in the world of commerce, neither in the deep nor in the sea, neither amongst the living nor with the dead. And the reason why man could not find wisdom was that God alone understood its way and knew its place (V.23). God alone held wisdom, He alone had complete vision and was able to “look to the ends of the earth” and see “under the whole heaven” (V.24), making “a weight for the winds” and meting “out the waters by measure.” These, as all powers of His Creation, were weighed, measured, balanced, sent forth by God (V.25). God regulated the rain by His decree, and such was His control that He even planned the path of “the lightning of the thunder” (V.26; cp. Chap. 38:25). At the outset, when God created the world and regulated the principles of its operation and stated His laws, wisdom (the principles of God’s rule) was established and detailed (V.27; cp. Isa. 40:20; Prov. 7:22). And unto man (from whom wisdom was hid) it was said that his “wisdom” must necessarily be to “fear” or reverence God

(cp. Prov. 1:7; 3:7; 16:6) and “depart from evil” (V.28) – “Behold the fear of Yahweh, that is wisdom.” Job had done this from the outset (Chap. 1:1).

Zechariah 4 – 6th Night Vision – The Lampstand, olive trees and a great mountain

V.1 – “And the angel that talked with me came again, and **waked** me” – Zechariah will be resurrected along with all the responsible, and if found faithful will have a role in fulfilling the events of this sign.



V.2-3 – Rotherham – “I have looked, and lo! a **Lampstand**—all of gold, with the **bowl** thereof upon the top thereof, and its seven lamps upon it, seven pipes each, to the lamps which are upon the top thereof; and, two olive-trees, by it” – The lampstand represents the ecclesia (the body of Christ) – Rev. 1:20. Here seen in glory in the Kingdom Age with a bowl (Christ – the Word made flesh – John 1:14).

It is suggested that the Hebrew for the phrase “seven lamps” being *sheba sheba*; i.e. “seven sevens,” that there are forty-nine pipes (thus seven pipes establish the connection between each lamp and the reservoir of oil in the “bowl”). Be that as it may, the imagery represents the glorious manifestation of Christ and his saints in the Kingdom Age. The two olive trees that feed oil into the bowl (V.12) represent the Jewish and Gentile element in God’s plan of redemption. Described as “anointed ones” in V.12, they are the Redeemed who will be used to preach the “everlasting gospel” to that Age – Rev. 14:6.

V.4-10 – Mystified, the prophet is informed that the “mountain” of opposition experienced in his time, and in the future by Christ and the saints will be removed by Divine power – “Not by might (human strength), nor by (human) power, but by my spirit, saith Yahweh Tzvaoth” and will result in the “great mountain” being levelled. That power will have been wielded by Christ when he reveals his bride to the world after the ‘false bride’ (Catholicism) has been destroyed (Zech. 14:6-7; Rev. 19:1-5). This is the subject here when the antitypical “Zerubbabel” (Christ) shall “bring forth the **headstone**, with thundering shouts Beautiful! Beautiful! Thereunto” (Rotherham). There are two words in the Hebrew for “headstone” – *ro’shah* (Feminine of *rosh* = head) *eben* (family building stone); hence, this is a reference to **the Bride of Christ** who owes her glory to her “head” (Christ). When she is finally revealed it will be equivalent to placing the “headstone” (always the last stone fitted) into the structure. Little wonder there will be thunderous shoutings of joy and the declaration – “Beautiful, beautiful” (*chen*) for nothing will compare in that day. Christ (“Zerubbabel”) will ‘lift’ that stone (V.9 – “his hands shall also finish it”), and we (the “eyes” in the stone – 3:9) will see “the plummet in the hand” of Christ, the builder of God’s spiritual house and of His “house of prayer for all nations.” We must ensure we do not “despise the day of small things” in which we now find ourselves. The answers will come as they did for Zechariah.

Zechariah 5 – 6th Night Vision – The apostate house set up in Shinar

This is the sixth vision, and six is the number of man (= “the man of sin” – Rev. 13:17-18). And Zechariah was shown how flesh would again corrupt God’s way, and pervert that which was even then being set up. Apostasy would insinuate itself into Judah over centuries, and Jerusalem would be overthrown because of it in AD 70. Wickedness would be driven from Israel to set up its house in the land of Shinar. There is a close connection between this vision

and the one preceding it, for out of the land of Shinar was to develop the “fourth beast” whose latter-day manifestation will constitute the “great mountain” that the anti-typical Zerubbabel will level as a plain (Dan. 7:7-11).

V.1-4 – “**Then I turned**, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a **flying roll**” – Zechariah had been looking into the future, but now he “turned” (*shub* – to turn back); i.e. looked back into history before the Kingdom. The “flying scroll” (LITV) represents the system of the Law of

Moses corrupted by Judaism rapidly infecting the whole world. It should have been holy for its size is the same as the “Holy Place” of the Tabernacle, but had been subject to denigration by ‘thieves’ who wrote down the Law (Jer. 5:25-28; 23:25-32; Luke 16:1-7). Judaism finally corrupted the 1st century Brotherhood as Bro Thomas explains – “This vision traces the spiritual decline of Israel until a commercialized Judaism arose to supplant the true spirit and purpose of the Law by a deadening formalism, and to superimpose itself upon the truth in Christ causing the great apostasy to arise in spiritual Babylon.” – Eureka Vol. 1 pg. 65-74. He added – “The abominations of Judaism have been abundantly reproduced in the Roman Catholic religion. The abuses of Rabbinism and Romanism are singularly alike.”

“This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth” – The great apostasy that arose out of the Brotherhood morphed into the Roman Catholic Church. Zech. 5 provides the roots of Paul’s condemnation of that system in 2 Thess. 2 (see slide >).

V.5-8 – “This is an **ephah** that goeth forth” – Originally used as a measure for grain, it was also used for produce. It is used here to denote a measure in general and represents a commercialized religion. Judaism in all ages fits that description.

”a talent of lead” – A circle (*kikar*) of a base metal was lifted up to reveal a woman named “wickedness” who was locked in by the cover being replaced – “So he thrust her back inside the ephah,—and then thrust the leaden weight into the mouth thereof” (Rotherham). This woman represents the apostate system that was developed in Judea and was transferred to Rome in the 2nd and 3rd centuries and

Zechariah’s 6th Night Vision

- ❖ **Zech. 5** sees 2 women – **Samaria** and **Jerusalem** fly like storks to **Shinar** (Semiramis) with an **ephah** (Judaism’s commercialised religion).
- ❖ This is a prophecy of the rise of the **Roman Catholic apostasy out of the ecclesia** in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.



Zechariah 5 root of 2 Thess. 2

The **Septuagint** translation of **Zech. 5** uses the same word and ideas for the wicked woman that Paul uses to describe the man of sin.

| | |
|---|---|
| “This is their <i>iniquity</i> in all the land.” – Zech. 5:6 (RV margin) | “with all deceivableness of <i>unrighteousness</i> ” – 2 Thess. 2:10 |
| “A woman that <i>sitteth</i> in the midst of the ephah.” | “ <i>sitteth</i> in the temple of God” – 2 Thess. 2:4 |
| “He cast her down into the ephah: and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof” – Zech.5:8 (RV) | “that which <i>restraineth</i> ” – V.6 (RV) “there is one that <i>restraineth</i> now” – V.7 (RV) |
| “This is <i>wickedness</i> ” – V.8 (RV) <i>Yahweh will destroy Nimrod</i> | “the mystery of <i>iniquity</i> doth already work” – V.7 “then shall that <i>Wicked</i> be revealed” – V.8 |



Zechariah 5

impacted every strata of society – “they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven” (i.e. rulers and ruled).

V.9-11 – The “two women” with wings like a stork (a migratory bird) are Israel (Samaria) and Judah (Jerusalem) which in the days of Ahab and Manasseh hosted the religion of Babylon (cp. Ezek. 23). A house was built in “the land of Shinar” (refers to the original “mother of harlots” Semiramis, wife of Nimrod (see slide at right).

Semiramis – Queen of Babylon

- ❖ “Any effort to trace the origins of the myth, legend, and lore of goddess-worship will eventually lead one back to a single historical figure – **Semiramis, wife of Nimrod and queen of Babylon.**” – **Bryce Self** (contemporary writer)
- ❖ “The name Semiramis is a later, Hellenized form of the Sumerian name “Sammur-amat”, or “gift of the sea.” The initial element “sammur” when translated into Hebrew becomes “Shinar” (the biblical name for lower Mesopotamia), and is the word from which we derive “Sumeria” – **Bryce Self**

Revelation 1 and 2

Brief comments only will be made on the Apocalypse. For those seeking verse by verse consideration, a full set of notes can be accessed and downloaded from web site <https://jimcowie.info> under the Bible Marking Notes tab. Here is a direct link – <https://jimcowie.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Apocalypse-Bible-Marking-Notes-Complete-US-pagination.pdf>. Those notes are a distillation of ‘The Apocalypse Epitomised’ by Bro. H.P. Mansfield which is itself a distillation of Eureka.

V.3 – “Blessed is he that **readeth**, and they that **hear** the words of this prophecy, and **keep** those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (i.e. for the unfolding of its content) – A few sentences from Eureka on this most important verse will demonstrate the need to work at understanding the Apocalypse. Bro. Thomas writes:

In Apoc. 1:3, the Spirit pronounces a benediction upon individuals of a certain class in relation to the Apocalypse. They are characterized in the original by the terms *ho anaginoskon*, and *hoi akouontes*, and *terountes*; the first being rendered in the Common Version, “*he that readeth*,” the second, “*they that hear*,” and the third, “*keep*.” But these renderings do not express the full sense of the original; for a man may *read* and *hear* and *keep* in memory the words prophesied, and the things commanded, and yet be very far from understanding. The word *anaginoskon* signifies *one who gathers exact knowledge* of a matter, or thing. Hence, in my translation I have rendered it, “*he that knows accurately*.” But blessed is he that understands the Apocalypse, gives heed to, and observes narrowly the things which have been written therein.

Chapter 1 – The Multitudinous Man amid the Lampstands – “The things which thou hast seen” – V.19. Christ, through John on the Isle of Patmos, writes to the seven carefully selected ecclesias of ‘Asia’, and begins with a vision of the glorified body of Christ as the prospect before all who overcome the trials and challenges of their time.

Chapters 2 and 3 – “The things which are” – Christ gives warning messages to the seven ecclesias as to how he viewed them at the end of the first century, and what was coming upon them – These are exhortations from heaven that are as relevant today as they were then. It is almost as though Christ selected the seven ecclesias on the basis that collectively they would represent the character of ecclesias in all ages. He “who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands” could say of them, and of us “I know thy works.”

See **Appendix 6** (pg. 154) for slides on the letters to the seven ecclesias.

December 22

Job 29 – Job’s monologues – chapters 28-31

If man could not find wisdom because wisdom was peculiarly God’s and possible for Him alone, it followed simply that man should wait upon God. If absolute wisdom rested only with God, man could never attain to it, and his next best course would be to acquiesce in reverence before the One who possessed it – on the basis that “the fear of the Lord” befitted the creature as the absolute wisdom did the Creator! That being so, the way was cleared for Job to make his final, moving appeal to God, which he did in a monologue of surpassing beauty. First, he reviewed those happier days, now, it seemed, long since past (Chapter 29), then he contrasted with them his current abjectness and misery (Chapter 30) finally issuing a solemn repudiation of evil, and a final appeal for God to meet him (Chapter 31).

V.1-6 – The glory of Job’s past when God favoured him

- V.2 – God watched over him
- V.3 – God lighted his path
- V.4 – God befriended his family
- V.5 – God surrounded him with children
- V.6 – God increased his herds and multiplied the fruit of his fields

V.7-10 – The glory of Job’s past when men respected him

- V.7 – Job’s respect as a judge in “the gate of the city” where all civic and commercial transactions took place
- V.8 – The young men hid and the aged arose out of respect
- V.9-10 – Princes and nobles respected Job as a man of great eminence

V.12-17 – The glory of Job’s past when he was known for his deeds of compassion

- V.11 – Blessing affirmed his words, admiration approved his appearance
- V.12-13 – He delivered the poor, helped the fatherless, saved the perishing, and brought joy to the widow
- V.14 – He wore righteousness as his clothes and justice as his robe and turban

V.15-16 – He became eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and father to the poor
V.16-17 – Job was a champion of the oppressed, as he served as an activist for justice:

- searched out the cases of injustice
- identified the causes of oppression
- broke the evil power of the guilty
- freed the victims from them

V.18-20 – The glory of Job’s past when security surrounded him

- V.18 – In the days of his prime, he expected to live long and die in peace at home
- V.19-20 – His vigour was like a tree spreading out its roots with daily renewal of strength

V.21-25 – The glory of Job’s past when leadership pursued him

- V.21-23 – Men esteemed Job as a leader whose counsel they awaited in silence and accepted with enthusiasm
- V.24 – Job’s leadership was such as to inspire men
- V.25a – Job’s leadership was decisive and he was accepted as a “chief”
- V.25b – Job was a shepherd-king who restored and comforted the afflicted

Job 30

Having surveyed the glory of his ‘kingdom’ as it was, Job now turned to look upon its ruins. He was wretched, dispossessed, despised even by outcasts – men he would disdain for servants. He was diseased, emaciated, racked by pain, hopeless and despairing – and all the while he felt the awful contrast between what he once was, and what he now was.

V.1-8 – “But now” – From honour to the object of scorn

V.1 – The mocking crowd of the dregs of humanity make Job the object of scorn

V.2-8 – They were worn out vagabonds, indolent, exiles, scavengers, outcasts and uncivilized

V.9-15 – “But now” – From respect to the object of a taunting song

V.9-10 – They sang taunting songs about him, swear vulgar words near him, treat him as untouchable and spit in his face (Ps. 69:12; Isa. 50:6)

V.11 – Job accuses God of depriving him of his strength

V.12-13 – The rabble besiege Job, attacking him, promoting his calamity

V.14-15 – Fame and prosperity are gone

V.16-19 – “But now” – From robust health to the door of death – Job cries out from the depths of suffering that has ravished every part of his being

V.16-17 – Days of prolonged pain, nights of piercing pain, days and nights of gnawing pain (RSV), as the leprosy takes its toll

V.18 – Painful writhing caused his garment to become dishevelled and tightly wrapped about him

V.19 – Job accuses God for the affliction of his disease and casting him into the mire

V.20-23 – “But now” – From God’s favour to God’s brutality

V.20 – Job appealed for help – but God responded with indifference

V.21 – God had become cruel to him, and assailed him

V.22 – God endeavoured to destroy him by storm and tempest

V.23 – These God-appointed calamities would result in his death

V.24-31 – “But now” – From security to uncertainty

V.24 – Job’s utter ruin and outcry for help

V.25 – He, like God, had wept with the troubled and grieved for the poor

V.26-31 – Job’s uncertainty in life – the reversal of life’s fortunes and expectations

Zechariah 6 – 7th Night Vision – The victorious chariots of Yahweh

In this last of the night visions (V.1-8), the prophet saw four chariots going forth between two mountains of brass. He was told that they represented the “four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord (*Adon* or ruler) of all the earth” (V.5). This expression links this vision with that of the two olive trees and branches of Zechariah 4, for the former are likewise represented as standing by “the Lord of the whole earth” (V.14). But whereas “the sons of oil” are ‘standing still,’ the chariots are shown in a state of vigorous activity – “going forth.” This is the activity of the saints who “walk to and fro through the earth” (Zech. 1:10; 6:7).

These four chariots, wrote Bro. Thomas, “represent the resurrected saints in the execution of the judgements written (Ps. 149:9). The reason why there are four, and not three or five is because in the military organization of Israel, the twelve tribes were set off into four camps; the Camp of Judah; the Camp of Reuben; the Camp of Ephraim and the Camp of Dan (Num. 2). The standard of Judah’s camp was a Lion; that of Reuben, a Man; that of Ephraim, an Ox; and that of Dan an Eagle; and the faces of these four were united in the two Cherubim of the Most Holy Place (see Ezek. 1:10). Now, as the Saints without regard to the accident of their fleshly descent, are all Israelites by adoption through Christ their organization is based on that of the twelve tribes; so that they come thereby to be represented by the standard of Israel’s camps” (Eureka Vol. 1 pg. 76).

V.1 – “**And I turned**, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came **four chariots** out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of **brass**” – Having looked back to history in chapter 5, Zechariah now turns to look again into the future. The “chariots” (*merkâbâh* – chariot) he sees are in fact the Cherubim of Ezek. 1 and the “chariots” of Ps. 68:17 (although the word there is *rekeb*). It is a reference to the saints as the vehicles of Divine judgement (Ps. 149:6-9), who are also presented in the same role as four craftsmen in chap. 1:20-21. There are four chariots based on the camp of Israel and the standards of the tribes.

The two “mountains of brass” are commonly identified with the Gogian confederacy from the north and the Tarshish-Anglo powers of the south. “Brass” was a symbol for the empire of the Greeks. Gog will make his advance from Constantinople with **claws of brass** (Dan. 7:19) and will plunge down into Egypt (once ruled by Britain as “the king of the south” of Dan. 11:40). Any foreign occupying power of Egypt assumes the mantle of “king of the south” as Bro. Thomas made clear in Exposition of Daniel and Eureka. It is as well to keep in mind his words which were cited on November 2 – Eureka Vol. 5 pg. 185 (Logos Edition) saying Christ also becomes “king of the south” – “My present conviction therefore, is, that the gathering together of the national armies against Jerusalem (Zech. 14:2) is after the appearance of Christ in the South; that is, in Teman; where he begins his career as “THE KING OF THE SOUTH” (Dan. 11:40).” Christ will also occupy Egypt evicting Gog’s forces who had become “king of the south” by conquest (Isa. 19:4; Dan. 11:42-43) before Armageddon. The chariots do not begin their work until Christ and the saints leave Sinai to invade Egypt. Perhaps this is the reason why the mountain on the south is also of brass for it will then be occupied by the champion of the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches. Additionally, it should be noted that after Armageddon, most Tarshish aligned nations will submit to Christ, but not the Catholic/Greek/Russian Orthodox powers (Ps. 2). They will bitterly resist Christ’s rule and it will require 40 years of work by the “chariots” to destroy them.

V.2-8 – The colour of the horses – red, black, white and grisled/bay (*bârôd ‘âmôts* – ESV – “dappled horses—all of them strong”) is significant. Bloodshed (red); famine from the consequences of war (black); pestilence (white); and storm (“grisled” meaning hail-spotted) are the weapons the saints will use to destroy those opposed to Christ, and they will be very active – “When the strong horses came out, they were impatient to go and patrol the earth” (ESV). The black and the white horses deal with the “north.” Gog’s army will have been destroyed in Israel (Ezek. 39:4), now Christ’s army will invade the homelands of the northern confederacy. The “dappled ones go toward the south country.” The Hebrew suggests that the red and grisled horses go to the south where there will be less resistance (consider Isa. 43:6 – “I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back”).

V.9-15 – ESV – “**Take** (*laqach* = accept, receive) from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon...silver (redemption) and gold (tried faith – 1 Pet. 1:7), and make a **crown** (NIV, YLT, Rotherham), and set it on **the head of Joshua**” – It was apparently one crown with several layers of circular segments (see Rev. 19:12). The coronation of Joshua was typical of that of the Lord Jesus Christ as King-Priest (uniting the two offices harmoniously – “the counsel of peace shall be between the two of them” LITV). He is our High-priest and soon will be crowned “King of kings” (Rev. 19:16) in fulfilment of this type. Then Pilate’s timid “Behold the man” declaration (John 19:5) will be replaced by a world-wide acclamation of the greatness of the “Branch of righteousness” (3:8; Jer. 33:15).

“Even he shall build the temple of Yahweh” with the assistance of submissive nations – “they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of Yahweh” (V.15). In that House the “crown shall be to them that wait patiently” (Brenton) “for a memorial”

(Rotherham). The promise to them, and to us is, “it shall come to pass if ye will, indeed hearken, unto the voice of Yahweh your God” (Rotherham).

Zechariah 7

Chapters 7 and 8 commence a new section of the prophecy. Two years had passed (it was now the “fourth year of king Darius”) since the night of the seven visions culminated in the enacted parable of the coronation of Joshua, and considerable progress had been made in the building of the Temple, to the joy of the people as they could at last see some results for their labours. Moreover, they had experienced the blessings of Yahweh in bountiful harvests (Hag. 2:19). In view of this peace and prosperity, a deputation was sent to the prophet to make enquiry as to whether the people should maintain certain fasts that had been celebrated for 70 years since the city of Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed (V.3). The question gave the prophet opportunity to show the people how little they had taken to heart the chastening they had received from the hand of Yahweh.

V.2-7 – ESV – “Now **the people of Bethel** had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech and their men to entreat the favour of Yahweh” – Bethel had a dubious past as the centre of Jeroboam’s apostasy. Their enquiry – “Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?” betrayed an insensitivity to the new realities. The lamentations and fasting indulged in by the Jews had become a meaningless ritual, in the face of great blessings received. The captivity in Babylon had kept a fast for 68 years in the 5th month of each year, commemorating the Babylonian destruction of Solomon’s Temple (2 Kings 25:8-10; Jer. 52:12-13). They did not anticipate the answer they received – ESV – “When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh (commemorating the assassination of Gedaliah), for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted?” The fasting was conducted in a spirit of self-pity, not in repentance to Yahweh. The Jews fasted because they suffered, not because they acknowledged their wickedness. They mourned the loss of the Temple, the destruction of the city, the scattering of the nation, but they did not acknowledge the cause of these calamities – their own rejection of the word of God (Hos. 4:6) their own wickedness and apostasy – “Should ye not have been doing the things which Yahweh, had proclaimed, by the hand of the former prophets, while yet Jerusalem was inhabited and in peace” (V.7 Rotherham). This confirms the critical importance of Isa. 66:2 – “But for this one, will I look around, for him who is humbled and smitten in spirit, and so careth anxiously for my word” (Rotherham). They, like many after them were blind to their own shortcomings. Their fasts were a form of voluntary humility – mere religious formalism without reforming power generated by the Word.

V.8-14 – “But they refused to hearken....and stopped their ears, that they should not hear” – The fast that Yahweh had chosen (cp. Isa. 58:6-7) was quite different – “Execute true judgement, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart” for “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). It is still the same.

Revelation 3

V.1-6 – Sardis had a reputation that it lived, like the ecclesia there. It had prevailed in wars against the Greek cities and inscribed its coin with the words, “Sardis the First Metropolis of Asia, and of Lydia, and of Hellenism,” but went into decline under the Romans and turned to trade rather than the spoils of war. Twice in its history it was overthrown by enemies climbing

the unguarded cliffs on the north, thought to be impossible to scale – Cp. V.2-3. The ecclesia was commended by Christ for a few worthy members who had not defiled their (Christ) garments, but criticized for having a reputation of vitality, but being spiritually dead with unfulfilled works before God. The exhortation was “strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.” Are the ‘walls’ of our ecclesia being scaled by deadly enemies? As capital of Lydia, Sardis housed the royal archives – the records of the kingdom, just as Christ does – “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of **the book of life.**”



V.7-13 – Philadelphia the beloved ecclesia was commended by Christ for works faithfully accomplished with little strength; for keeping his word; and not denying his name; and for their endurance under trial (V.10). There is no criticism or condemnation.

V.14-22 – Laodicea was the complacent ecclesia. There is no commendation by Christ, but he criticized them for lukewarmness in their attitude and works; dangerous confidence in their prosperity; and blindness to their true spiritual state. In the prophetic scheme of the letters, this one heralds the return of Christ – “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock,” and is therefore very relevant to us. We must avoid complacency and lukewarmness at all costs.

See **Appendix 6** (pg. 154) for more detail on the letters to the seven ecclesias.

Revelation 4

V.1-11 – John is given a vision of the culmination – “Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter,” i.e. after the Laodicean epoch; a vision of the Kingdom. The invitation “Come up hither” represents an ascension of nature and of political status (Rev. 11:12). John as a representative of all saints is invited to political ascendancy and sees the throne of David in the Kingdom (Rev. 5:5), with Christ sitting upon it surrounded by his saints. These are represented by twenty four elders (priestly role – 1 Chron. 24 & 25) and four living creatures (Seraphim) – the king priests of the Age to come (Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10). The rainbow, **green** in colour represents both the end of hostilities (Rev. 10:1-2) and the acquisition of **eternal life** (green = life).

V.8-9 – The “living creatures” who give glory to Christ are the Seraphim of Isa. 6:1-3 for they have 6 wings (4 Seraphim with 6 wings = 24 = the 24 elders). This is another indication that the hostilities required to establish the Kingdom are past. It is a new phase for the Cherubim of Ezekiel 1, despite the fact that *seraphim* means “burning ones”, the saints have completed their military role and now become administrators and priests. Unlike king Uzziah who unlawfully entered the Holy Place and whose death introduced the glorious vision of Christ in glory of Isa. 6:1-3 (John 12:39-41), the saints are able to access **all three courts** of Yahweh’s House. So they sing, “Holy, holy, holy” like the Seraphim of Isa. 6:3 for “the whole earth is full of his glory.”

December 23

Job 31 – Job’s final statement of integrity

Having contrasted the former glory that attended his righteousness with his present poverty, Job had crystallized the problem of his failure to understand God’s moral rule in the world, which (at least in his case) was against all appearances; and he had cleared the ground for a final ‘abjuration of error’ and ‘confession of faith,’ and a final appeal to God to vindicate his cause.

V.1-12 – Job’s personal life – Through a series of oaths encompassing his whole life, he attests freedom from grievous sin and repudiates all sensual sins.

V.1-3 – “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?” – Adultery and fornication head most of the lists of what comes out of the heart of men (Mark 7:21). At the outset, Job had made ‘a covenant with his eyes.’ He had removed ‘the flesh’ as it were from them. The eyes of a man are the open door through which external images cast their reflection on his mind and stir his base desires. The way one ‘looked upon a maid’ crystallised the conflict of duty versus desire. Job had pondered the problem and decided he would never allow his eyes to overrule his mind (Matt. 5:28).

V.4 – Nothing he did would escape the eye of God – “Does He not see my ways, and count all my steps?” – Ps. 119:37; Prov. 27:20; Matt. 6:22.

V.5-8 – Rejection of falsehood and deceit – Job had not yielded to any of his members: eyes, heart, hands, feet (V.7).

V.9-12 – Adultery abhorred – “That would be a fire that consumes to destruction” (V.12).

V.13-23 – Job’s relationship with his neighbour – Job repudiates the abuse of position

V.13-15 – Spurns the common oppression of servants

V.16-17 – Not guilty of thoughtlessness and neglect of the poor, widow, and fatherless

V.18 – In an aside Job refers to his generosity in extending help to the orphan and widow

V.19-23 – In his past there was no callous disregard for those in need

V.24-40 – Job’s relationship with God – Job repudiates internal sins

V.24-28 – He strenuously avoided idolatry whether in practice or in admiration; whether through covetousness or materialism

V.29-30 – He disclaims antipathy and bitterness towards his enemies

V.31-32 – Job was a model of hospitality

V.33-34 – He disclaims any concealment of sin, as in the case of Adam

V.35-37 – Job’s repeats his desperate plea for a hearing with God, and his confidence in his integrity and vindication

V.38-40 – Job disclaims insincerity – Finally, if Job’s land cried out against him, “and the furrows wept together” (ESV – V.38) because Job had wrongfully appropriated it and put to death its owners (V.39), let thistles (thorns, or brambles) grow instead of wheat, and cockle (some evil-smelling plant) instead of barley (V.40). So, end the words of Job – “So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes” (Job 32:1).

Job 32 – The speeches of Elihu the Buzite – Chapters 32-37

Here is a summary of Elihu’s speeches:

Chapter 32 – Elihu’s introduction – his antecedents and qualifications

Chapter 33 – Elihu’s first speech – The discipline of adversity

Chapter 34 – Elihu’s second speech – The Almighty never perverts justice

Chapter 35 – Elihu’s third speech – The value of righteousness

Chapter 36 – Elihu’s fourth speech – The purifying effects of adversity for moral development

Chapter 37 – Elihu’s ‘Song of the Seasons’

V.1-5 – Elihu’s pedigree and wrath

V.2 – “Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite....against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God” – Elihu’s name means “My God is He” which speaks of his spiritual heritage. He was the son of Barachel (“Blessed of God”) suggesting a prosperous and aristocratic family. He came from the line of Buz, the son of Nahor (Abraham’s brother), of the kindred of Ram (“exalted”) – Gen. 11:27; 22:20-23. Buz was the brother of Uz (Gen. 22:21) the forefather of Job (Cp. Job 1:1). Elihu and Job were therefore, distantly related. In Jer. 25:23, Buz is placed alongside Teman.

Elihu emphasizes the righteousness of God as opposed to the righteousness of man to counter Job’s views. He draws attention to the fact that suffering is often God’s way of refining the righteous; to purify them for a deeper and fuller revelation of God; and for moral development. Elihu’s wrath against Job was because he “justified **himself** rather than God.”

V.3 – Elihu’s wrath is forcefully expressed against Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar because they had pronounced Job guilty of sin without reason.

V.4-5 – Elihu’s youth and courtesy is acknowledged

V.6-10 – The source of true wisdom

V.6-7 – Elihu’s honesty and deference to age is shown

V.8 – Elihu’s authority was “the inspiration of the Almighty” – Heb. *neshamah* = breath (cp. Gen. 2:7). Elihu’s “breath of the Almighty” and Paul’s “inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16) are synonymous and interchangeable phrases.

V.9-10 – Elihu’s challenge to the wisdom of Job’s three friends.

V.11-14 – Elihu’s frankness and appraisal

V.11 – Elihu claimed patient attention to their words – (a) he waited; (b) he listened; (c) he didn’t interrupt; (d) he paid close attention (V.12a).

V.12b – Elihu’s appraisal of Job’s three friends – Their error was two-fold: (a) They only tried to prove Job was wrong; (b) They did not attempt to answer Job’s questions.

V.13-14 – Elihu’s fresh approach and rejection of the friends’ reasoning.

V.15-16 – Elihu expresses his incredulity at Job’s friends’ complete failure

V.17-20 – He was constrained to speak as the message burned within him

V.21-22 – Elihu’s impartiality would speak without favour or flattery.

Zechariah 8 – Present blessings foreshadow future ones

The rebuke of formalism in chapter 7 is followed in chapter 8 with the promise that when true repentance is manifested glorious blessings will be experienced. Chapter 8 is divided into two parts, prefaced by the statement, “The word of Yahweh came” (V.1,18). These two parts are separated into a series of Divine proclamations – V.2,3,4,6,7,14,19,20,23. The first section proclaimed the promise of ultimate glory for Israel which was typified in the revival then taking place. In view of this wonderful future, it calls upon the people to put away evil and submit to Yahweh in word and deed. The second section gives the specific answer to the question asked

in Zech. 7:3 as to whether the fasts of the past 70 years should be continued. It provides the reason why they should be replaced by festivals of greatest joy.

V.1-2 – Rotherham – “I am jealous for Zion with a great jealousy,—Yea, with great wrath, am I jealous for her” – God never forgets Zion, His chosen place (Deut. 11:10-12; Ps. 132:13-14). “Zion” also refers to the people (Zech 2:7), God’s “witnesses” (Isa. 43:10-12).

V.3 – “I am returned unto **Zion**, and will dwell (*shâkan* – basis of *shekinah*) in the midst of Jerusalem” – The Shekinah (“dwelling” presence between the Cherubim) glory of Yahweh which departed in Ezek. 10 and 11 had not returned, and will not return until Christ and the saints enter the completed Temple of the future Age (Ezek. 43:1-6), but Yahweh was back among His people (Hag. 2:4 – “for I am with you”). The present blessings were an earnest of greater things to come – “Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of Yahweh of hosts, the holy mountain” (ESV). As Isa. 9:7 says, “The zeal of Yahweh Tzvaoth will do this.” The militant title of Deity guarantees the fulfillment.

V.4-5 – “the streets of Jerusalem” – “Zion” and “Jerusalem” are used in two ways: firstly, to indicate the places so named; secondly, for the nation as a whole. Zion is used in this latter sense in Zech. 2:7, and Jerusalem in V.8. It is sometimes thought that the “streets of Jerusalem” should be understood literally. However, the Hebrew word (*rechôb*) signifies not streets as we know them, but open spaces; i.e. the wider land of their inheritance. Jerusalem itself will be a Temple city with strict laws governing access and use (Ezek. 46:9).

V.6-17 – In times of stress it is difficult (“marvellous”) for humans to see beyond their trials, but not for God (“should it also be marvellous in mine eyes?”). He will redeem His people from their dispersion (V.7), and return them to the Land, and “they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (citing Gen. 17:7-8 of the Abrahamic promises). So they were encouraged, **“Let your hands be strong**, ye that **hear** in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets,” and build in the house of God. Things were now much better than they had been for a long time, and the blessings would continue if they practiced the counsel of chap. 7:9-10 which is repeated and augmented here – “Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith Yahweh.” Righteousness, not ritual, was required.

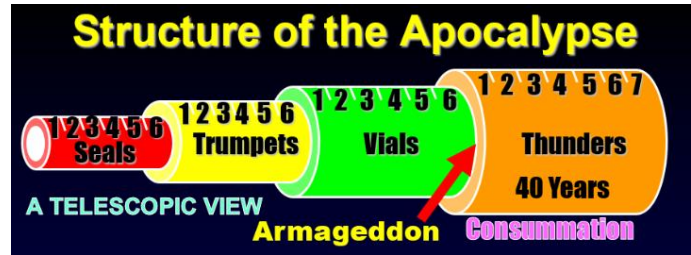
V.18-23 – “The fast of the fourth month” = breaching of the wall in BC 587; “of the fifth” = burning of Jerusalem and Solomon’s Temple; “of the seventh” = murder of Gedaliah; “of the tenth” = the Babylonian siege which began in BC 588. All these were redundant. It was time for “joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts,” and to “love the truth and peace” (V.19) in prospect of greater things to come. And great they will be!

“So shall enter many peoples, and strong nations, to seek Yahweh of hosts in Jerusalem” (Rotherham for V.22) – Not only redeemed and resettled Israel, but people of all nations will come to worship in Yahweh’s “House of Prayer for all people” (Isa. 56:7) and “ten men (standing for **all**) shall take hold out of **all languages** of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt (the word used of the “border” of an Israelite’s garment with fringe and ribband of blue – Num. 15:38) of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”

Revelation 5

Rev. 4 and 5 belong to the same vision. The seven sealed scroll in the hand of Christ in glory is introduced and this becomes the timeline for the rest of the book. It is obvious that the scroll

contains the culmination of God's purpose revealed in the vision of these two chapters. The seventh Seal was opened in AD 324 and then unfolds with seven Trumpets, then seven Vials, and finally seven Thunders that result in the establishment of the Kingdom with the Lamb sitting on the throne of David in glory (V.5-6). John wept "because no man was found worthy to open and to read the scroll," but a slain Lamb (John 1:29) "which taketh away the sin of the world" had prevailed to open the seals of the scroll and oversee the unfolding of history from the time of John (AD 96) until he could sit in triumph on David's throne in the Kingdom.



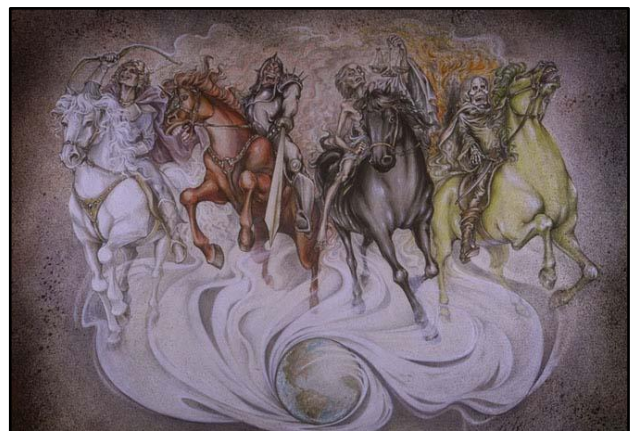
V.9 – "they sung a new song" – There are 9 occurrences of the phrase "a new song" in Scripture – 7 in the O.T and 2 in the N.T. (Rev. 5:9; 14:3). If the context of each is examined it will be seen that the new song is sung at a time when Yahweh has "gotten him the victory" (Ps. 98:1). In Ps. 149:1; Rev. 5:9 and 14:3 the saints rejoice after being made immortal. Therein lies a key. A "new song" is called 'new' despite the fact that we are told what the words of the song are. It is 'new' because it can only be sung with full appreciation when one is immortal. The triumph of Christ over sin and death has led to the saints being made kings and priests to reign with him (V.10; Rev. 1:5-6), and to be present when "the whole family in heaven and in earth" express their appreciation for his triumph (V.11-14).

Who would not want to be there in that Day?

Revelation 6

This chapter deals with the unsealing of the first six **Seals** of the seven-sealed scroll. It covers the period of Roman history from the time of John to the overthrow of paganism in the Roman Empire (AD 312-324).

Some have questioned whether the horse is a symbol of the Roman Empire. The evidence presented by Bro. Thomas in Eureka Vol. 2 pages 130-132 (Logos Edition) is incontrovertible and is copied below.



Of the War-Horse Symbol

But, in reading the first four seals, the student of this prophecy must have been struck by the symbolization of which the **war-horse** is the root. What does this sign import? What use does the Spirit of Christ make of the horse in prophecy? What does He signify by it, and what did he intend it to signify when he exhibited it before John, now white, then red, black, and pale? In Isa. 63:13, the Spirit says, that Yahweh led the whole tribes of Israel "as a horse in the wilderness that they should not stumble." This use of the animal is making it the symbol of a nation, or people. Again, in Zech. 10:3, the Spirit saith, "Yahweh TzVaoth hath visited his flock, the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle." Thus, when Messiah comes he will ride Judah as his war-horse. From these instances, then, it is scriptural to say that the Spirit in prophecy sometimes represent a people by a horse. Now it is also scriptural to say that where He finds people representing themselves by animals, he adopts their symbols, and speaks of

them by their own signs. Thus, the Persians represented their nation by a Ram; the Macedonians theirs by a Goat; **the Romans theirs by a Horse**, a Dragon, an Eagle; and the Franks their people by Frogs. ...There can be no reasonable doubt of the Roman people having symbolized themselves by a war-horse. This is clearly shown... by quotations from Latin authors, and from ancient Roman coins. They claimed to be the offspring of Mars, their god of war, whom they honored and worshipped by horse-races and horse-sacrifices in spring and fall from the time of Romulus, the founder of their state, down to the time of the emperors. The **horse** was also, according to Pliny, one of the **ancient Roman war-standards**; so that Mars, the Horse, and the Roman people, had an established and recognized affinity. The introduction of the **Roman Horse** into the symbolization of the first four seals as representative of the Roman people, was peculiarly appropriate. It was their symbol as pagans — worshippers of their father Mars through the horse which they sacrificed to him. It represented the pagan Roman people, who were to be ridden by the judgments of the first, second, third and fourth seals in retribution for the cruelties they perpetrated upon the seed of the Woman in their fight of faith against idolatry during the first.

Now the diverse colors of the horses indicate certain diverse conditions of the body politic typified by the horses. White is emblematic of peace; red of war; black of lamentation, mourning and woe; pale green of famine and pestilence. From the time of John, the pagan body politic, with whom he and his brethren and fellow servants were contending to the death, was to pass through seal-periods of a peaceful onslaught upon their superstitions, war, famine and pestilence, in the order of symbolical enumeration. The first seal-period, then, was to be a period of internal peace and prosperity to the pagan Roman world; and this period is only found in pagan Roman history subsequent to the death of Domitian, between that event and the accession of the emperor Commodus, A.D. 180.

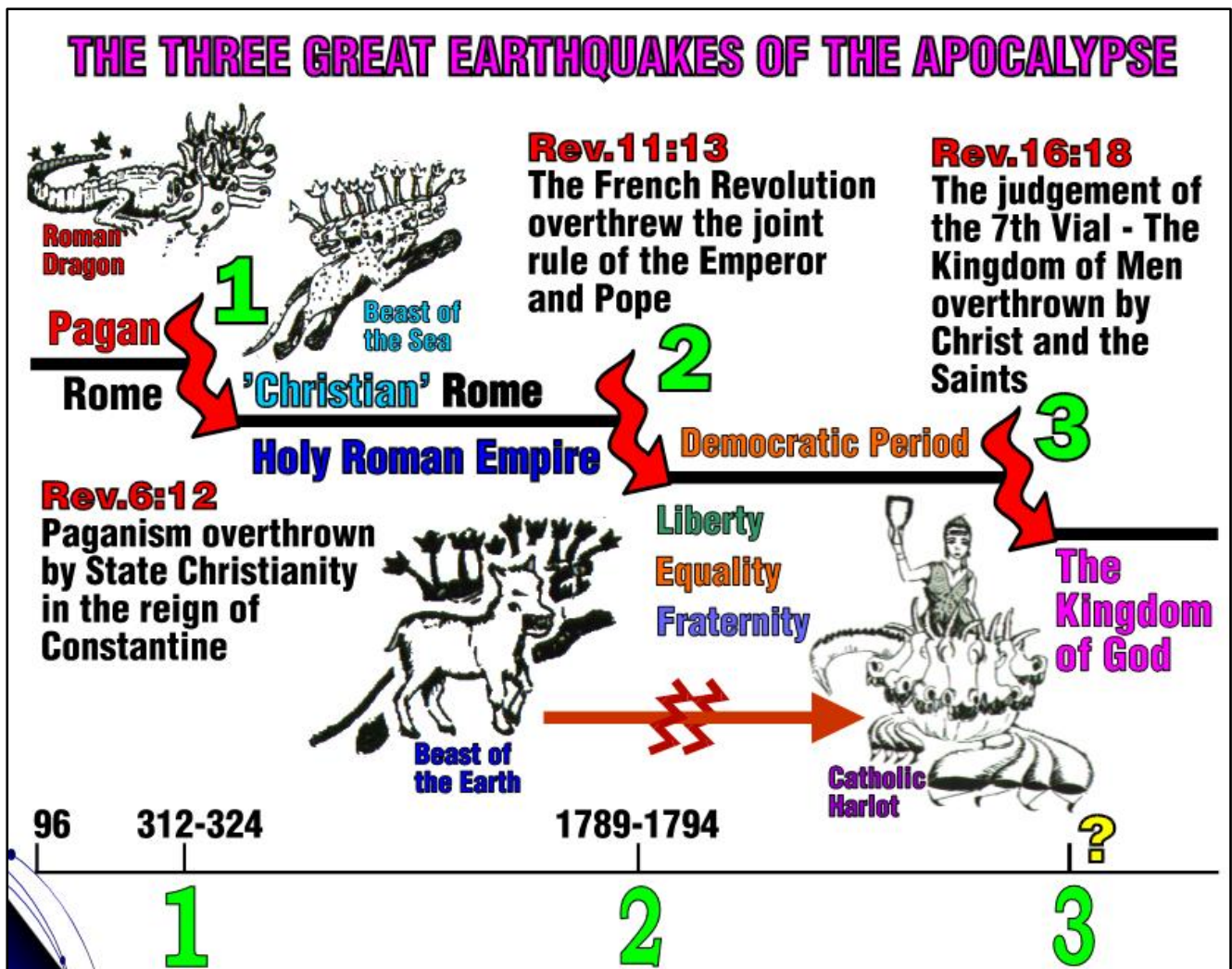
V.1-2 – **First Seal** – depicts a time of peace for the Roman Empire (white horse) during the reigns of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, the two Antonines, and the first 3 years of Commodus. “The spirit of heaven” (the rider of the white horse), working through spirit agencies (the Christian community) aimed for victory over the paganism of the Roman Empire. This was to be accomplished by the rapid growth of Christianity through evangelism (the bow) despite continuing persecution. It was finally accomplished when Constantine established pseudo-Christianity as the state religion in AD 312.

V.3-4 – **Second Seal** – The period of Commodus (AD 183-193) who was strangled to death; Pertinax (193) who being virtuous was assassinated by the Praetorian Guard; Didius Julianus who gained power by paying 25,000 sesterces to each of the 15,000 Praetorian Guards and was beheaded by them 63 days later; Septimius Severus (193-211) whose firm rule brought some relief to the empire, turned red by the Praetorian Guard.

V.5-6 – **Third Seal** – The period of Caracalla (AD 211-217) who slew his brother Geta to seize the throne, and by vicious misrule (slew 20,000 after Geta) and oppressive taxation of the wealthy and farmers, brought about widespread famine and suffering. He was assassinated by Macrinus (AD 217) who was in turn murdered by Egalabalus (AD 217-222), a licentious tyrant who brought the empire very low by lust, waste and oppression. Famine, injustice and distress continued until the reign of Alexander Severus (AD 222-235) who ruled well, guided by his mother until he also suffered the same fate as his predecessors. Like Egalabalus, Alexander was murdered by the army because he dared to reform their ranks. The whole empire suffered famine, privation, oppression and bloodshed.

V.7-8 – Fourth Seal – Spans the period from the murder of Alexander Severus (AD 235) to the 18th year of Diocletian (AD 303). Maximinus a rapacious Thracian appointed as emperor by the army was first of many emperors and pretenders who became a class of agents known as “Death.” In 50 years, violence and bloodshed in Italy, and famine and pestilence throughout the empire, and wars with barbarians accounted for the death of half the human race. In 50 years from AD 235, 39 men who had gained or sought the throne died violent deaths. The empire began to fall apart for lack of leadership as men vied for power and because those who gained it used it to destroy and corrupt. Famine, raging inflation and plague were the result of the corruption and confusion in Rome. Only Diocletian (AD 284) managed to restore a semblance of political stability to the empire.

V.9-11 – Fifth Seal – From AD 284 to 303 Christians enjoyed relative tranquility. This resulted in decline and division between Novatians (or puritans) and the followers of Cornelius (the Catholics). The empire had four rulers at the time – Diocletian and Maximian (Augusti), and Constantius (west) and Galerius (east). The latter began severe persecution in AD 303. Diocletian and Maximian abdicated in AD 305. Rivalry resulted in the empire having 6 rulers for a time. Constantine succeeded his father in the west and influenced Galerius and Licinius to tolerate Christians. Galerius and Maximian died in AD 311 and Maximin assumed power in the east and Italy, and began the severest persecution of Christians until his death in AD 313. So terrible was the persecution that even hardened pagans recoiled in horror, and Maximin himself died in frantic torment at the horrors of his own violent persecution.



V.12-17 – **Sixth Seal** – It began with the Empire ruled by four emperors under paganism in AD 312, and ended with Constantine as sole emperor and apostate Christianity as the state religion in AD 324. Victories over Maxentius at Milvian Bridge in AD 312, and over Licinius at Adrianople in AD 324 assured the rise of the papal system in due course. Constantine's edict of tolerance was gained by the abandonment of true Christianity. It is important to recognize that the words of V.16 – “the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” represent the way both pagans and the apostate Christian community viewed these events. Constantine became the first Christian Emperor and pagans regarded him and his Christian supporters as Christ's true representatives. In that respect, Bro. Thomas could write “The fierceness of paganism exhausted itself in this last effort, and the triumph of the Lamb was near” (Eureka Vol. 2 page 276). This was the first great political Earthquake of the Apocalypse as Bro. Thomas also expounds on pages 282-284.

“A great earthquake” is foretold in three places of the apocalypse also, “an earthquake” twice without the addition of “great.” The first “great earthquake” is predicted in this seal; the second, in chap. 11:13; and the third, in chap. 16:18. The first revolutionized the whole Greco-Latin Habitable, dethroned Jupiter, cast all his official adherents out of their places, and installed the “Holy Catholic Church” and her Laodiceans in the government of the Roman world. The effects of this “great earthquake” are felt in every part of the globe to this day.

December 24

Job 33 – Elihu's first speech

Having addressed Job's friends, Elihu turned and spoke to Job himself.

V.1-7 – Elihu answers Job's request for a mediator

V.1-2 – Appeals for Job's close attention

V.3 – His words would be upright and sincere

V.4-6 – Elihu's intermediary role – Job's spokesman before God, yet balanced by his humanity

V.7 – With Elihu, there would be neither fear nor the heavy hand of superiority

V.8-11 – The critical issue of Job's innocence

V.8-9 – Job's claim to innocence reviewed (cp. Job 9:21; 10:7; 12:4; 16:17; 23:12; etc.)

V.10-11 – Restating Job's complaint that God punishes him without cause, treats him like an enemy, holds him captive, and stalks his footsteps (Job 13:27,34; 19:11).

V.12-13 – Job's impropriety in presuming upon God's sovereignty

Elihu had been present and had heard Job speak (V.8) his protestation of innocence and repudiation of all “transgression” and “iniquity” (V.9). He had also heard Job clearly state that God had set out in his case to find a “cause of alienation” (RV mgn.) and was “counting him as an enemy” (V.10), even to the extent of “putting his feet in the stocks” and “marking his paths” (V.11). These were serious charges which demanded an answer. To even make such charges constituted an injustice, if for no other reason than that the circumstances were not equal – “God is greater than man” (V.12), and it was improper for Job to strive against God because God did not need to explain Himself to any man! (V.13).

V.14-18 – God speaks in many ways with redemptive purpose

V.14 – Far from God being silent He speaks to man in a variety of ways

V.15-16 – God speaks in dreams (Gen. 20:3) and visions, when He opens men's ears and seals their instruction.

V.17-18 – God’s purpose is to prevent sin, and save man from pride, death and destruction.

V.19-22 – God also speaks to man through pain and suffering

- The suffering of the godly is for their benefit. It is a part of God’s chastening hand in that through it a man is brought close to death in order that he might see more clearly the fate of the wicked, and therefore appreciate the gracious hand of God.
- Although Eliphaz saw chastisement as being given in proportion to sin (Job 5:17), Elihu has a clearer conception of God’s ways. Discipline or chastisement is not necessarily always correction, but it is always a stimulus to healthy growth.
- The blessing of chastisement is God’s to give to whomsoever He pleases. As a Father, God trains His children in the way of godliness and does not leave them without discipline (Heb. 12:5-11).

V.23-28 – Elihu details the unique role of Christ

V.23 – A “messenger” (Mal. 3:1), a “mediator” (1 Tim. 2:5), “one among a thousand” (Ecc. 7:28), one who declares “the righteousness of God” (Rom. 3:21-26).

V.24 – He would be a “ransom” – Heb. *kopher* = ‘a covering’ who would lay the basis for the forgiveness of sins (Rom. 3:25).

V.25-28 – Provides promise of restoration, blessing and resurrection.

V.29-30 – God is a patient teacher

In these ways, said Elihu, God disciplined men: “twice” (i.e. by dream and instruction), “yea, thrice” (i.e. by suffering as well) (V.29), so that He might save them from death (V.30; cp. Ps. 56:13). Job should therefore mark well and hear what else Elihu had to say on the matter (V.31).

V.31-33 – Elihu’s challenge to Job

V.31-32 – Although Elihu is defending God’s sovereignty, he also desires to justify Job.

V.33 – Elihu challenges Job to reply, or be instructed. If he could reply to what Elihu had already stated, he should answer, for Elihu would gladly assent to any arguments of Job that proved him to be in the right (V.32), but if no such arguments were forthcoming, he should listen to Elihu and be instructed in wisdom (V.33).

Zechariah 9 – Human conqueror or Divine Prince of Peace

There is an obvious break in the prophecy at Chapter 9. Though no date is given, it seems that the Temple must have been completed, and in view of this a new series of visions relating to the time of the end engaged the attention of the prophet. In this chapter, the proud and haughty Macedonian warrior, Alexander the Great as an instrument in the hands of Yahweh to effect His purpose, is contrasted with the humble though all-powerful King of the Jews. The former was ruthless in military power; the latter full of grace and mercy. The former rode pompously against Jerusalem on a high-spirited steed with no control over his spirit; the latter entered the city humbly upon an ass to crucify the flesh. The former was humbled outside the city walls; the latter was applauded and honored as he entered its precincts.

V.1-4 – RV – “The burden of the word of Yahweh upon the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be its resting place” – This concerns the progress of Alexander the Great in capturing Syria after the battle of Issus in south-eastern Asia Minor (BC 333). It is said he kept the captured family of Darius in Damascus. This enabled him to then attack Tyre. Because Tyre rejoiced at Jerusalem’s fall in BC 586, she had sealed her doom. The mainland city of Tyre had fallen to Nebuchadnezzar by BC 573 after a 13 year siege. The island city was

subjected to Babylonian rule until 539 BC, but not conquered until BC 332 by Alexander in 7 months fulfilling a number of prophecies – Jer. 27:6-7; Ezek. 26 & 27.

V.5-8 – Alexander then turned his attention to Philistia and Judea. Of the Philistine cities, Gaza resisted and was besieged for 5 months, and upon surrender Alexander had 10,000 Gazites murdered, and its king dragged behind a chariot until dead as a warning to other resisters to his might, fulfilling “the king shall perish from Gaza.” Most capitulated, as did Jerusalem.

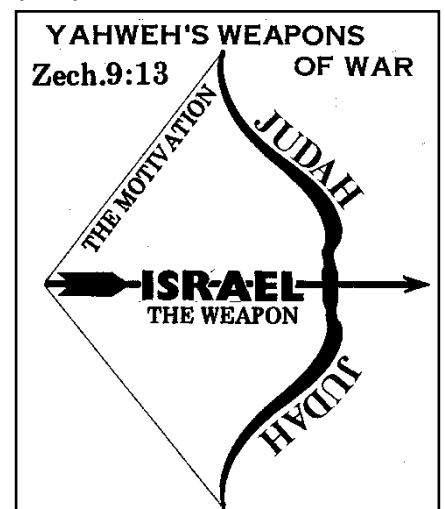
“I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth” – The phrase “him that passeth by” refers to Alexander the Great who visited Jerusalem on his way to Egypt in BC 332 and “him that returneth” refers to Antiochus Epiphanes the Syrian (BC 175-163) who marched against Jerusalem on his way from Egypt, and killed 40,000 Jews and enslaved 80,000 others (Dan. 11:22-29). The pattern was set for the latter days when Gog will come from the north and pass through the Land on his way to Egypt and then be drawn back to Jerusalem where his army will be destroyed (Dan. 11:41-45), but not before “he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many” (Dan. 11:44).

Alexander advanced on Jerusalem, but Jaddua the high priest led a procession of peace to meet him. Because Alexander had foreseen this event in a dream in Macedonia, he considered it a sign that Judah’s God was directing his campaign and did not destroy Jerusalem (Josephus Book XI, chap. 8, para 4-7).

V.9-12 – In sharp contrast to the Macedonian conqueror, the prophecy now turns to the Lord Jesus Christ as Israel’s promised Messiah and King. Whereas Alexander proudly ranged up to Jerusalem on his great warhorse Bucephalus to be humbled, Jesus would ride into the city on a colt the foal of an ass to be declared king (though neither V.9 or its reference in Matt. 21:7 indicate which animal the Lord would ride, but he knew from Gen. 49:11 it would be the colt – see comments on Matt. 21 on July 20). In full control of his spirit he was “just, and **having salvation**; lowly” and five days later “crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24). The KJV margin adds – “saving himself.” The Lord saved himself that he might save others (Heb. 9:12). Without his perfect obedience ensuring resurrection there would have been no salvation for anyone else. Alexander could not save himself. It is said he died from fever induced by a drunken stupor in Babylon. He had conquered many cities (70 named after himself) but had no rule over his spirit – “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Prov. 16:32).

“So will he cut off the chariot out of Ephraim, and the horse out of Jerusalem, and the war-bow” – Christ at his second advent will humble his own people and subdue the nations, and establish the Kingdom with its base in the Land promised to Abraham (Ps. 72:8). He will not be alone having raised from the grave (“the pit wherein is no water”) all the faithful who will be redeemed by his blood (“the blood of thy covenant”), all of which is good reason to “return to the stronghold, ye prisoners of **the hope**” (*hatikvah*). The faithful of all ages as Yahweh’s firstborns (Heb. 12:23) will be granted a double portion – “I will render double unto thee.” The same principle will apply to redeemed and restored Israel.

V.13-17 – “When I have bent **Judah** for me, filled the **bow** with **Ephraim**” – Christ will “save the tents of Judah first” (Zech. 12:7) and they shall “fight at Jerusalem” against the power of the north (Zech. 14:14). The Jews in the Land called



'Judah' will provide the strength or motivation which will impel Israel to return to the Land and in the process act as Yahweh's arrow against the nations. Refined 'Judah' is to become Yahweh's "goodly horse" in battle to overcome all peoples round about the Land of Israel – Zech. 10:3-5; 12:5-6. Ephraim is equivalent to Israel and refers to scattered Jewry. Returning Israel in the Second Exodus is to be the striking force of Yahweh against the nations – Zech. 10:9-11.

"against thy sons, O Greece" – Zechariah's prophecy primarily concerned the wars fought by the Maccabees against the Grecian king of the north. Here the latter day 'king of the north' is shown to be a manifestation of the Grecian Empire (Gog based in Constantinople).

V.14 – "Yahweh shall be seen over them" – The glorified saints will have the name of Yahweh named upon them (Rev. 3:12), and will overshadow and guide the Israelites in their conquests over the Gentiles. They "shall go with whirlwinds of the south," i.e. Christ and the saints as Yahweh Sabaoth will have come from the south or Teman – Hab. 3:3; Deut. 33:2. The word "whirlwinds" is *cearah* signifying a hurricane, from a root *ca'ar* meaning to rush upon. The work of the saints in shepherding Israel back to the Land will leave behind sorely judged nations so that Jeremiah's prophecy will be fulfilled – Jer. 25:32-33.

V.15 – "Yahweh of hosts shall **defend** them" – *ganan* signifies to hedge about, i.e. to protect. This is the work of Elijah and his associates for a period of nearly 40 years during the Second Exodus (Isa. 11:11; Ezek. 20:33-38; Mic. 7:14-17). "How great is his goodness."

Revelation 7 (For detail on these chapters, refer to Bible marking notes – <https://jimcowie.info>)

Sealing the servants of God – the 144,000. Truth is God's sealing agent. Time was needed for the 'Christian' community to sort itself out and reveal the remnant within who would stand aside from the apostasy established by Constantine. So, the looming threat to the Roman Empire from the barbarians to the north and east was kept in check to allow this to happen.

V.1 – "holding the four **winds** of the earth" – Wind = armies and war (Jer. 4:11-12; Dan. 7:2). These were restrained by God to allow peace for the growth of Christianity and lasted from AD 324 to 396. When the 'Christian' community became paganized, the remnants of the woman's seed separated themselves – Rev. 12:17.

V.2-17 – The sealing of the 144,000 who represent the whole number of the Redeemed (14:3 & 7:9). 12 = perfect government (12x12 = fixedness of organization and full completion). 12 also represents the tribes of Israel. 144 represents the families of Israel. The Hebrew word *aleph* serves for 1 and 1000 denoting the head of the family and the family derived from him – note its use in Josh. 22:14; 1 Sam. 10:19; Mic. 5:2; Jud. 6:15. Hence 144,000 symbolizes the true families of Israel joined in perfect civil organization for the purpose of government – i.e. Christ's government in the Millennium comprising Jew and Gentile as the true Israel of God. This is one of the many visions of glory in the Apocalypse.

Revelation 8 – Chapters 8 to 11 – The Seven Angelic Trumpets

Chapter 8 – Opening of the **Seventh Seal** containing the Seven Trumpets.

First Trumpet – There was a preparation period of 32 years (AD 363-395) preceding the first trumpet. In 366 the Goths crossed the Danube in fear of the Huns and were allowed to settle and join the army of the Empire. They became powerful and troublesome. Alaric became an officer in the army of Theodosius who died AD 393 and was succeeded by his two sons Arcadius and Honorius. The former dismissed Alaric and stirred him to revenge. Proclaimed king by the Goths he finally sacked Rome in AD 409 spreading death and destruction.

Second Trumpet – Genseric king of the Vandals in Spain was invited by Boniface governor of Africa to assist him in the revolt against Rome. Genseric used the opportunity to grow in power. He became the scourge of North Africa. He organized piratical excursions on the Mediterranean Sea ravaging coasts and maritime trade and won many outstanding victories on the sea. He invaded Rome in AD 455 and sacked it, carting its treasures off to Carthage. In AD 457 he again defeated Rome's sea power. He died in AD 477.

Third Trumpet – The Huns originated from central Asia (Scythia). Under Attila they menaced Constantinople and were granted a treaty by Theodosius. They attacked the Persians, but were defeated and turned to ravage the Eastern Empire around Illyria and Greece. Then they went west and ravaged Europe, but were again defeated in Gaul. They finally turned to ravage the Alpine districts and northern provinces of Italy. After leaving great destruction in his wake, he was forced to retire to the plains of Hungary where he died during an orgy in AD 453. The Huns were fierce and ruthless fighters sparing no atrocity in their barbaric campaigns of plunder and bloodshed. Wherever he went Attila left bitterness and total destruction behind him, particularly in the fair province of northern Italy. It was fear of Attila that led to the building offshore of Venice by the inhabitants of Aquileia.

Fourth Trumpet – Odoacer was the son of Edecon who had served under Attila. He assumed the title of king of the Heruli and marched on Rome occupying it in AD 476, becoming king of Italy. Rome was then ruled for 60 years by Gothic kings. Rome fell easily to Odoacer because of the great depredations of the Goths, Vandals and Huns. Rome's last emperor bore the name of its first – Romulus Augustus.

Revelation 9

The sounding of the **First two Woe Trumpets** – V.1-11 – 5th Trumpet and 1st Woe – Mahomet and the Saracens – AD 632; V.12-21 – 6th Trumpet and 2nd Woe – The Turkomans

Fifth Trumpet – Mahomet began his great imposture as a young man claiming to be a prophet in communion with God. He was initially supported by the Prince of Mecca, but then was rejected by the people of Mecca when that prince died. He fled to Medina, wrote the Koran and grew in power until he ruled all Arabia. He declared war on Catholics and the eastern Empire but died in AD 632. His successors pursued his goals. From Syria, Palestine, and Edom they pushed into Asia Minor and Persia, and south to Egypt and North Africa. Within 50 years of AD 632 the Saracens had advanced to Constantinople and Gibraltar. They entered Spain and threatened all Europe. They were defeated at Tours in France in AD 732 by Charles (the Hammer) king of the Franks who gathered his allies at Poitiers. Constantinople stood firm and Saracen power waned until AD 932 when the Caliph was unseated. The Eastern Roman Empire was sorely harassed but still survived.

Sixth Trumpet – The Turks or Tartars originated in the far east and migrated to the Euphratean area. The Seljuk Turks under Togrel Beg established power from the Bosphorus to China and in AD 1058 deposed the Saracen Caliph relegating him to spiritual head of Mahommedans. He and his successors made war on the remnants of the Eastern Empire provoking the Crusades. The Mongols under Genghis Khan and his successors ravaged all Asia and eastern Europe during the 12th and 13th centuries thus causing the demise of the Seljuks and allowing the rise of the Ottoman Turks in Asia Minor. The Mongols of India drove the Ottomans westward and they finally took Constantinople in AD 1453 after attacks in AD 1397 and 1422 were repulsed. Thus, four invasions from beyond the Euphrates brought an end to the Byzantine Empire, but the Ottoman Empire continued to expand throughout Europe and Asia. It became "the great river Euphrates" of Rev. 16:12.

December 25

Job 34 – Elihu's second speech – God never perverts justice

Elihu's first speech (Chap. 33) revealed that God answered man by dream, and by vision so that he might be purified to receive a greater revelation of God, by suffering. In his second speech (Chap. 34), he pressed Job's view about the inevitability of Divine justice to its logical conclusion by showing that it was virtually impossible for God to be anything else but **just**, and he countered Job's view of God's inscrutability with the other view that it was not God who was **incomprehensible**, but Job who was **uncomprehending**.

V.1-4 – Elihu's appeal to the wise

- V.2 – Appeals for an attentive hearing
- V.3 – Appeals for real discernment
- V.4 – Elihu's challenge was to hear his case, judge the issues, and arrive at that which was "right."

V.5-6 – Job's claim to innocence – Was a charge of God's injustice – Whenever Job had treasured his rights before God, he had actually accused God of injustice.

V.7-9 – Elihu's rebuke of Job

In spite of all remonstrances, Job had steadfastly refused to be influenced or to re-examine his position, but as the thirsty ground soaked up water, so had he soaked up "scorning" (V.7; cp. Chap. 9:20; 27:2; 10:3; 15:16). Not only so, but the opinions advanced by him constituted a virtual association with "workers of iniquity" and "wicked men" (V.8; cp. Chap. 9:21-24; 10:3; 22:15; Ps. 1:1), for he had as much as said that it was profitless for a man to seek God (V.9; cp. Chap. 9:21,22,24; 35:2,3).

V.10-15 – The Almighty never perverts justice

- V.10-12 – God's moral code stated
- V.13-15 – God's justice demonstrated (cp. Gen. 3:19)

V.16-20 – God's justice illustrated: impartial, though superior

Proof of God's justice is evident in His impartial dealing with princes and commoners, rich and poor, weak and mighty, though He is far superior than them all.

V.21-30 – God's perfect knowledge makes Him the essence of justice

V.21 – God sees perfectly the "ways" and "steps" of man

V.22 – His justice is based upon perfect knowledge

V.23-28 – God only requires to act, not to defend His actions

V.29-30 – God's judgement is final – He is answerable to no one

V.31-33 – Confession – Man's proper response to God

V.31a – I have borne chastisement

V.31b – "Though I offend not" (RV mgn.)

V.32-33 – Teach me what I do not see

V.34-37 – Elihu's condemnation of Job's words during the debate

- Job's sin – speaking without knowledge
- Job's rebellion – his persistence in self-justification
- Elihu's desire for Job's effective trial

Note: Elihu has no condemnation for Job's former life. He is dealing solely with Job's words during the debate, not his character.

Zechariah 10

This chapter depicts the fulfillment of Rom. 11:26 – "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Israel who were about to go through a time of spiritual drought is admonished to seek Yahweh, who is able to provide bountiful "rain and grass in the field" for rich pasture. So the flock which was to be scattered due to the negligence of the false shepherds is not left without hope. The Good

Shepherd is to be revealed in due time, and Zechariah sees him regathering and leading the sheep from all parts of the world back to the fold (the Land of Promise) when the nation of Israel shall be raised from the depths of despair and exalted to the height of glory and triumph as Yahweh's people.

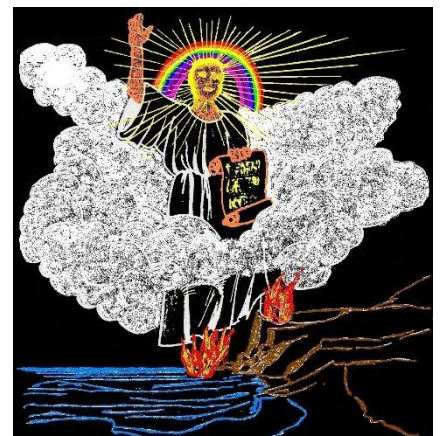
V.1-2 – Rotherham – “Ask ye from Yahweh rain, in the time of the latter rain” – Rain is figurative of the blessings of the Truth (see Deut. 11:13-14; 32:1-2), whilst apostasy is likened to spiritual drought (see Amos 8:11-13). The exiles had returned from captivity in Babylon freed from idolatry, but apostasy in a different form eventually took over as prophesied in chapter 5. This was another form of idolatry – the self-worship of Judaism, and it took root through poverty of leadership by Judah's shepherds. When Christ arrived on the scene he was opposed by a Hellenised priesthood (the Sadducees) and hypocritical Pharisees who crucified the Good Shepherd (Zech. 13:7). Their commercialised religion finally produced Catholicism led by a “foolish shepherd” who is also called “the **idol** shepherd” (Zech. 11:15-17) = the papacy (it is a system of idolatry – 2 Thess. 2:3-4).

V.3-4 – Rotherham – “Against the shepherds, is kindled mine anger, and, upon the leaders of the flock, **will I bring punishment**” (notice the tense). That punishment came in AD 66-70 with the overthrow of the corrupt “shepherds” of Yahweh's flock when Christ at the head of the Roman armies caused “the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (Dan. 9:26-27). The next intervention by the Good Shepherd will be at Christ's second advent when he will visit “his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his **goodly horse** in the battle.” In the wars of Armageddon and beyond, Israel is described as a **horse** (Isa. 63:13; Rev. 14:20; 19:11) the familiar imagery of chapter 1:8 – “a man riding upon a red horse.” The horse is a vehicle of warfare (Zech. 6:1-3) and Israel will be used to bring judgements upon Catholic Europe during the Second Exodus (see V.7), but this prophecy is about **Judah** (Jews in the Land – Joel 3:1) whom Christ will redeem first (Zech. 12:7-14), and refers to the time period of Zech. 14:14 – “Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem” (i.e. they will be involved in the local conflicts post-Armageddon. They will have recognized the once rejected “cornerstone” (Ps. 118:22; Matt. 21:42) – “From him (Judah) shall come forth the corner stone” (RV). He is “the nail” and will display the glory of his Father's house (Isa. 22:23. Zech. 6:13), and will provide the strength needed to defeat the enemy, for “from him, shall proceed every one that driveth on, together” (Rotherham).

V.5-12 – While the Jews in the Land will be granted Divine help post-Armageddon (“I will strengthen the house of Judah”), Elijah will be gathering scattered Israel (i.e. Ephraim) called “Joseph” here. Like a shepherd, Yahweh through Christ and Elijah “will hiss for them, and gather them” in the Second Exodus (see V.8-11). Hence, “I will make them mighty in Yahweh, and, in his name, shall they march to and fro” (Rotherham V.12).

Revelation 10 – The triumph of the Rainbowed Angel

V.1-2 – The same glorified multitude seen in Rev. 7 are now presented in the symbolism of a mighty Angel with a rainbow over his head at the **end** of his military career. This is indicated by three things. Rainbows appear as the storm subsides. His feet are firmly planted (i.e. the march is over); and there is a little **open** scroll in his hand (i.e. its contents – the written judgements on the nations have been accomplished). Bro. Thomas says of this scroll in Eureka Volume 3, page 178 – “This ‘little scroll’ is **the most important fragment of the**



Apocalypse. It contains the catastrophe of the plot, without which all the rest would be of little interest to the believer.”

This “mighty angel” is the Christ ‘body’ presented as a multitude in ‘one’ in Rev. 1:13-16. This vision of glory is inserted here to encourage believers who witnessed and experienced the failure of the apostate system of Rome to repent after the severe judgements that fell upon them under the six trumpets – Rev. 9:20-21. They would have to wait until Christ’s second advent for the judgements to be completed, and if they remained faithful in their time would play a part in them.

V.3-4 – “The Jews were accustomed to speak of thunder as the 7 voices” (Vincent), and thunder is a symbol of judgement and war, suggesting the 7 campaigns of Christ (Cp. David 2 Sam. 8-10). This symbolism is drawn from Ps. 29 where the phrase “the voice of Yahweh” occurs 7 times in a context that is clearly about the 40 years of judgement from Armageddon to the scene of V.1, with the Angel’s feet planted firmly on Mediterranean and European soil. John wanted to write down what he saw, but was forbidden to do so. This was not because the judgements were too awful, because they are described elsewhere. It is because he was a representative of the constituents of the Angel and will share with them the work of these judgements. He is invited to approach the angel in V.8 and take the open scroll out of his hand and eat it. He did so, and like Ezekiel before him (Ezek. 2 & 3), found it sweet as honey in his mouth (i.e. he agreed with the judgements), but bitter in his belly (i.e. the dispensing of Divine anger will not be pleasant – Ezek. 3:14). This is how the chapter ends. While the saints will be teachers in the Age to come, this vision is about their military role in the establishment of the Kingdom – V.11 – Rotherham – “It behoveth thee again to prophesy **against** peoples and nations and tongues, and many kings.” The word “before” in the KJV is *epi* – over, upon. Bro. Thomas translates it “**against**”; i.e. by warfare.

V.5-7 – The mighty Angel raises his arm to swear “that there should be time no longer” and declares the fulfilment of God’s messages which “he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” Daniel’s time periods are about to be fulfilled – Dan. 12:7 – Rotherham – “Delay no longer shall there be”. This was the reassurance to the saints during the long period of the 5th and 6th trumpets, and an answer to the saints’ prayers of Rev. 6:10. The effect of their prayers was:

1. The overthrow of paganism in AD 312-324 – Rev. 6:12-17
2. The continuing and ongoing sealing of the 144,000 – Rev. 7
3. The end of the Western Roman Empire – Rev. 8
4. The eventual overthrow of the Eastern Empire – Rev. 9
5. Judgement and retribution on persecuting Catholicism – Rev. 11
6. Promise of the final overthrow of fleshly politics and religion – Rev. 11:15-19.

Revelation 11 – The Warfare, Death and Resurrection of the Witnesses

V.1-2 – “a reed like unto a rod” – A “reed” is a symbol of measurement (Ezek. 40:3; Rev. 21:15-16 – i.e. a time period), and a “rod” a symbol of correction and chastisement (1 Cor. 4:21; Prov. 13:24). John is awakened (“rise” – *egiero* – to wake from sleep of death) by resurrection to end the period of chastening for the true ecclesia (“the temple of God” – 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Pet.2:5); the Christ “altar” (Heb. 13:10; 1 Cor. 9:13); and the partakers of Christ’s sufferings (1 Pet. 4:13; Heb. 12:5-6; 13:12-14). “But the court which is without the temple **leave out.**” This is the Gentile court associated with the Temple, but not part of it and represents the apostate church = nominal Christians (“Gentiles”). The Greek for “leave out” is *ekbale* – to throw out by force. The Apostasy would not suffer, but would inflict suffering by

persecuting the true ecclesia “the holy city” (spiritual Jerusalem – the ecclesia Gal. 4:26) for 42 months. This is a period of 1,260 years (42 x 30) – the period of papal ascendancy from the decree of Phocas (AD 608-610) to the loss of papal temporal power (1868-1870), a period in which Catholicism persecuted the ecclesia.

V.3-10 – “And I will give power unto my **two witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth” – The two witnesses were **political** and **religious** opposition to Roman Catholic power. The religious witness includes the true ecclesia who did not take the sword. The 1,260 days is presented differently because it represents a different period of warfare commencing at the establishment of the state church in AD 312 through to 1572 (the massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day in France) – “sackcloth” is a sign of affliction and mourning. Two olive trees each with a lampstand represents political and religious opponents to Catholicism among the Gentiles (Cp. Zech. 4:11-12 – two independent forms of witnessing). And they stood “before” (*enopion* – in view of, with the idea of opposition) “the God of the earth.” This is not the God of heaven (V.13), but the Papacy (2 Thess. 2:4).

V.6 is based on the three and a half year witnessing of Elijah (religious) and Obadiah (political) against Ahab and Jezebel (type of Catholicism) in 1 Kings 17 and 18. To “smite the earth” with plagues refers to antagonism, violence and war that erupted as the witnesses struggled against the political and religious tyranny of Rome. It allowed the Truth a voice. However, as the 1,260 years drew to an end the witness of the true ecclesia became lax and its protection was withdrawn. The successive testimony of Donatists, Waldenses, Novation’s and Huguenots ended in 1572 with the massacre of St. Bartholomew (24 Aug.). Catholics were ascendant in France and all religious and political liberties were withdrawn. They were restored by the edict of Nantes in 1598 by Henry IV, but revoked in 1685 by Louis XIV who crushed all liberal institutions in France. The witnesses lay ‘dead’ for 105 years “in the street of the great city where also our Lord was crucified” (i.e. the Roman Empire, as Caracalla had decreed the city of Rome extended to the borders of the empire and Christ was crucified in Jerusalem by order of a Roman).

V.11-13 – “And the same **hour** was there a **great earthquake**” – The French Revolution was the second “great earthquake” of the Apocalypse. It lasted for 30 years (an “hour” in the Apocalypse – see Eureka Vol. 2 pages 359-362 – “represents a judicial period of *thirty years*, or the twelfth of a time”). The French Revolution brought severe judgements on Catholicism in France and much of Europe. The description here exactly matches what happened in the Revolution period. The accuracy of the detail is astonishing.

V.13-18 – **The 7th Trumpet and 3rd Woe** – The consummation of God’s judgements on Catholic Rome. When “Babylon the Great” is destroyed by Christ and the saints “The **kingdom** of the world” (Rotherham) will become his Kingdom (V.15). That time is at hand for the nations are “angry” (V.18). Then the third “great earthquake” of V.19 and Rev. 16:18 will complete the job and there will be seen (Rotherham) “the ark of his covenant in his sanctuary” – cp. V.1 – the reed, rod and altar of affliction are replaced by the Ark with its Cherubim and Shekinah glory for all to see.

December 26

Job 35 – Elihu’s third speech – The value of righteousness

Elihu’s third speech is his response to a statement of Job in 34:9 – “It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself in God.” Elihu had not specifically dealt with this issue, contenting himself instead in dealing with the inevitability of God’s judgements that

omniscience logically required. In his third reply to Job, Elihu started from this point to make the case that whilst man's good or evil could not affect adversely the absolute God, it could and did affect man himself, and that all seemingly apparent discrepancies from this rule were explicable.

V.1-3 – Elihu's summary of Job's complaint

V.2 – Elihu asserted that Job had said my righteousness is more than God's

V.3 – He also said Job had asserted there was no profit in godliness

V.4-8 – The transcendence of God and the inherent qualities of man

V.4-7 – God is far higher than man – He is not affected by human action of good or evil.

Transgressions do not affect Him and righteousness does not benefit Him.

V.8 – While God in His transcendence cannot be changed by human sin or righteousness, man in his immanence (inherent qualities) is the victim of sin or the beneficiary of righteousness. Human sin or righteousness impacts persons, individually and corporately (Prov. 14:34).

V.9-13 – The motive force in seeking God

V.9 – The cry for God often arises out of the pain of suffering, not out of genuine desire for God. The cry is for relief of suffering rather than the presence of God.

V.10a – In prayer, we are to seek first the presence of God

V.10b – In the presence of God we sing "songs of the night" (cp. Job 1:21; 19:25; 23:10)

V.11 – Man is higher than the animal creation and his cry to God should arise out of mutual trust in God and not from instinctive needs

V.12-13 – Prayer is unanswered because of human pride and vanity

V.14-16 – Final rebuke for Job, warning against impatience and foolishness

Since the only voice God would hear was the one based on true religious seeking, and would not answer vanity, how would it be possible for God to comply with an entreaty stemming from the arrogance of one who said he could not see God (Chap. 23:8), who could not see His rule in the world and who charged Him with refusing his just appeal (V.14; cp. Chap. 13:18; 22:3; 31:35). Indeed, because God's long-suffering was manifest, it appeared that Job (adopting the RV mgn.) considered that God would pay little or no regard to his arrogance (V.15). In this way, Job had been guilty of vain words and had "multiplied words without knowledge" (V.16).

Job 36 – Elihu's fourth speech – The purifying effects of adversity

Having sufficiently rebuked Job for his complaints against God – reasoning from God's greatness and man's need, and so upholding "the righteousness of God" (Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-26), Elihu took up again the disciplinary nature of suffering. This time, however, he applied it directly to Job's case, reinforcing his argument with illustrations from the world to show the greatness of God and the impossibility of man comprehending all His ways, and that, because of this, Job should humbly submit. This final speech also anticipates the Almighty's speeches in the next section, when God answers Job out of the whirlwind – thus paving the way for the voice of God.

V.1-4 – Elihu's final appeal for an audience

V.2 – Elihu speaks on God's behalf

V.3a – His teaching will be extensive

V.3b – His approach will be humble

V.4a – His teaching will be true

V.4b – His teaching will be comprehensive and sincere (cp. Job 37:16)

V.5-15 – The purifying effects of adversity for moral development

God is mighty, but in His strength He:

V.5a – Despises no one
V.5b – Has understanding
V.6a – Does not preserve the wicked
V.6b – Gives justice to the oppressed
V.7 – God watches over and exalts the righteous

If the righteous are afflicted He:

V.9 – Shows them their sin
V.10a – Opens their ear to instruction

V.10b – Commands them to repent
The righteous who suffer have a choice:
V.11 – If they obey and serve God, they would resume prosperity and happiness
V.12 – If they rebelled, they would perish
V.13-14 – The perverse hypocrites would be cut off like “sodomites” (RV mgn.)
V.15 – However, the ear of the “afflicted” (i.e. Job) would be opened to receive a fuller revelation of God

V.16-23 – Job’s response to suffering considered

V.16 – Restoration was possible by a proper response to God’s mercy
V.17 – The danger lay in Job’s compulsion to make judgements belonging to God
V.18 – Warning against ill-advised “wrath,” for God’s justice requires Him to destroy the arrogant, without redemption
V.19 – Self-sufficiency is a barrier to redemption
V.20-21 – He implores Job not to desire death, nor to choose the way of the wicked
V.22-23 – There is no greater teacher than God, who knows the best possible method of instruction

V.24-25 – An ancient proverb on God’s awesome majesty

V.24 – Creation teaches us God’s ways V.25 – History demonstrates the accumulated evidence of God’s work of redemption

V.26-33 – God’s majesty and power in the wonders of Creation

(Darkening clouds, distant thunder, lightning flashes, and rain, act as an audio-visual aid to augment the words of Elihu)

V.26 – God is so great that we cannot know or understand Him
V.27-33 – The formation of rain, cloud patterns, bolts of lightning (God’s hands), pealing thunder (God’s voice), are all expressions of God’s creative power

Zechariah 11 – The rejection of the Good Shepherd and the scattering of the flock

Chapter 10 prophesies the regathering of the flock by the Good Shepherd (see V.8) whereas chapter 11 reveals why the flock was scattered beyond Zechariah’s day. It commences with a figurative description of the devastation that swept guilty Judah in AD 70 and condemnation is heaped upon the so-called shepherds of Judah who failed to care for the flock, in consequence of which they are rejected. The prophet personally enacts the parable of the Good Shepherd (V.4-14) who was to be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (V.12) and slain (Zech. 13:7), giving rise to the “idol shepherd” (the papacy) an accretion of the commercialized Judaistic religion of Christ’s murderers who were an increase of “foolish shepherds.”

V.1-3 – “Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars” – Cedars, like other trees, are used as symbols for people (Isa. 2:13; Jer. 11:19; 17:8). When the Roman legions invaded Judea in AD 66, they came from the north through Lebanon and down to Bashan east of Jordan. After some reverses in AD 67-68, by AD 70 the legions had desecrated the entire region and only Jerusalem packed with two million squabbling Jews remained. The fire of Divine judgement swept over them. The “howling of the shepherds” came from

thousands of crosses on which were suspended many that had been complicit in the murder of Christ. Many had swallowed their gold, and were cut open by the Romans in consequence.

V.4-6 – The cause of the calamity is spelt out – “Feed (shepherd) the flock of the slaughter” – Zechariah was told to shepherd or feed God’s flock that by its rulers was accounted good only for slaughter and eating (V.5; cp. Ezek. 34:1-3) as they themselves would become.

“I will deliver every one into his neighbour’s hand” – This speaks of factional strife and bloodshed, and these evils characterised the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Whilst the Romans were hammering at the walls of the city, the Jewish defenders inside were quarrelling and fighting among themselves and blood was daily shed by those who should have been united against the common enemy. Hence, “And into the hand of **his king**” – The Jews had rejected Jesus and claimed that Caesar was their king (Hos. 10:3; John 19:15), and into the hands of this king, claimed as their own, they were given as the Roman legions under Vespasian and Titus slaughtered over a million people in one of the worst sieges in history.

V.7 – Rotherham – “So I tended the flock doomed to slaughter” – Zechariah as a type and forerunner of Christ fed the poor of the flock ignored by the foolish and selfish shepherds of Judah. To signify the work of Christ he took “two staves; the one I called **Beauty** (pleasantness or graciousness), and the other I called **Bands** (unity and fellowship); and I fed the flock” – Shepherds of old used a “rod and staff” though sometimes these were combined in one instrument (Ps. 23:4). The rod was for fending off wild beasts (1 Sam. 17:34-35), and for counting the sheep (Lev. 27:32). The staff was armed with an iron hook at the end to pull in and hold straying sheep. Should one fall into a bog the hook could be helpful to drag it out. Figuratively, the rod and staff spoke of defence and counting, and were for guidance and assistance in trouble.

V.8 – “Three shepherds also I cut off” – Perhaps a reference to the Scribes, Sadducees and Pharisees who were disavowed (meaning of “cut off”) by the Lord in the last weeks of his ministry (Matt. 23). There was mutual antagonism – “their soul also abhorred me.”

V.9-11 – “I will not feed you....**let the rest eat every one the flesh of another**” – Zechariah enacted; Christ fulfilled. God’s people would not even listen to His son, leave alone His prophets (Jer. 11:7; 25:3-4; 35:14). Like the murderers of Stephen who “stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord” as they had similarly done with Christ, all the graciousness (“Beauty”) that was available to them was lost – “So I took my staff **Grace**, and cut it in two” (Rotherham), and so they were left to eat each other in the siege of Jerusalem as foreshadowed by Moses (Deut. 28:53) and recorded by Josephus. There was no option but for Yahweh to “break my covenant which I had made with all the people.”

V.12-14 – Still enacting the parable, it is apparent that Zechariah ran into some opposition from his contemporaries who took umbrage at his words. He was God’s messenger, not a hireling as they had suggested, so he sarcastically asks what price they would put upon him. In a remarkable foreshadowing of the Lord’s betrayal by Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27:3), they offered the price of a slave gored by an ox under the Law (Ex. 21:32), and with Judas again in mind “I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter” (Matt. 27:3-10). Such was the price laid on our Lord Jesus Christ. Little wonder Zechariah then broke his other staff – Rotherham – “Then cut I in two my second staff, even **Union**” (continued by Brenton) “that I might break the possession between Judah and Israel.” The covenant of Gen. 17:7-8 granting an inheritance to Abraham’s natural seed had to be set aside for the time being. Now both Israel and Judah would be absent from the Land until the latter days.

V.15-17 – Instead of two staves of graciousness and unity, Zechariah took up “the instruments of a foolish shepherd,” thus foreshadowing the rise of the papal system out of

the ecclesia through an apostasy fostered by Judaism and later Gnosticism. This developed “the idol (‘ē/ŷ/ – good for nothing) shepherd” whom Christ and the saints will destroy.

Revelation 12

CHAPTERS 12-14 – THE DEVELOPMENT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE BEAST, HIS IMAGE AND

ORGANISATION – Chap. 12 – Development of the Roman Apostasy – Birth of the Man-child

The following chapters cannot be considered verse by verse here. A full set of notes can be accessed and downloaded from web site <https://jimcowie.info> under the Bible Marking Notes tab.

V.1-6 – **The Rise of Constantine** – In AD 284 Diocletian became Emperor. In AD 286 he took Maximian to share control as Augustus. Then in AD 292 Galerius and Constantius (father of Constantine) were made Caesars. Subsequently, Diocletian partitioned the empire, reserving Thrace and the Asiatic provinces for himself and giving Maximian Italy and Africa, Galerius Illyria and the countries of the Danube, and Constantius had Gaul, Spain and Britain. The latter openly favoured the Christians (because of his Christian wife Helene) while Maximian and Galerius were openly hostile to them. Diocletian, once indifferent, was induced by Galerius to commence bitter persecution of Christians in AD 303. Diocletian, and then Maximian abdicated in AD 305 leaving Galerius and Constantius to assume the highest dignity with two new Caesars Maximin and Severus. Contention raged for some years over imperial power and at one stage six emperors ruled. In the east Galerius, Maximin and Licinius; in the west, Maximian who had resumed power, his son Maxentius and son-in-law, Constantine (successor to Constantius) who ultimately in AD 311 ruled Britain, Gaul and Spain, Maxentius over Italy and Africa; Licinius in Illyricum and Maximin in Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. Constantine declared in favour of the Christians and was attacked by Maxentius whom he defeated at the Battle of Milvian Bridge near Rome in AD 312. This left 3 divisions of the empire (V.4). Constantine and Licinius became allies in favour of the Christian cause while Maximin an intolerant pagan continued to persecute them. The latter attacked Licinius but was defeated. Licinius then repudiated Christianity and swore to exterminate it and restore paganism throughout the empire. This led to war with Constantine who was supported by the Catholic section of the Christian Church. Licinius and his pagan forces were finally overthrown in AD 324 and Constantine was proclaimed sole emperor. Ultimately he shifted his capital to Asia Minor and built Constantinople which became the seat of the Dragon power – Rev. 16:13.

V.7-12 – “there was war in **heaven**: Michael (Constantine) and his angels fought against the dragon (Paganism); and the dragon fought and his angels” – This is the conflict in the Roman “**heaven**” explained above. The victors proclaimed, “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ” – This was how the Catholics viewed the victory of Constantine and the Church over Paganism as peace resulted for the Church. The Church became ‘The Kingdom of God’ on earth.

V.14 – This verse demands a change in the character of the serpent power, for it was to persecute the woman for 1,260 years. The dragon is the symbol of the civil and military power of Rome which up to AD 312-324 had been pagan. When Constantine came to power the empire became ‘Christian’ but in fact this was only a paganized Christianity. The state Catholic Church persecuted its remnants who protested against its pagan ways. Hence, the dragon came in time to represent the ‘Christian’ civil and military authorities under Constantine and his successors. While there was religious liberty for Catholics, there was no such peace for “the **remnant** of her seed” (V.17), i.e. the **true ecclesia** which upheld the purity of the truth and was part of the protesting element being persecuted.

Revelation 13 – Uprise of the Beasts of the Sea and of the Earth

V.1-10 – Development of the **Beast of the Sea** (the Papacy with political power in the Mediterranean region) – It had “seven heads (forms of government = Rome) and ten horns (Barbarian nations formed in the Empire), and upon his horns ten crowns” (i.e. independent powers). The imagery is based on the **four beasts** of Dan. 7:3-7. The Bishop of Rome gained political power in the west from the emperors in the east by decrees – “the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority” (the military power of the Roman Empire based in Constantinople – Rev. 12:17) for “to continue forty and two months” = 1,260 years. And it came to pass:



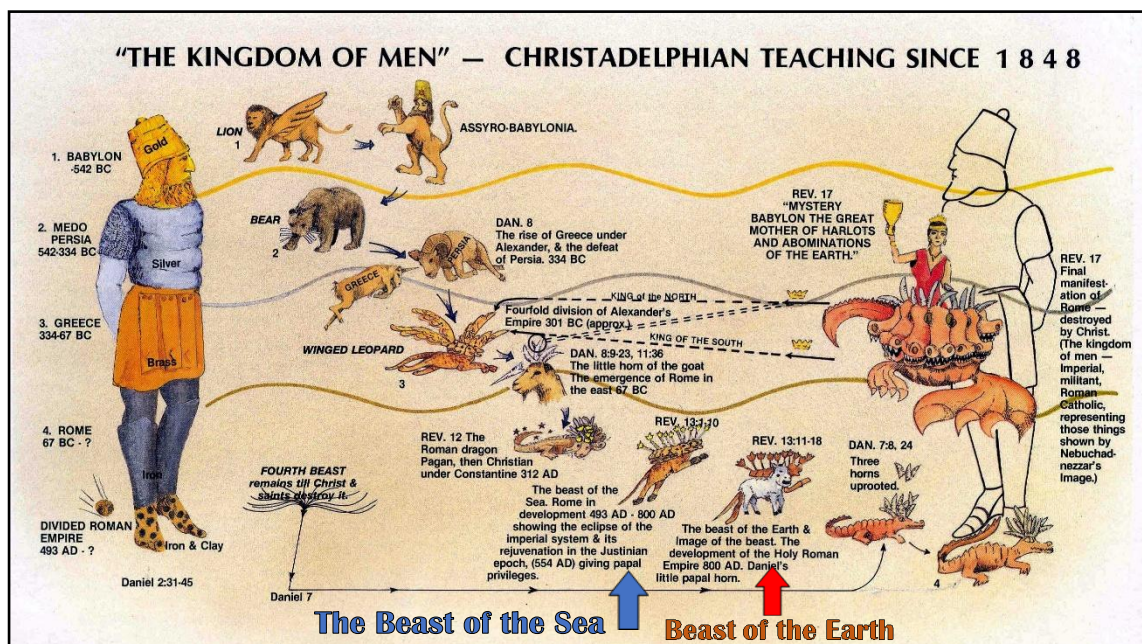
1260 Years of Papal Rule

529-533 to 1789-1793 – from the decrees of Justinian in support of the Papacy to the French Revolution.

549-554 to 1809 – from Justinian's Pragmatic Sanction giving the Pope control of Municipal and Provincial governments to Napoleon's annexation of the Papal States.

608-610 to 1868-1870 – from the Decree of Phocas proclaiming the Pope head of all churches to the loss of Papal Temporal power.

V.11-18 – The Development of the **Beast of the Earth** and its Image (the Papacy). **The Holy Roman Empire** was brought into being by the Pope having to seek new allies. A division had occurred in the Church between east and west – the Greek and Roman Catholic religions with headquarters in Constantinople and Rome respectively. The Pope could no longer rely on the military support of Constantinople. Attacked by Lombards, Stephen II sought help from Pepin king of the Franks. Again, in AD 773 Pope Hadrian appealed to Charlemagne (Pepin's son) who defeated the Lombards in 774. In AD 787, Rome formally turned from Constantinople and became allied to the growing power of Charlemagne in Central Europe. On Christmas Day AD 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Augustus and Emperor and so the Holy Roman Empire came into existence. Charlemagne extended his conquests to include the Germanic nations of central and northern Europe. The following chart shows the consistent Christadelphian teaching on this subject.



December 27

Job 37 – Elihu's fourth speech and his song of the seasons

Elihu continued his fourth speech which was evidently interrupted by a timely clap of thunder.

V.1-5 – The thunder of God's voice

V.1 – A clap of thunder rattled Elihu and focused his mind

V.2-5 – This interruption dramatizes his speech as he calls attention to the thunder of God's majestic voice

V.6-13 – The cold of winter

V.6-11 – The variation of seasons is under the Divine command: "snow" and "rain" (V.6); "wind" (V.9); "ice" (V.10); "clouds" (V.11). "They do whatever He commands them"

V.13 – God has a purpose in it all: (a) to correct those who are astray; (b) rescue those whom He loves; (c) to test their loyalty. The disasters God brought upon men were for their "correction," not to **prove** them so much as to **improve** them, as the mercies showered upon them would remind them that they received not according to their merits, but according to His grace.

V.14-18 – The heat-wave of summer

The wonder of what he described caused Elihu to turn to Job and beg his attention. Job had demanded of God to give him an answer. Yet, many things God did and man accepted without God ever giving a reason, or man ever demanding one; instead, he had learned to submit, conscious that God did whatever was for man's good. Oh, that Job might attend to these wondrous works of God; that he should reflect upon their lessons (V.14). Was it possible for Job to explain how God performed these wonders? (V.15). Could he tell how it was that God, as He sometimes did, seemed to poise the clouds in the heaven – obviously the mark of One "perfect in knowledge" (V.16), the stillness of whose cloud marked the presence of the light "south wind" (V.17). The hot silent stillness of this scene gave rise to Elihu's next thought. Could Job join with God to "spread out the sky" which resembled "a molten mirror" (RV); i.e. a mirror made of metal such as the ancients used (Ex. 38:8)? (V.18). To ask was to answer. None could so presume. The very thought itself served only to emphasize the Almighty's greatness and power, and the great gulf that separated Him from the finite creatures of his Hand, and the impossibility of any of his creatures contending with Him.

V.19-24 – The approach of the Almighty

Suppose one did contend with Him; what words would one use? Compared with His, our reasons would amount to "darkness" such as prevailed before His light illumined the chaos of the primeval world (Gen. 1:2). Could it be conceived that, in those circumstances, any man would presume to contend with God? Was it conceivable that any man would voluntarily order his own extinction? – "if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up." Yet for a man to contend with the Almighty was virtually to invite such a fate (V.20). Man would contend with God to discover His reasons, as men longed for the light of the sun when the clouds covered the land until the wind came to clear the skies (V.21). However, it was not the wind that cleared the clouds that Elihu had in mind, for the north wind brought cloud and rain, it did not disperse it. It was Deity Himself, riding upon "clouds," surrounded by awe-inspiring majesty (V.22; cp. Ps. 68:33-36; Jer. 4:13; Dan. 7:13). To the Eastern mind, the north was shrouded in mystery, and it was the place whence God's judgement emerged (cp. Ps. 75:6,7; Ezek. 1:4).

Deity Himself, said Elihu, was the true gold (cp. Ex. 25:17,18), the keeper of true wisdom, and though it was true that "we cannot find him out" (i.e. His wisdom was beyond man), it was equally true that in the exercise of His judgement and justice, he would do no "violence" (V.23

– RV mgn.). Though much of what God did, men might not understand, they reasoned from His greatness to His goodness, and bowed before Him in reverence. Job should also bow, for God would not look with favour upon “any that are wise of heart” – i.e. touched by pride and wise in their own thoughts (V.24).

Zechariah 12 – The coming Day of Yahweh

Chapter 12 commences a new section of the prophecy that continues to the end of the book. The theme of this extended and cohesive prophecy is the coming “Day of Yahweh”; a day when Yahweh will be vindicated by the outpouring of overwhelming judgements – see Ezek. 39:8; Isa. 2:10-21; Isa. 13:1-6; Zeph. 1:7. There have been similar days in the past which foreshadowed the future in type. Note the significant repetition of the phrase, “In that day” contained in this section of Zechariah’s prophecy – **12:3,4,6,8,9,11; 13:1,2,4; 14:4,6,8,9,13,20, 21** (in various forms it occurs 23 times).

V.1 – “which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him” – The Creation speaks of the omnipotence of Yahweh (Isa. 42:5; Amos 4:13). This is the guarantee that His word will come to pass (Isa. 55:11). There is nothing mortal man can do to prevent it.

V.2-9 – “I will make Jerusalem a **cup of trembling** unto all the people round about, when they shall be **in the siege** both against Judah and against Jerusalem” – See margin – ‘Cup of poison or of slumber.’ Criminals were given a cup of mixed wine to dull their senses before execution. The nations will be hopelessly intoxicated with the thought of the prize – “Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession” (Ezek. 36:2). It is important to note the timing of this prophecy. It is the same event as Zech. 14:2 when Jerusalem will be under **siege**. It is not about the present. The saints will be personally involved in these events (Zech. 14:5). Hence, “**On that day** I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples” (ESV). Consistent with Christ’s warning in Matt. 21:44, the nations who come against Jerusalem will be crushed by a stone power (Dan. 2:34,44). We are reminded of Zech. 2:8 – “After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.”

The invaders are represented as riding **horses** (war vehicles – used throughout this prophecy) – “I will smite every horse with terror, and his rider with madness” (Rotherham). Christ and the saints will be present (14:5), so “over the house of Judah, will I **keep opening mine eyes**, and, every horse of the peoples, will I smite with blindness” (Rotherham). “Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, the inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through Yahweh of hosts, their God” (ESV). The leaders of Jewry will recognize they are in the presence of Divine power and their remnant will become “like a torch of fire in a sheaf” (cp. Armageddon = a heap of **sheaves** in a valley for judgement), for “Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem” (Zech. 14:14) and assist with cleaning up the invading armies.

V.7 – “Yahweh will save the **tents of Judah** first” – This is consistent with the pattern set by David whose name occurs 6 times in this context (but nowhere else in the book). He first ruled only **Judah** for 7 years and then the whole nation for 33 years. “Tents” bespeaks homelessness for they will have been driven out of the current wider city of Jerusalem (14:2), hence, “Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem” (V.6). As for the Old City, it will have been turned upside down by the earthquake described in chap. 14:4-5 and by the exaltation in its midst of Mt Zion (Zech. 14:10).

It is clear from V.12 that one of the first things established “in that day” will be the tribal heritage of all surviving Jews. Once the descendants of David have been identified, the natural tendency to assert status and privilege will be curbed – (ESV) “lest the honour of the house

of David, and the honour of the inhabitant of Jerusalem, should be magnified over **Judah**" (i.e. all Jews in the Land). In fact, the house of David will be foremost in the outpouring of grief and remorse once their formerly crucified Messiah is revealed to them (V.10-14). Only those connected with the immortal "house of David" (2 Sam. 7:11,19,29) will occupy positions of privilege for "the house of David shall be as Elohim" (mighty ones).

V.10-14 – There will be an outpouring of "the spirit of favour, and of supplications" (Rotherham) on the survivors in Judah. When confronted by Jesus Christ whom their fathers crucified they will realize that they actually "pierced" his Father – "they shall look upon **me** whom they have **pierced**, and they shall mourn for **him**" (cp. Luke 2:35). The extended mourning of the whole nation will exceed that for Josiah in "the valley of Megiddon" (2 Chron. 35:24). Every strata of the nation will mourn apart to experience the denial of self as manifested by their rejected Messiah who will still bear the marks of his piercing (Zech. 13:6).

Revelation 14 – The triumph of the Lamb and the Redeemed

V.1-5 – The Lamb on Mount Zion with the 144,000 is a post-Armageddon vision showing the fulfilment of Rev. 7. The symbols of Rev. 4 and 5 appear again with an important addition. The redeemed have the "Father's name written in their foreheads" indicating they have His character which cannot be separated from His name (Ex. 34:5-7). They are also described as "not defiled with women; for they are virgins" indicating a spiritual status, not a condition of their former mortality. This means they had remained separate from all other religious systems – the 'women' of Rev. 17:4-6. They had followed "the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," and would do so forever.

V.6-13 – Three angels deliver messages as to how this opening vision will proceed. The **first angel** represents the saints on a mission to appeal to the nations to submit to Christ now installed on the throne of David at the foot of the exalted Mt Zion (V.1). They "fly in the midst of heaven" because their message is to everyone – those above, the 'heaven' (governments) and those beneath, 'the earth' (the governed). It is called "the everlasting gospel" (actually Millennial good news), but only good news if it is obeyed. After 10 years of this 'preaching' "the hour of his judgment is come" (i.e. 30 years – For the "hour" of judgement and the times of Armageddon refer to Eureka [Logos Edition] Vol. 5 pgs. 34, 38-39, 74-75).

The **second angel** announces the destruction of the city of Rome (V.8) – "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city" **10 years after Armageddon**, but this does not end Catholic rebellion against Christ as V.9-11 indicate. A **third angel** gives a dire warning that continued resistance will result in total annihilation. This is why Isa. 34:9-10 are alluded to in V.10-11 (see comments on Isa. 34 for June 10). V.12-14 are an interlude before more detail of Armageddon and the destruction of Babylon the Great are given.

V.13-16 describe "the harvest of the earth" = Armageddon ("a heap of sheaves in a valley for judgement"), and V.14-20 "the vintage of the earth" = the treading of "the great winepress of the wrath of God" in the total destruction of Babylon the Great. The vehicle of destruction is a "horse" (namely, Israel under Elijah – Isa. 63:13; Rev. 19:11), and the length of the period of judgement from Armageddon to that denouement is then provided in V.20 – "by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." This is **forty years** using the square root principle which began this chapter – 144,000 (V.1) is based on Rev. 7:4-9 with 12 tribes of Israel each with 12,000 sealed. To Jews a thousand represented a 'family' (see Rotherham for Jud. 6:15), and 12 is the number of Israel – hence using the square root principle 144,000 represents **the perfected family of Israel** (an innumerable multitude of Jew and Gentile – Rev. 7:9). 1,600 furlongs in V.20 is not a lineal measurement but the length or period of the bloodshed involved in treading the winepress. Using the square root principle of V.1 – 1,600 is

40 x 40 – hence, represents a period of 40 years. This is a secret code that is only discernible to those of Rev. 1:3 – *“he that knows accurately.”*

December 28

Job 38 – The speeches of Yahweh – Job 38:1 to 42:6

This section of the book contains the following:

Chapter 38:1 to 40:2 – Yahweh’s first speech – He is supreme – the architect and engineer of the universe. The Almighty’s first speech has two parts, the first (Chap. 38:4-38) dealing with the marvels of inanimate nature (drawn from Gen. 1), and the second (Chap. 38:39–39:30) surveying the marvels of animate nature.

Chapter 40:3-5 – Job’s confession and humiliation – Job’s impotence and ignorance

Chapter 40:6 to 41:34 – Yahweh’s second speech – His justice and power

Chapter 42:1-6 – Job’s repentance and submission

In his frequent pleas for an audience with God (Chap. 9:35; 13:20-22; 31:35), Job had proposed “Then call thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer thou me” (Chap. 13:22). Yahweh now, in keeping with His dignity, adopted the former of these alternatives. Job should “gird up his loins like a man” (i.e. be prepared for combat, and be courageous) for God would ask him questions and invite him to supply the answers (V.3).

V.1 – Rotherham – “Then Yahweh responded to Job, out of a storm” – The way, having been prepared, Yahweh Himself spoke from “out of the whirlwind.” It was Job, not Elihu, to whom His correction was addressed. Job had “darkened counsel by words without knowledge,” something he himself later admitted in Chap. 42:3 (V.2).

V.2-3 – Yahweh’s challenge to Job

V.2 – Reprimands Job for speaking in ignorance

V.3 – Challenges Job to answer Him

V.4-38 – The inanimate things of Creation reveal God’s universal power –

The architect and engineer of the universe

V.4-7 – The foundations of the earth – cp. Isa. 28:16; Ps. 118:22; 1 Pet. 2:4-8

V.8-11 – The control of the sea

V.12-15 – The command of the dawn

V.16-18 – The depth and breadth of the earth

V.19-21 – The source of light

V.22-30 – The seasons of the earth

V.22-24 – Winter’s snow and hail – Yahweh’s weapons of war

V.25-30 – Spring floods and summer thunderstorms

V.31-33 – God’s command of the constellations – The movements of the celestial constellations: Pleiades, Orion, Mazzaroth, the Great Bear – are at God’s command to control the seasons of the earth

V.34-38 – Control of the clouds – In between the heavens and the earth, there are the clouds that contain the water for rain, and electricity for lightning – falling and flashing at God’s command.

The point of this series of illustrated messages drawn from Creation is clear. In all of these things, Job was clearly to understand that there was no way in which he could challenge God. The disparity of reasoning and control between them was so vast. God’s world was so limitless, and Job’s so restricted and confined. God’s view took in every circumstance, and His judgement of issues was complete. Job’s view, large and profound as he might will it to be, was narrow and cramped by comparison. There was so much that he did **NOT** know. He was finite. God was infinite. It was folly to challenge God.

Zechariah 13

V.1 – “In that day there shall be a **fountain** opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness” – This primarily refers to the **water of life** offered by Christ to the Samaritan woman (John 4:14,42) which will be accepted by the refined Jews who survive the events of Armageddon (Zech 12:5,6,10 – called “the house of David” and “Jerusalem” here). This **spiritual fountain** will deal with “sin” and transgression, but will also involve **baptism** requiring water to deal with “uncleanness” (the possession of a leprous nature). The proud and self-confident Jews in the Land today are typed by Uzziah the would-be ‘Messiah’ (see comments October 29). They have leprosy in the forehead (their thinking unclean) like Uzziah and will be greatly humbled by the earthquake likened to that “in the days of Uzziah king of Judah” (Zech. 14:5) for a reason. Healed lepers (like Naaman) need to be immersed in water (Lev. 14:8-9), so a fountain will be provided for the purpose.

V.2-5 – The depths of rabbinical teaching (“the prophets and the unclean spirit”) and influence so evident in the Land today will not be easily overcome. Judaism is a form of idolatry (self-worship – Luke 18:11) and must be eradicated – “I will cut off the **names** of the **idols** out of the land.” The Jews in the Land (Orthodox and secular) will have been humbled but will not easily abandon their religious ideas and rituals (evidenced by their bitter resistance to Christ at his first advent), nor the philosophical ideologies of the “unclean spirits” that dominate Israel today. Judaism in the Brotherhood of old ultimately produced Catholicism, and like the latter will need drastic action to overcome. This will require education and discipline, but where apostasy persists the principles of the Law will be invoked – “when any shall yet prophesy, then his **father** and his **mother** that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of Yahweh: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth” (Deut. 21:18-21; 13:6-11; 18:20). Ingrained practices of millennia will take time to be eradicated, but finally will be abolished (Rotherham) – “neither will they put on a **mantle of hair** to deceive” (symbol of prophetic office – 1 Kings 19:19; 2 Kings 2:14).

V.6 – “What are these wounds in thine hands?” – It will also take time for all surviving Jews in the Land to come to grips with the fact that their new King and Messiah is actually Jesus of Nazareth whom their forefathers crucified. It is an intriguing fact that Christ in his **immortality** bears the marks of his crucifixion (John 20:27). It is the public sign of his victory over human nature, as will be his making sacrifice in the Temple during the Kingdom Age (Ezek. 45:17,22; 46:2,12) be a public demonstration that in overcoming sin and death he himself was redeemed by his own sacrifice (Heb. 9:12; 13:20). All sons of Adam need him.

V.7 – “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my **fellow**” (*’âmîyth* – relation, companion, associate). Paul explains this brilliantly in two places – Heb. 5:8 (Weymouth) – “Although he was **God’s Son**, yet he learned obedience from the sufferings which he endured”; and Phil 2:6-8 – “Who, being in the form of God... and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” The Lord cited this passage in Matt. 26:31 in order to prepare his disciples for their abandonment of him in the garden – “All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad” (its fulfilment is noted in Matt.26:56). But, in his absence, his Father would care for them – “Howbeit I will **turn back my hand over the little ones**” (taken up by Christ in Luke 17:2).

V.8-9 – “in all the land, saith Yahweh, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein” – In the events of the Gogian invasion, the great earthquake

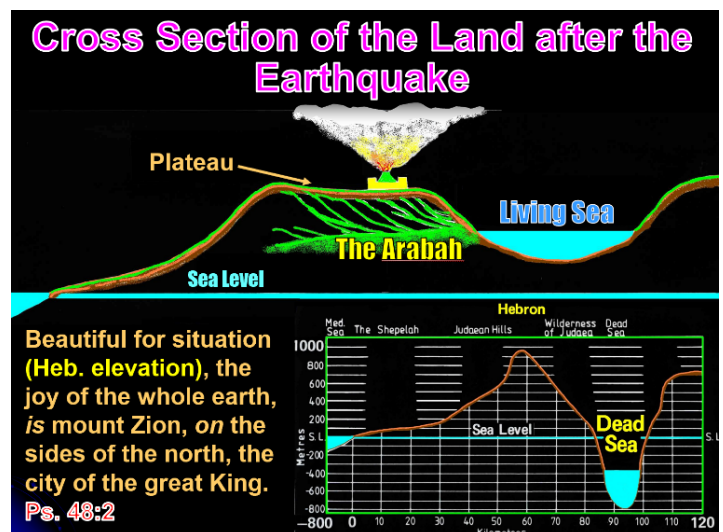
and the battles that follow, two thirds of Israel's current population of 9 million will perish (the percentage will be no less in the rest of the world on the principle 'to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile'). God's judgements are selective, so the survivors will have the potential to reform and participate in the Kingdom, although earlier verses of this chapter indicate that not even all of them will respond (human nature being perverse and ungrateful – Jer. 17:9). The fire of Divine judgement will have refined them as silver (symbol for redemption) is refined, and "try them as gold (tried faith – 1 Peter 1:7) is tried" by intense heat (tribulation). Then, says Yahweh – "they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, Yahweh is my God" in fulfilment of Gen. 17:7-8.

Zechariah 14

V.1-2 – "Behold, the day of Yahweh cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee" – None of what is described in chapters 12 and 13 can come to pass until the Gogian invasion of the Land reaches maturity. These events are similarly described in Ezek. 38; Dan. 11:44-45; Mic. 5:5-6; Isa. 30:30-31; 31:8-9 and many other places. Jerusalem is to be attacked, conquered and sacked ("the city shall be taken"), except for the Old City ("half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and **the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city**"). When the Jews captured the Old City in June 1967 they vowed they would never give it up to 'the last drop of blood.' It is clear from this passage that there will be Jews holding out against the Gogian siege until Christ and the saints arrive at the Mount of Olives (V.3-5). This will be made possible by the strict ban on using destructive weapons against the Old City which houses sacred sites for three religions. The Pope and his compatriots want these 'holy' sites to be taken intact ("Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession" – Ezek. 36:2; cp. Isa. 37:33 – no "arrow" fired). What this means is that Jerusalem has had its last full "treading down" (the meaning of Jebus) and the greater 'David' (Ezek. 37:24-25) will enter to set up the throne of David. The events of the Six Day War saw the 'cleansing' of Jerusalem from Gentile control (Dan. 8:13-14 – see comments October 30).

V.3 – Rotherham – "Then will Yahweh go forth, and fight against those nations,—just as he did in the day when he fought, **in the day of battle**" – The brutality of the latter day "Assyrian" (Isa. 14:25 – "I will break the **Assyrian** in my land") will be brought to a swift end as it was in the days of Hezekiah (Isa. 37:36). The "day of battle" referred to is drawn from Josh. 10:14,42 where a marvelous type of the 40 year "day of Yahweh" (the subject of Zech. 12 to 14) is presented for "Yahweh God of Israel fought for Israel."

V.4-5 – "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" – Christ will return to the very spot from which he left to go to his Father (Luke 24:50-51), but just as he left in the company of angels (Dan. 7:13), so he will return in the company of many of his glorified Bride (the angels of the future Age – Luke 20:36) – "Then, shall arrive, Yahweh my God, All thy holy ones, with thee!" (Rotherham V.5). An unprecedented earthquake "will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land" (Hag. 2:6-7), for "Surely in



that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel” (Ezek. 38:19). The result will be a complete reshaping of the topography of the Land (see slide above). The Mount of Olives will divide north and south and form the Arabah, a plain at the base of the plateau running down from Geba (NE of Zion) to Rimmon SW of Jerusalem. This massive earthquake will completely overturn everything in the Land and take with it Gog’s army and two thirds of Israel’s population (Zech. 13:8) greatly humbling the proud nation modelled by Uzziah the would-be Messiah. In fear they will flee **from** the valley formed (as it should read).

V.6-7 – Bro. Thomas translates these verses: “And it shall be in that day there shall be no brightness, **the splendid ones** drawing in. And it shall be **one day** that shall be known to Yahweh, neither day nor night, but it shall be at the **time of evening** there shall be brightness.” The RV supports this by rendering it as “the bright ones shall contract themselves.” The “bright ones” are the saints who during the 40 year period of “the day of Yahweh” will operate as the angels do now, rarely showing the glory that attends their Divine nature. As the 40 years nears an end (“the evening time”) and the Catholic Harlot system (the false ‘Bride’) has been destroyed, Christ will reveal his true Bride to the world (the subject of Rev. 19:1-9).

V.8-11 – Living waters will flow from under the Altar on Mt Zion (Ezek. 47:1-12) towards the once Dead Sea (“the former sea” – now living) and also flow northwards up the Jordan River and out to the Mediterranean (“the hinder sea”). Christ will rule on earth for his Father (Isa. 9:6) and only one God will be served by mankind (“one Yahweh, and his name one” demands it – Deut. 6:4-5). Zion will exalted at the lip of the plateau that looks down to the Arabah “and inhabited in her place” by Christ and the saints in the proportions supplied here and in Jer. 31:38-40. Peace will have finally come to Jerusalem (V.11; Ps. 122:6).

V.12-15 describe a range of Divinely created ‘plagues’ that will be deployed to destroy the invading armies of V.2. Survivors of Judah will be involved in the conflict (V.14).

V.16-21 – After 40 years of strife and war accompanied by diligent activity in the Land to build the Temple of Ezekiel’s prophecy (“Yahweh’s house” of V.20-21) the subjected nations will make annual pilgrimages “to keep the feast of tabernacles” that speaks eloquently of their involvement in the ‘harvest’ to fulfil the promises to Abraham – “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22:18). True to human nature, even in these blessed times some will not respond (V.17-19). Religious ‘traders’ (“Neither shall there be a merchant any more in the house of Yahweh of hosts” – Rotherham V.21) will be abolished for “he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations” (Isa. 25:7).

Revelation 15

Rev. 15 and 16 must be treated together for the former sets out (as is typical in the Apocalypse) the end to be attained, while chap. 16 shows how it is to be accomplished.

The important thing to remember is that the Vials are **our** work. The angels go out together (Rev. 15:1; 16:1). Christ and the saints are the 7th Vial Angel. All seven angels are clothed in pure white linen (Rev. 15:6 – symbol of “the righteous acts of

| Summary of Revelation 15 & 16 | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| The seven vials of Divine wrath | |
| 15:1-4 | The Rejoicing Redeemed |
| 15:5-8 | The Temple Opened in Heaven |
| 16:1-2 | 1st Vial – The French Revolution – 1789 |
| 16:3 | 2nd Vial – Britain Rules the Sea – 1793 |
| 16:4-7 | 3rd Vial – Napoleon’s Alpine Victories – 1796 |
| 16:8-9 | 4th Vial – Holy Roman Empire Judged – 1805 |
| 16:10-11 | 5th Vial – Holy Roman Empire Ends – 1808 |
| 16:12-16 | 6th Vial – Turkish Empire Dried Up – 1820 – Activity of three unclean spirits - Armageddon |
| 16:17-21 | 7th Vial – Conquest of the Nations |

the saints” – Rotherham for Rev. 19:8). Rev. 15 shows the way we should view our involvement in the judgements of God – but we are slow, like John! Consider the import of Rev. 19:9-10 and 22:8-9. The angels are working on our behalf now (Heb. 1:14), because we will one day take over their role (Heb. 2:5; Matt. 24:31; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:36; 1 Cor. 6:3; Heb. 12:22). The work of the 7th Vial is not theirs, but the saints.

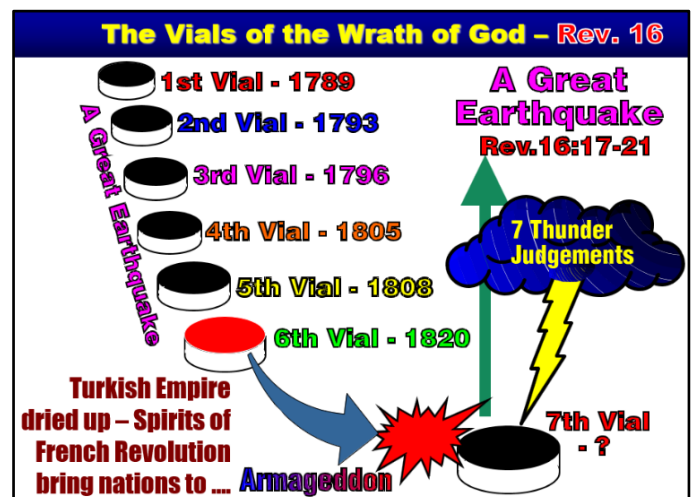
V.1-4 – There are two songs sung in two eras that provide the basis for the song of the Redeemed (they are Ex. 15 and Deut. 32) – “And they sing **the song of Moses** the servant of God (Ex. 15), and **the song of the Lamb** (Deut. 32:44 – Hoshea = Yahshua), saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou **King of nations**” (as it should be, alluding to Jer. 10:7). The Redeemed can sing this song because they “had gotten the victory over the **beast**, and over his **image**, and over his **mark**, and over **the number of his name**,” and “stand on the sea of glass (tranquility of the Kingdom), having the harps of God.” The Beast = the POLITICS of the Papal system and its supporters against Christ’s rule. The Image = the RELIGION of the Babylonian harlot encapsulated in the Pope. The Mark = the COMMERCE of Babylon the Great by which the world is controlled. The number of his name = 666 (Rev. 13:18) – the MORALITY of “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5). The harps = the hearts of the faithful (Eph. 5:19 – see also Rev. 5:8-10; 14:1-4).



V.5-8 – Details are now given as to how God’s judgements lead to the consummation seen in V.1-4. The “temple” (Nave = the Most Holy is the realm of immortality set before the saints – now occupied by the angels which include the saints of the 7th angel) – “One of the four beasts (**living creatures**) gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God.” The “living creatures” of Rev. 4:6 representing the military/kingly role of the saints were last seen in Rev. 6:7 in an era when the ecclesia had succumbed to apostasy. They are reintroduced to complete the judgements on the Apostasy “and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God” meaning there will be no mediation for the nations until the judgements are completed (see Ex. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10; Isa. 6:4).

Revelation 16 – The Seven Vials of Divine wrath poured out (see chart right).


The 1st Vial poured out was the French Revolution of 1789. This brought massive retribution on Catholic France and then on Catholic Europe through the military campaigns of Napoleon. The 2nd Vial was necessary to keep Napoleon where God wanted him, so his campaign in Egypt and his attempt to invade Britain were foiled by Britannia ruling the waves. The next three Vials were poured out on Catholic Europe and led to the end of the Holy Roman



Empire. The history of all these Vials is too vast to be considered here, but is summarized in the Bible marking notes accessible on web site <https://jimcowie.info>.

V.12 is based on the work of Cyrus in his overthrow of Babylon that foreshadowed the triumph of Christ and his saints over Babylon the Great (see comments June 17,19,21). The “great river Euphrates” is the symbol for the massive **Turkish Empire** that like that river which has its source in Turkey, overflowed all its banks into Europe (cp. Isa. 8:7). It was to be dried up progressively from 1820 onwards as history shows it has. When Britain pushed the Turks out of Palestine in 1917 making way for the State of Israel in 1948, a “way” was created for Christ to send his “kings out of a sun’s rising” against Babylon just as Cyrus had made for his “immortals” by drying up the Euphrates. Some slides will have to suffice here.

The way of kings out of a sun’s rising

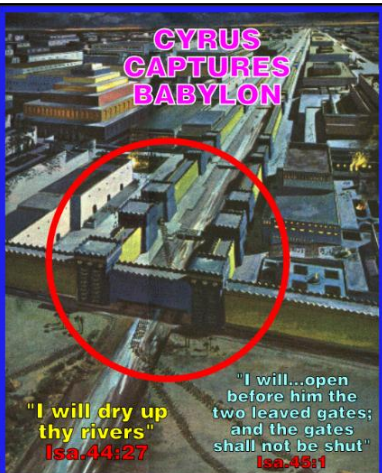


Based on the overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 BC

Cyrus – Type of Christ

- Raised up from the east by Yahweh in righteousness – Isa. 41:2
- Yahweh’s shepherd to deliver Israel and appointed judge of Babylon – Isa. 44:26-45:4

The Vials of the Wrath of God



CYRUS CAPTURES BABYLON

“I will dry up thy rivers” Isa. 44:27

“I will...open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut” Isa. 45:1

V.13-16 – The 6th Vial was also to see “three unclean spirits” created by the French Revolution come from the mouth of the Dragon (Constantinople), Beast (Europe) and false prophet (the Papacy). The latter has been partly fulfilled by the late Pope Francis, and is being continued by the present Pope. These “spirits” or ideologies are **Liberty, Equality and Fraternity**, otherwise known as **Humanism**. They will ultimately bring the nations to “the battle of that great day of God Almighty” in a place called “Armageddon” (outside the walls of Jerusalem). The bracketed verse 15 is Christ’s personal message to the last generation of believers not to become victims of Humanistic thinking. It leads to spiritual nakedness and ultimately rejection at the Judgement Seat. He based his words on the observations of a 12 year old boy as he sat outside the gates of the temple for three nights (Luke 2:46), and reserved this message for the final generation of his brethren!

The Temple Guard



- ❖ On duty every night – **240 Levites** and **30 Priests**.
- ❖ Set to watch the 24 gates of the **Temple** and its courts.
- ❖ To be **awake** and **alert** to prevent entry of the **unclean** or **forbidden**.
- ❖ Wore **distinguishing garment** of **white linen** while on duty.

“Blessed is he that watcheth”

- ❖ Watched from **dusk** to **dawn** without relief.
- ❖ **The Temple Captain (Acts 4:1)** made his rounds unheralded, at any time during the night.
- ❖ Guards found sleeping on duty were arraigned before their fellow guards at dawn, **stripped of their garment** (which was burnt), and were **dismissed ‘naked’ and shamed** from their Temple service.

V.17-21 – The 7th Vial will be poured out on Babylon the Great by the saints using “the way” established by Christ’s victory over Gog in the Land at Armageddon. The second of three declarations “It is done” (Ezek. 39:8) is heard. Roman Catholicism is destroyed over 40 years by Yahweh’s ‘hailstones’ whose “weight of a talent” = a human body minus all that is not required in the immortal body. This is after the pattern set in Josh. 10 (refer comments May 24). Every time hailstones are mentioned in Scripture the subject is about judgement. Hailstones are formed by a rapid uprush of warmer air into upper regions of the atmosphere where it is much colder. Tiny droplets of water coagulate in the cold and form into hailstones. As they become heavier, gravity causes them to descend towards the earth, and when their size is considerable they can do great damage. Such is the pattern for the saints. Having been given immortality (taken up as it were to heavenly places and trimmed to a “talent”) they will descend upon a guilty world and crush the resistance of mankind to the rule of Christ. Places like Ps. 72:6 speak of Christ’s rule in the wake of judgement – “He shall come down like rain upon the **mown grass**: as showers that water the earth” – the work of the saints. First the scything and crushing, then the revival through the Word of God.

This 7th Vial also constitutes the 3rd “great earthquake” of the Apocalypse.

December 29

Job 39 – The animate things of Creation – God’s universal care – Job 38:39-39:30

Having shown Job the scope of His **universal power** (and hence, the futility of challenging Him), the Almighty next proceeded to reveal His **universal care** (and hence, the scope and diversity of His **justice**). To do so, God brought before Job a panorama of animal and bird life, inviting him to consider their diverse qualities demonstrating the profound balance in Creation. A dozen different animals are mentioned; each is dramatically different, but God cares for them all, despite their diverse characteristics that perfectly mirror wildly contrasting human behaviour. Would Job perceive in these characteristics echoes of his own experiences?

Job 38:39-40 – **The needs of the young lions** – What was it, for instance, in the lioness that made her hunt for the prey and so provide food for her young? Would Job undertake to do what the lioness did by instinct in finding her food and by her power and skill in seizing her prey? Would he agree to supply the wants of young lions (V.39) that were instinctively supplied by the parent waiting the prey (V.40), or would he be able to see himself as an innocent victim of a roving hunter – the Adversary who walked to and fro through the earth?

Job 38:41 – **God’s provision for the young ravens** – Contrasting the silent power of the lioness was the insistent croaking of the raven. Both were flesh-eating, but the lion waited for prey and the raven ranged over a wide area in search of food. A carrion-eater, it would doubtless alight on prey left by the lions and so bring back food to its clamouring young. The lion was the noblest of animals and the raven the meanest of birds, yet one helped the other unknowingly, and God who fed the lion, also fed the raven (V.41). Would Job undertake the problem of feeding raven and lion? If so, what would he do? If imbalance existed, how would he right it? Was there not in the natural order an imbalance set by God?

Job 39:1-4 – **The wild goat** (Ibex) – Did Job know anything concerning the birth of the wild goat or the hind (V.1) or their period of gestation? (V.2). Their offspring were born without help or observation of man (V.3), yet their young were fit and strong, extremely fleet of foot, and grew up “in the open field!” Though by nature timid and shy, they belied their nature and soon left their mother to fend for themselves (V.4). Job knew virtually nothing of them or their habits. Who was it that cared for them, if Job, a practised carer of children (1:1-5), didn’t?

V.5-8 – The freedom of the wild ass (or onager) – Who was it that planted in the wild ass its deep, instinctive, love of freedom? (V.5). It was God, who made his home the desert (V.6) so that he scorned city tumult and enjoyed complete absence of restraint – the very opposite of his tame brother (V.7), a difference accentuated by his pasture in the mountains where he fended for himself (V.8). Had there not been such a spirit in his adversary?

V.9-12 – The stubbornness of the unicorn (wild ox) – Could Job tame and bring into service the wild ox? (V.9). Did he think it possible to yoke him to the plow or harrow? (V.10). Would it be possible to get him to do the things that were done by the domesticated ox – tasks, where left to himself, he would do on his own (V.11), such as carry home the grain, or work in the plenty of harvest? (V.12). Man could not tame the wild ox, but found his tame brother the most useful and trustworthy of animals. One was instinct with service and the other with fierce independence. They looked alike, but were so different, yet God made them both. Were there not people like these two beasts within the community of “the sons of God”? (Job 1:6).

V.13-18 – The foolishness of the speeding ostrich contrasted with the maternal stork – In some respects, the ostrich and stork were similar, but contrasting with the devoted care of the stork for its young, was the seemingly careless regard that the ostrich displayed for its young (Lam. 4:3). She left her eggs in the earth (V.14) where man’s foot or that of beast might crush them (V.15). By nature, she appeared to care no more for her young than if they had belonged to another; she seemed to have a callous disregard for results that attended her labours (V.16), and the reason was that God had deprived her of the sensitivity He had conferred on others (V.17). Yet if it came to a chase, her speed was such that no horse could hope to catch her (V.18). Here was a bird who had no thought of safety for her offspring but who, when she herself was threatened, displayed the liveliest concern. A paradox that displayed the variety and complexity of God’s creation, and which showed the resource and imagination of the mind that contrived it. Could Job see in the protective stalk himself (Job 1:1-5), and in the callous ostrich his nemesis – the adversary? Their respective behaviour matched!

V.19-25 – Combativeness of the war horse – Contrasting the fearfulness of the ostrich was the fearlessness of the war-horse. Did Job give the horse his strength, or clothe his neck with trembling? (V.19). Did he create in him that fractious, snorting, impatience? (V.20). Watch him as he pawed the ground, proud of his strength, desperately anxious for the fight (V.21). Neither fear, nor dismay, nor sword deterred him (V.22), but he raced to the fray, the rattling quiver, flashing spear and javelin (V.23). He gloried in the battle and was filled with fierceness and rage so anxious was he, at the trumpet’s sound it was hard to hold him in rein (V.24). He knew the sound of the trumpet (V.25). Had not Job seen this kind of combative behaviour in the ranks of “the sons of God”? And what about his friends’ behaviour towards him?

V.27-30 – The instinct of the migrating hawk and the pride of the high-nesting eagle – The hawk soared high in the sky, and migrated south, but by whose instruction? (V.26). Who told the eagle to mount up on high and place its eyrie on the precipitous crag? Was it Job? (V.27). High up, its eyrie resembled a strong-hold (V.28), and from there, it spied out its prey (V.29), and having captured its prey and carried it to its eyrie, where the young eagerly waited “to suck up blood.” Wherever the slain was, there was the eagle (V.30). Who gave the eagle its penetrating sight, and endowed it with blood-lust that passed, without instruction, to its young?

What was Job to understand by these illustrations from a wide variety of living creatures brought to his attention? One thing was very clear, innocent and unsuspecting animals suffered when they became food for wild beasts by God’s appointment, like the lion and eagle who pounced upon them out of nowhere. Similarly, Job could also see that animals of the same kind could operate totally differently, also by God’s appointment. The wild ass ran free

while his brother, the domestic ass, was tethered and controlled. Perhaps Job could see himself in the innocent victim category, while the 'Adversary' surreptitiously conjured up ways to take everything from him (Job 1&2). This adversary walked to and fro through the earth in total freedom to do as he pleased while Job was tethered and bound by his conscience. In God's wisdom, the harmless and timid creatures were necessary food for the survival of the wild and cruel. In any case, how would God ultimately save the human race? Would not a sinless man be killed by wild and rapacious men in order that the world might be redeemed? And what of Job? Was there not a deeper purpose in his sufferings than just his own perfection? Yes, the salvation of his erstwhile but unmerciful and callous friends, and perhaps even of the wild adversary himself (Job 42:11). And, whereas the harmless and innocent creatures who became food for the wild beasts would **never be seen again**, those who were upright like Job would see the light again and be redeemed. Job believed this – "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, **yet in my flesh shall I see God.**" The sacrifice of the harmless and godly would not have been in vain.

Malachi 1

Malachi, whose name means "My messenger" prophesied in the days of Nehemiah. All the evidence points to it being in the period of Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem after completing and dedicating the wall (Neh. 12) and his sudden return to find his people in a state of apathy and apostasy (Neh. 13). Hence the warning, "the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple" (Mal. 3:1). Malachi was a forerunner to Nehemiah just as John the Baptist was to Christ at his first advent (Luke 1:17), and Elijah will be at his second (Mal. 4:5-6). There are 5 messengers in the book all told, including the Levites (2:5-7).

Nehemiah at his second appearance found the returned exiles of Judah in breach of all seven solemn commitments they had made by covenant in Neh. 10 consistent with Malachi's 'message' from Yahweh. The nation was guilty of ignorance (1:6), indifference (1:13) and self-seeking (3:8). The theme of the book is "Who may abide the day of his coming" (3:2), a challenge just as relevant today.

An overall summary of its contents is as follows:

Chapter 1:1-14 – An unholy nation – Yahweh's love rejected and His name despised

Chapter 2:1-10 – A faithless priesthood – Levi's fine example ignored

Chapter 2:11-16 – A godless people – Unfeeling dealers in treachery

Chapter 2:17 to 3:15 – A nation of robbers – Judgement was pending

Chapter 3:16 to 4:6 – A faithful remnant to be vindicated – A message of hope

V.2-3 – "I have loved you, saith Yahweh. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Yahweh: yet I loved Jacob and I hated Esau" – The entire history of Israel from the time they left Egypt testified to God's love toward them, and of late the return from captivity and being permitted to rebuild the temple and the walls of the city confirmed it, as Ezra testified – "now for a little space **grace** hath been shewed from Yahweh our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place" (Ezra 9:8). **Ingratitude** is one of the worst failures of mankind. Hence, the repeated exhortations in Scripture to give thanks (1 Chron. 16:8,34,35.41; Ps. 30:4,12; 106:1,47; 140:13; Eph. 5:4,20; Col. 1:12; 3:17; 1 Thess. 5:18; Heb. 13:15). Israel were condemned in Deut. 28:47 because they did not serve their God "with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things." They were not grateful, or mindful of the benefits of covenant status. Jacob and Esau were diverse **twins**. Yahweh loved Jacob because he was

upright, but hated Esau because he was fleshly and selfish. Now in the days of Malachi, God's chosen people were acting like Esau. They were self-centred and ignorant.

V.4-5 – Edom had rejoiced at the Babylonian conquest of Judah (Obad. 10-14), but met a similar fate at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. They rebuilt, but were overthrown later by the Maccabees (BC 175-135) who compelled them to be circumcised and insinuated them into Judea from whence they again arose through Herod. But they are “the people against whom Yahweh hath indignation for ever” and are used as a type of latter day Babylon the Great in Scripture (Isa. 34:5-10; 63:1-4; Ezek. 35; Rev. 14:8-11). Their ultimate doom is assured, while Israel's is guaranteed – “your own eyes, shall see,—and, ye yourselves, shall say, **Yahweh, be magnified**, beyond the boundary of Israel” (Rotherham V.5). Why could not Malachi's generation see these things and understand and appreciate God's love for them?

V.6 – “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?.... O priests, that despise my name” – Firstly, the priests (teachers – 2:7) are condemned, and then the people (V.14) because they both responded the same way in their blindness and ignorance – “Wherein have we despised thy name?” Israel was God's firstborn national son (Ex. 4:22; Hos. 11:1,4). Where was the normally expected honour for a father, or willing obedience to a master? The nation was in a state of apathy and blindness later matched by Laodicea (Rev. 3).

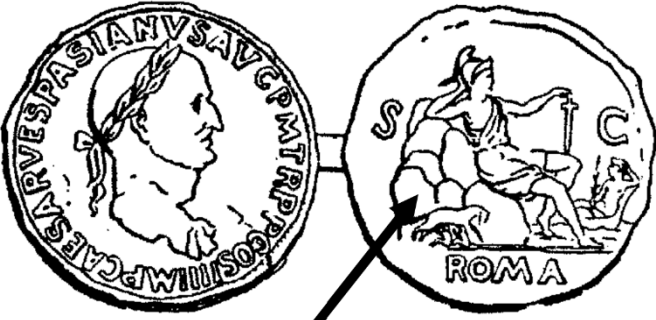
V.7-9 – To the charge “Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar” they responded with disrespect towards God's “table” (Ezek. 44:16; Ps. 69:22 cited Rom. 11:9) – “Yahweh's table may be despised” (ESV). This is tantamount to what later happened in Corinth when morally loose brethren treated the memorial gathering with contempt as Rotherham and the ESV translate 1 Cor. 11:27 – “in an unworthy manner.” That is what Malachi's compatriots were doing – “if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?” Their governor (Rotherham – “pasha” = Persian official) would not accept that. Why would they think Almighty God would? Ignorance and indifference ruled their mind and they could not blame anybody else – “at your hands, hath this come to pass” (Rotherham – V.9).

V.10-11 – The Septuagint (Greek) translation is probably more correct – “Because even among you the doors shall be shut, and one will not kindle the fire of my altar for nothing, I have no pleasure in you saith the Lord Almighty and I will not accept a sacrifice at your hands.” This is prophetic of the final shutting down of sacrifice in the temple in AD 70, but God's purpose would not be frustrated through Israel's failure. Ultimately, Yahweh would be worshipped by all men in every nation in the Kingdom Age. “Incense” (prayer) will rise to Him from every nation, but the polluters of Malachi's day would not be there to see it.

12-14 – If treating the altar with contempt was not enough, they also complained about the burden they believed the Law imposed upon them – “Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness (*mattelâ'âh* – what a trouble) is it!” Accordingly, they brought the refuse of their flock – “the torn (blemished), and the lame (immobile), and the sick” (unhealthy), all of which represented themselves as sacrificial animals under the Law always did. This was particularly true for sacrifices made for vows (Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21; Lev. 22:18-21) which were required to be perfect – “it shall be **perfect to be accepted**; there shall be no blemish therein” (Lev. 22:21). We who have made a vow in baptism must keep this in mind. Though by nature we cannot be ‘perfect’, this must be the aim. It is a question of **priorities** and **intent**. We serve “a great King” who cannot be deceived – “cursed be the deceiver.”

Revelation 17 – The Harlot System of Rome described

V.1 – “there came **one** of the seven angels which had the seven vials” – This is the Angel of the **7th Vial** to perform a work of judgement in which John will be personally involved. The subject of the judgements is “the great whore that sitteth upon many waters,” namely, the Roman Catholic Harlot of V.2-7 (language drawn from Jer. 51:13). The symbols are interpreted internally. V.15 shows the “waters” are a multitude of nations, and V.9 and 18 are conclusive that the city is **Rome** (the Greek grammar is clear – the reference is to the city that ruled the nations at the time John wrote = Rome). Jerusalem never did that, and so the view that the Harlot is a reference to Jerusalem (which is not built on seven hills either) is nonsense.

| | |
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| <p>The Mind which hath Wisdom Identifying “the woman” and the “seven heads” of the beast – V.3</p> <p>V.9 – “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth” – Rome built on 7 hills.</p> <p>V.10 – “And there are seven kings” – Rome had 7 forms of government.</p> <p>V.18 – “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↑ Present tense – Lit. “which has kingship”, i.e. when John wrote.</p> | <p>The seven hills of Rome</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Quirinal Capitoline Aventine Viminal Palatine Equiline Caeline</p> |
|--|--|

V.8 – “the beast that was, and is not, and yet is” – This is a reference to the Beast of the Sea, but in its final manifestation – i.e. the last 30 years of its existence before destruction by Christ (V.12-14). When John wrote, the 6th form (“head”) of Roman government existed. It was to go through phases – severely wounded by the Barbarians; replaced by Gothic rule (7th head), and then revived (as the 8th head) when Papal political power was established between AD 529-610. It was then temporarily overthrown between 1789 and 1870 (V.16), “and shall be present” (Rotherham), i.e. is yet to be revealed in another period of power (V.17) with 10 southern European nations that will revive the old Roman Empire (V.12-13; Dan. 7:7,11), before being destroyed by Christ and the saints (V.14).

Revelation 18 – Babylon’s violent overthrow

V.1 – “after these things” – After the events of Rev. 17:16 (1789-1870) and before the events of Rev. 17:11-14, “I saw another angel come down from heaven” – This is the mighty Rainbowed Angel of Rev. 10:1 who moves from place to place in stages (as the participle suggests) from God’s right hand, to Sinai, then to Zion (Ps. 68:17), then against Babylon.

V.2 – “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” – This is the fulfillment of Isa. 34:9-17. If Babylon is **fallen**, then it is not going to be “the habitation” of the priests and cardinals of the Catholic Church. This is a reference to what will happen after the complete annihilation of all rebellious Catholics from Europe and elsewhere after 40 years of judgement. Their lands will be vacated of all inhabitants and peoples and nations who have previously submitted to Christ’s rule, but have no land as an inheritance due to the massive changes in the earth’s geography at the time of Armageddon (Zech. 14:4-5,10) will be granted

the vacated lands. This is clearly the teaching of Isa. 34 (refer comments for June 10). It is also the subject of Rev. 19:17-18.

It is worth noting that much of the language in this section of the Apocalypse (chaps. 17 to 19) is drawn from Jer. 50 and 51 where the name “Babylon” occurs 55 times. Some examples are **V.2** – Drawn from Jer. 50:39; 51:8,37; **V.4** – “Come out of her, my people” is drawn from Jer. 50:8; 51:6,45; **V.6** – “Reward her even as she rewarded you” is drawn from Jer. 50:15,29; **V.8** – “her plagues come in one day” and “she shall be utterly burned with fire” is drawn from Jer. 50:27,31; 51:58; **V.9** – “the kings of the earth...shall bewail her, and lament for her” is drawn from Jer. 50:46; **V.21** mimics Jer. 51:63-64; **V.22** – “no craftsman, of whatsoever craft” is drawn from Jer. 51:17,47. There can be no accident in this. The greater than Cyrus is coming to destroy “Babylon the Great.”

V.7 – “she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow” – The Roman Catholic system will lose its ‘suitor’ when Gog is destroyed in the Land by Christ. That will not prevent it from immediately assembling its supporters against the rule of Christ – Ps. 2:1-6. In the end, after a long struggle, it will meet the same fate as Abimelech (V.21; Jud. 9:53 – see comments June 11).

December 30

Job 40 – Yahweh’s second speech

V.1-2 – **Yahweh’s challenge to Job** – The Almighty had set before Job ideas which, when he reasoned on them, could not fail to strip from him the mind that had challenged God to contend with Him, and that had alleged injustice in God’s treatment of him. We may assume there was a significant pause between the end of Chap. 39 and the opening words “Moreover, Yahweh answered Job” of Chap. 40:1. The ideas imparted were allowed to sink in. Then, turning to Job again, God asked him directly whether it was still his desire to “contend.” To “argue.” If so, he should answer (V.2).

V.3-5 – **Job’s confession and humiliation** – Job had been quick to see God’s reasoning. Before, he had been ignoring the larger world outside him; looking too narrowly on his own world. Relative to God’s overall plan, he was really of small account, and that admitted, there was nothing left to say. He would remain silent (V.3,4). He was convinced he had spoken far too much already (“once, yea twice”). He would say no more (V.5).

V.6-9 – Yahweh repeats his challenge to Job – (1) Do you refute my wisdom?; (2) Do you condemn my justice?; (3) Do you doubt my power?; (4) Do you reject my voice?

The righteousness of God could only be upheld through the salvation of many, and it followed that before a **man** could partake of this righteousness, he would have to abandon his **own**; he would have to look at the world as God looked at it; to join God and to share His attitude.

The voice of God continued out of the storm, repeating the challenge of Chap. 38:3. There were other answers Job must yet find (V.6,7). If Job continued to believe that he, personally, of himself, was just, was he not virtually ‘disannulling God’s judgement’ (i.e. breaking God’s rule in the world), thereby ‘condemning God’ – i.e. dismissing God from His own world? (V.8). The obvious thought here was that ‘the righteousness of God’ and ‘the righteousness of Job’ were incompatible. Possession of one would eliminate the other. If Job were to insist on his own ‘righteousness’, he did not need God’s. Thus, if God abdicated, would Job be able to wield the power of His “arm” or “thunder with a voice like Him?” (V.9). The answer was obvious.

V.10-14 – Job is invited to rule the world – God asks Job to change roles, and as the new executor of the universe, he must make decisions on two critical issues. He must: (1) Abase

the proud; and (2) Destroy the wicked (V.11-12). The very **thought** of Job ruling for God was one conceived in futility, but the fact that the thought was put at all suggested that it was the end to which (if pressed) Job's thinking would carry itself. If a man thought that **his** righteousness was something meritorious that he possessed, apart from God, the logical extension of his thinking was that he was either; (1) challenging God's supremacy; or (2) guilty of spiritual pride. Job was not guilty of the first of these. His was a mind that "sought" God rather than challenged Him. But he was guilty of the second, and for him to be invited to assume God's seat of power was to ask him to sit in judgement on his own case. If he were God, how would he deal with the wicked, and the man who would stand in his own right? For their own sake, to save them, God abased the proud (i.e. He "bound their faces in the hidden place," or put them under restraint) but condemned the wicked to death – i.e. He "hid them in the dust together" (V.13). If Job could exercise these powers, God would concede he could save himself (V.14).

V.15-24 – **Behemoth – The abasement of the proud** – Although Job's home was nearer Jordan than the Nile, he was asked to consider, in connection with the problem stated in V.6-14, Behemoth (the hippopotamus – RV mgn., and as the context confirms), and Leviathan (literally understood, the crocodile), two Egyptian creatures whose most natural home was the river. Both were fearsome, and calculated to repel. Why should Job have been asked to consider such creatures? Pride and sin repelled and God would have none of them. It was thus to enable Job to see man through God's lense, as God beheld him (Job) in his pride and sin, that God set before him Behemoth and Leviathan. However, there was precision in the choice of beasts. Behemoth wonderfully represented human nature which all men possess. As Bro. Thomas said in Elpis Israel, it is our misfortune, not our crime that we inherited it from Adam. It must be seen for what it is and crucified daily (Luke 9:23). We are only blameworthy when given the power to overcome it (the Word) we allow it to rule our lives (this is what Leviathan represented – the domination of man by King Sin – Rom. 6:12-14).

"Behold, I pray thee, the Hippopotamus" (Rotherham) "which I made with thee" (i.e. metaphorically, "like thee"). It was a creature gross in its fleshly proportions which, though endowed with the qualities that would suggest a devourer of flesh, was a grass-eater – "he eateth grass as an ox" (V.15). The enormous strength of the animal was concentrated in its loins, and this was matched by the muscles and tendons of its belly (V.16). The animal had remarkable control over its tail, which it would bend as a cedar-branch in the wind (V.17). His bones and ribs were solid, as if made of metal (V.18), an animal strong inside as well as outside, whose heart was difficult to reach – just like man. His teeth were his "sword" from God (V.19). Not even the greatest of calamities, as when the Jordan overflowed in flood, could disturb the equanimity of the hippopotamus (V.23), as it often seemed the most violent of misfortunes could not take pride from man. Would it fail in Job's case? Job's pride and confidence in himself needed to be abandoned.

Malachi 2

V.1 – "And now, O ye priests" – The priests who had flagrantly broken the commandments of the Law were now commanded to reform (Jer. 2:6; 5:31; 6:16).

V.2-4 – Failure to hear would see their blessings withdrawn – "I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already" for unfruitful crops (Hag. 1:6-11) meant no tithes on which the Levites depended – "Behold me! threatening, on your account, the seed" (Rotherham) "because ye do not lay it to heart." Even worse, Yahweh would spread the dung of their sacrifices (normally burnt outside the camp symbolizing repudiation of sin – Lev. 4:11; 8:17) on their faces in utter disgust of a tribe who occupied a special place in His heart.

V.5-9 – “My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name” – This is a reference to Ex. 32:25-29 when many of the tribe of Levi joined Moses to stand with Yahweh against the idolators of the golden calf. This was no easy task as it required them to “slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.” It also embraces the faithfulness of Phinehas (later High Priest) in dealing with a similar apostasy in Num. 25 culminating in God’s covenant – “Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace.”

“For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth” – The tribe of Levi had a special role in Israel. They were the **teachers** (Neh. 8:4-8) and accordingly had been spread throughout the whole Land in 48 cities without inheritance of land (Josh. 21) for that purpose, but Malachi’s generation had “corrupted the covenant of Levi” – “so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction” (ESV).

V.10-16 – Intermarriage with the alien was a common problem (Ezra 9&10; Neh. 13:23-29) in Malachi’s times – “Judah hath profaned the holiness of Yahweh which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.” Men of Judah had dismissed their Jewish wives for foreign women and had received the nod of approval from their priests – “Yahweh will cut off the man that doeth this, the **master** and the **scholar**.” The tears of the rejected and destitute wives in the temple led to the rejection of the sacrifices of the offenders and the reason was given – because “thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion (*chābereth* – consort), and the wife of thy covenant.”

V.15 – Rotherham – “Now was it not, One, who made you who had, the residue of the spirit? What, then, of that One? **He was seeking a godly seed.**” This harks back to V.10. God gave Adam one wife, though with “the residue of the Spirit” He could have given him more. This **One God** had a singular purpose to replicate Himself in a single ‘nation’ – the nation of Israel called out of Egypt (Ex. 19:5-6; Jer. 13:11), and eventually the “nation” that would supersede them due to their failure (Isa. 55:5; 65:1; Rom.10:20; Matt. 21:43). The raising of faithful children was always in view (Deut. 6:6-9; Ps. 78:1-7). Yahweh wanted a Godly seed, but divorce and remarriage to unbelievers destroyed any hope of that. Hence, “he hateth divorce, saith Yahweh, God of Israel” (Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-9; Luke 16:18).

V.17 – “Ye have wearied Yahweh with your words” – Inversion of God’s principles in calling the evil man good, and that God delighted in the evil was essentially blasphemy, but to challenge Him with the cry, “Where is the God of judgement?” was the last straw. It was coming and God’s “messenger” was on his way – Nehemiah, “the Lord whom ye seek.”

Revelation 19

Bro. Thomas wrote in Eureka Vol. 5 page 320 (Logos Edition) – “The blessed and only Potentate upon the white horse, with the hosts of heaven, marching at the head of his army, from his capital against the kings of the earth and their forces, is the Apocalyptic angel, descending with key and chain to arrest, imprison and destroy, the powers of the world. When potentates leave their capitals on warlike expeditions, they are said to descend upon the countries they invade: so with this Angel. He descends from the heaven of his habitation and government upon the territories of the Devil and Satan.” This is what Rev. 19 and 20 cover.

V.1 – “And after these things” – i.e. the destruction of Rome (Chap.18). A loud voice of the saints in glory is heard saying “Hallelujah! The salvation and the glory and the power belong to our God” (Weymouth). There are to be **two “Hallelujah’s”** and it is important to delineate between them. The first is in V.1-2 and the second is from V.3-5. V.3 begins “And, a

second time, have they said—Hallelujah!” (Rotherham). The first “Hallelujah” by the saints is after the city of Rome is destroyed 10 years after Armageddon. This first “Hallelujah” is then amplified in V.6-8 where it is important to note the tense in the Greek. Green’s Lit. translates correctly – “Let us rejoice and let us exult, and we will give glory to Him, **because the marriage of the Lamb came**, and His wife **prepared** herself. And it **was given** to her that she be clothed in fine linen, pure and bright; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses (acts of character) of the saints.” These events were in the past (19 years in the past in fact), and now the saints can rejoice because the false ‘bride of Christ’ (the Catholic Harlot) has been revealed for what she is with the destruction of her headquarters – Rome. However, the system and its adherents will be far from destroyed. That will take another 30 years or so to completely accomplish. That is when the **second “Hallelujah”** will be heard – V.3-5. When the Papacy and its supporting empire is destroyed (V.20), then “the marriage supper of the Lamb” can be held. The Harlot ‘bride’ having been eliminated, Christ can reveal his true Bride to the world. That is what is meant in Zech. 14:6-7. During the long struggle against the false ‘bride’ “there shall be no light, the **bright stars** (the saints), shall be withdrawn” (Rotherham for Zech. 14:6), “But it shall come to pass, that, at evening time (nearing the end of the 40 year ‘day’), there shall be light” (Rotherham for Zech. 14:7) because the saints will be revealed as the Bride of Christ and he can then hold “the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (See Eureka Vol. 1 pg. 64).

V.10 – John’s response to all this was to do homage to the delivering angel, but he is stopped and told “I am a fellow-slave of yours, and of your brothers” (LITV) which reminded him that the saints will actually be the ones who destroy the Harlot. Like us, he was slow in realizing that the enormous privilege of being the angels of the Age to come is ours, **if** we remain faithful. He did the same thing again in Rev. 22:8-9 showing how difficult it is to rise above human weakness and uncertainty.

V.11-21 – The rider of the white horse is Christ. This imagery is drawn from Isa. 63:13 a prophecy of the destruction of Babylon the Great, the “Edom” of Isa. 63:1-6. In V.13 of that chapter Yahweh says He led Israel “through the deep, as an **horse** in the wilderness.” The **ass** is normally the four-legged symbol for Israel, but here it is a horse because it is a vehicle of warfare and that is the way it is presented in V.11 – “a **white** (= righteousness V.8) **horse** (war vehicle) ...in **righteousness** he doth judge and make **war**.” The **horse** is **Israel** returning under Elijah in the Second Exodus smashing their way through Europe (“the wilderness of the peoples” – Ezek. 20:35; Isa. 63:13; Rev. 17:3) bringing judgements upon Babylon the Great. But Christ is not alone in this work. His saints also ride on “white horses” (V.14), as many of them will accompany Elijah in his work of the Second Exodus – Matt. 24:31; Zech. 9:14. This is verified in V.15 – “he shall rule them with a rod of iron” is the promise to faithful saints who resisted “Jezebel” (Nimrod) in their day in Rev. 2:26-27. Nations who have submitted to Christ (“who had stood in the sun” V.17 = set up his government) after Armageddon will be invited to participate in the destruction of the Harlot (V.17-21) until the Papacy and the revived Holy Roman Empire and all its adherents are destroyed.

Revelation 20 – The Old Serpent bound and then destroyed

V.1 – Rotherham – “And I saw a messenger, coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain upon his hand” – This is the same ‘Angel’ as Rev. 18:1 and represents Christ and his armies (19:11-17), and they descend from the political heavens opened in Rev. 19:11 (see also 19:1). The “key” represents the power to open and shut government – Isa. 22:22 (cp. Rev. 1:18). They come to chain the “old serpent” – a symbol of restraint by law (cp. Mark 5:4 and Ps. 149:5-9) and cast him into the abyss or the deep.

V.2 – Every form of opposition to God during the history of the human race has originated from the serpent in the Garden of Eden, which is why the description is “the **old** serpent.” The first promise God made was in that garden, and it was to ultimately destroy the serpent. Hence, Rev. 20 deals with the fulfillment of Gen. 3:15. In fact, the last three chapters of the Bible deal with the fulfillment of all three great covenants as shown at right.

Political and religious opposition to God will cease for 1,000 years (V.4,6), but human nature being what it is will burst out in rebellion as soon as the pressure of Christ’s government is released. This will lead to a massive rebellion (“whose number is as the sand of the sea”) against Christ and the saints that will end with the eradication of sin and death, and the end of mortality (the curse of Adam) upon earth, so that God might “be all in all.”

Much of the imagery and language of Rev. 20 is derived from the marvelous type presented in Joshua 11. The charts used on May 25 are copied here again.

Jabin represents the Serpent

| Joshua 11 | Revelation 20 |
|--|---|
| V.1 – Jabin – “Intelligent”, “wise” | V.2 – The old serpent – “more subtle” Gen. 3:1 |
| V.2-3 – from north, south, east, west | V.8 – gather from four quarters of the earth |
| V.4 – even as the sand on the sea shore | V.8 – as the sand of the sea |
| V.5 – met together, pitched together | V.9 – went upon the breadth of the earth |
| V.5 – Merom – “height” or “elevation” | V.9 – the beloved city – Zion (elevation - Ps. 48:2) |
| V.6 – burned chariots with fire | V.9 – fire from God out of heaven |

Culmination of the 3 Great Covenants

Rev. 20 – Final fulfilment of Gen. 3:15

The Old Serpent bound and finally destroyed
Sin and rebellion eradicated - death abolished

Rev. 21 – Abrahamic Covenant fulfilled

The Holy City (Abrahamic) completed
One nation – Israel – embraces all
Eternal inheritance experienced by all

Rev. 22 – The Promises to David fulfilled

Divine authority over all the earth
David’s throne established forever
The spiritual house of David complete

| Joshua 11 | Revelation 20 |
|--|---|
| V.8 – Mishrephoth-maim – “burnings of waters” | V.10 – cast into the lake of fire and brimstone |
| V.8 – left none remaining | V.14 – the second death – mortality abolished |
| V.11 – left none to breathe | V.15 – no mortals remain |
| V.23 – the land rested from war | The serpent destroyed – no sin and death – Gen. 3:15 |

Joshua 11 is the basis for Revelation 20 – it foreshadows the final conflict between Christ and the serpent in political manifestation.

V.4-5 deal with the first resurrection and Judgement Seat whereas V.11-15 deal with the second resurrection and Judgement Seat at the end of the Millennium (the latter based on the former in process and outcome). A fascinating statement is made at the first that those present “were beheaded for the witness of Jesus.” We can be sure they belong to the era of the 6,000 years because they are known for repudiating Catholicism which will not exist in the Millennium. How many were beheaded as a witness for Christ? Not that many relative to the vast numbers at the Judgement Seat. What might this hint at? The rebellion at the end of the Millennium when Christ draws the saints back to Jerusalem for the “little season” (V.3 – probably a period of 50 years wherein there will be no births as there cannot be babies and irresponsible young children at the second Judgement Seat) will be at a time when there are very few dangerous weapons on hand, except for agricultural implements like scythes and pruning knives (Isa. 2:4), and perhaps axes and machetes. The rebels will doubtless go around demanding support for their cause, and if it is not forthcoming may behead those who refuse to join them. This will be a serious test at the end of a time of universal peace and tranquillity. God does not bestow eternal life on anyone who is not tested. That is why there was an amoral talking **serpent** in the garden who presented a test of obedience to Adam and

Eve. What other tests will people who have lived for hundreds of years (Isa. 65:20) in an almost perfect environment and with a perfect government have imposed upon them to prove them worthy of eternal life? The serpent will be involved again. The same principle that applies to us now will apply to them – Luke 17:33 – “Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.”

V.8 – The “Gog and Magog” who manifest the “old serpent” in the rebellion are not the Gog and Magog of Ezek. 38 and 39, but the revival of the political antagonism which motivated them – “Liberty, equality and fraternity”. These nations had their origins in the **Amalekites** (Num. 24:7 where the Septuagint translates “Agag” as “Gog”). The Amalekites became the national symbol for the serpent (see comments on Ex. 17 on February 9). Therefore, these powers at the end of the Millennium represent the revival of the political and religious powers of “the old serpent” of V.2. This will be their final appearance as Yahweh promised the time would come when He would “blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” – Deut. 25:19.

December 31

Job 41 – Yahweh’s second speech (continued)

Behemoth might be captured, in certain circumstances, even tamed, but not so Leviathan, whose description fits the crocodile.

V.1-34 – Leviathan (the crocodile) – The destruction of the wicked – An amphibious monster of land and sea, a creature of violent hostility, used to symbolize the power and dominion of sin (Isa. 27:1; Ps. 74:14).

V.1-9 – The fierceness of Leviathan – He is: uncatchable, unfeeling, untrustworthy, unmanageable, unplayful, undesirable, inhospitable, unethical = Man’s impotence to conquer sin.

V.10-11 – The power of sin, no matter how fierce, is not outside God’s control

V.12-25 – The power of Leviathan:

V.12 – Powerful limbs

V.13-14 – Ferocious jaws and teeth

V.15-17 – Impenetrable scales

V.18-21 – Terror of his breath

V.22-23 – Tremendous strength

V.24 – Heart of stone

V.25 – Strikes fear and terror

V.26-29 – Man’s weapons are ineffective

V.30-32 – Once aggravated he creates turbulence

V.33-34 – Fearless, ferocious, and formidable – he is the epitome of ‘King-Sin’ ruling over mankind

Leviathan, as a political concept in Scripture, was used to designate the sin-powers, either the King of the North (Isa. 27:1) or the King of the South (i.e. Pharaoh – Ps. 74:14) and such illustrations were doubtless based on this **characterization of sin**. The whole point of the context was that sin was something to be eradicated from human life, as the crocodile might be extracted from the river that gave life to Egypt. God intended to destroy sin and its effects from the earth, but could Job overcome sin by methods available to him, apart from God? If Job would conquer Leviathan (i.e. sin personified), what weapons were at his disposal? All he had was a fish-hook and a cord, a rope and a spike, and much more than that was required (V.1,2). If Job had no weapons at his disposal sufficient to conquer this terrifying creature, could he expect that it would come to him of its own accord, gently entreating him with a promise of good behaviour. Could anyone imagine **Sin** being good? (V.3). If not, then was it possible he and Leviathan would enter a covenant together (i.e. by sacrifice), whereby the monster would undertake to become his slave, and always serve him and do his bidding.

Could anyone imagine an agreement between light and darkness? (V.4; cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-18). It could not be tamed (V.5), and no one would purchase it (V.6).

Even when a person had all the right equipment, his armaments were of little value against the “skin” and “head” of the crocodile. He also needed God on his side (V.7; cp. Rom. 7:18-25). And if a person ventured to fight Leviathan alone, he had only to ‘lay his hand upon him’ to be convinced of the inequality of the battle, and he would do so no more (V.8). A man might set out with the best of good intentions to overcome the **monster**, but the very sight of his awesome appearance was sufficient to strike fear into the heart, and one’s resolution was soon daunted (V.9). If, then, he found it beyond him to conquer a creature made by God, what folly to imagine he could approach to openly contend with the Creator Himself. And the clear inference, thus far, would therefore be – man by himself was powerless against sin and he was certainly powerless against God (V.10). God stood alone, and apart. He was **absolute**, and **supreme**. If any could be found to whom He owed anything, He would willingly repay, but there was none (V.11).

Finally, Job was invited (V.12) to consider the various features of the crocodile, his jaws and teeth (V.13,14), his strong scales (V.15-17), the terror of his breath (V.18-21), his tremendous strength (V.22-24); the fear he engendered (V.25), and how all men’s weapons failed against him (V.26-29). His impression was left upon the mind (V.30), and he created commotions in the deep (V.30,31). He was unassailable, unapproachable, frightened by no one. Proud of his own strength, yet vile, he was “king over all the sons of pride” (RV – V.34).

The illustrations used very aptly described the detail, habits and attitude of the crocodile, and equally well, metaphorically described the wicked whom God was pledged to destroy. If anything could be used to describe unvarnished self-interest, this was it. Further, it was also the evil picture to which pride, if it remained unchecked, would drive a man. Leviathan epitomised human nature under the complete domination of sin.

Job 42 – The epilogue – Job’s confession, redemption and restoration

V.1-6 – Job’s repentance and submission

V.2 – I am weak

V.3 – I am unwise and wordy

V.5 – I now know you by experience

V.6 – I am unworthy

V.10 – Job’s restoration as Yahweh’s mediator

V.11 – Job’s consolation and renewal of old friendships

V.12 – Renewal of Job’s wealth – a double portion

V.13-15 – Job’s new family and their inheritance

V.16 – The generations of Job – A patriarch without peer in the land of the east

V.17 – Job’s epitaph – Job’s length of days and quality of life

V.7-9 – Job’s reconciliation and redemption

V.10-17 – Job’s restoration and epitaph

If sin was to be overcome at all, only God could overcome it. All the good that was in a man was in him because of the influence of God in him – he was not a ‘partner’ so much as a ‘beneficiary’ in the grace of God. Apart from God, he could neither conquer the power of sin in himself nor contend against its power in others. By himself, he could do nothing, but God could do everything. Point by point, Job had been reduced, stripped of every ‘independent’ thought, and driven to find his refuge in God, in all things.

Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar were condemned because they had not spoken about God the thing that was right. Conversely, what Job said about God was right (V.7). As isolated statements, many things the three friends said about God were sublimely true (cp. Chap. 4:17; 5:17 etc.), as many said by Job of God were completely false, which he acknowledged (Chap. 40:3-5; 42:3,6). They were condemned for what they said about God; i.e. that God’s

punishment of sin was exact, immediate and inexorable, and Job was commended for speaking what was right, in opposition to this theory (Chap. 21; 23 & 24). The lesson from this is simple – **we need to be right doctrinally**. God is not glorified by wrong doctrine.

The three friends were commanded to offer burnt offerings (the number and type of which suggested complete renunciation and rededication), so that they might be saved on Job's intercession for them. Intercession duly made, Job's three friends were restored after Job had prayed for them (V.9), thus completing the lesson that flowed from the Almighty's first speech concerning the benefits accruing from the sufferings of the innocent.

V.10 – "Yahweh turned the captivity of Job, **when he prayed for his friends**" – Job's self-righteousness had been reproved by God, so restoration in his case took place "when he prayed for his friends," and Yahweh restored to him a double portion; i.e. the right of the firstborn (Deut. 21:15-17; Ezek. 47:13). His disease removed, and fortunes restored, his friends and acquaintances renewed past associations (V.11). His herds and flocks were doubled (V.12), and he regained 7 sons and 3 daughters (V.13-15). The hope of resurrection would ultimately restore those lost.

V.11 – "Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and **all they that had been of his acquaintance before**" – The adversary was an acquaintance of Job. Might he be included? Certainly that had been part of the aim of Job's trials.

A more gracious end for Job is hardly imaginable, but it awaits a more glorious denouement at the return of Christ when Job's confidence in God will be fully vindicated and his lost children restored. He will probably also share eternity with his friends who made his life miserable for a time, and only God knows whether the Adversary changed his ways. The many echoes in Isa. 53 of Job and his experiences are not really surprising.

Malachi 3 – Who may abide the day of his coming

V.1-5 – "Behold, I send **my messenger** (meaning of Malachi's name), and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord (*adon* = ruler), whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant (*berith*), whom ye delight in, behold, he cometh, saith Yahweh Tzva'oth" – There were to be several iterations of this 'coming' – Nehemiah was about to appear after a period away in Persia and his forerunner was Malachi; Jesus of Nazareth would come as Israel's Messiah preceded by John the Baptist; and the Lord Jesus Christ as Israel's coming King would be preceded by his messenger, Elijah (4:5-6). The use of the militant title Yahweh Tzva'oth (used 24 times in Malachi) points to the latter as being the most important, for then Christ "will purify the sons of Levi" (V.3). This will be accomplished by the events of Armageddon and the Second Exodus of Israel, during which the rebels will be purged (Zech. 13:8-9 – cp. the language used there with V.3; Ezek. 20:38). To refine as **silver** and **gold** are purified is to convert and **redeem** through **tried faith**. The sins of Malachi's generation (V.5) have been repeated endlessly to the present day among God's people, but His coming judgements will purge them.

V.6-15 – "For I am Yahweh, **I change not**; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" – Covenant was the theme of V.1 for which the messengers were coming. God's promises to Abraham will be fulfilled despite the failure of so many of Abraham's natural children. That is why the race could never be completely destroyed even though they would go into captivity several times. This statement is a reminder of the burning bush that was not consumed (Ex. 3:2). Israel would suffer the fiery furnace of Egypt (Deut. 4:20) and its like many times, but would never be destroyed like their oppressors were. If they wanted to avoid the next conflagration there would have to be immediate reform – "Bring ye all the tithes

into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith Yahweh Tzvaoth, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing” and “all nations shall call you blessed.” But, “Your words have been stout against me” and they couldn’t see it – “Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance.” What hope of redeeming those who “call the proud happy” and justify the wicked doer? (V.15).

V.16-18 – But there was a remnant who “feared Yahweh (and) spake often one to another.” This did not go unnoticed. It was the practice of Persian monarchs to call their scribes together in the evening to record significant events of the day (Esther 6:1-2). It also happens in heaven – “Yahweh hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written **before him** (Matt. 18:10) for them that feared Yahweh, and that **thought** upon his name.” This book is a record of the life of individuals (Rev. 20:12), as distinct from the single Book of Life in which only names are recorded. It will be used by the interviewing angels at the Judgement Seat (Ecc. 5:6; Rom. 14:10-12 – see comments August 4) before we appear in the presence of Christ. Thankfully, sins acknowledged and forgiven (like David’s) will not appear, having been erased (Isa. 43:25; Ezek. 18:21-22). What is recorded in that book is purpose and intent, particularly how the principles and character of God can be woven (“thought” is *châshab* – to plait or interpenetrate, that is, to weave) into one’s life. We are called to manifest the character of God. He, through the angels, records our attempts to do so.

The promise is “they shall be mine, saith Yahweh Tzvaoth, in that day when I make up my **jewels**; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him,” but this will require severance of the righteous from the wicked – “So shall ye return, and see the difference, between the righteous and the **lawless**,—between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not” (Rotherham). The choice is ours. We make the answer now! (Hymn 405).

Malachi 4

V.1-3 – Judgement will begin at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17) and the “proud” of chapter 3:13-15 will be the first to feel the wrath of God. They will be followed in turn by Gog’s army; the Jews in the Land (Zech. 3:8), and finally by Babylon the Great (Catholicism) with all its adherents during which judgements scattered Israel will also be purged (Ezek. 20:38). No one will escape the “refiner’s fire” and the “fullers’ soap” (3:2) – “everyone who worketh lawlessness, shall be, stubble, and the day that cometh, shall consume them utterly” (Rotherham). This is language is redolent of Armageddon (a heap of sheaves in a valley for judgement).

To those of chapter 3:16, “shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings” (*kânâph* = wings, but is used of borders or an extremity). The idea is that nothing will be beyond Christ’s reach. The light of “the sun of righteousness” will eventually dispel all darkness (Isa. 60:1-3). The faithful will no longer be bound by the strictures of mortality and the grave and “shall come forth and leap for joy like calves let loose from the stall” (those who live in cold climates understand how cattle react to being released from months in barns. They come forth to dispense judgement on the lawless – “ye shall tread down the lawless, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet” (Rotherham). The saints have a military role in order to set up the Kingdom (Ps. 149:5-9; John 18:36). Like cows who crushed out the grain in a threshing floor with brazen shoes, so the saints will use Divine power to crush all resistance to Christ’s rule (Rom. 16:20).

V.4-6 – The message is to “all Israel” who routinely ignored the Law of Moses. It is important to recognize that there are two fulfilments of this prophecy – one at Christ’s first advent, and the last at his second advent. John the Baptist was “Elijah” to Judah (proof – Luke 1:15-17; Matt. 11:14; 17:10-13). The disciples were very slow in understanding this, but what it means is that “Elijah” has completed his work among the Jews in the Land. When the real Elijah is sent out prior to Armageddon (Luke 1:17 proves it will be **before**) to gather scattered Israel, he will not be involved with the Jews in the Land (called “Judah” in Joel 3:1 and Zech. 12:7), as indeed he was not in the past. It will be Christ who purifies, redeems and converts the surviving remnant in the wake of “the great and dreadful day of Yahweh” or Armageddon (Rev. 16:14-16). Like John the Baptist, Elijah will set out to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.” Jacob who would be utterly ashamed of his progeny if he were alive today, will see a complete transformation (Isa. 29:22-23) and his heart will turn to his “children.” As for the converted Jews, “the disobedient” will be turned “to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” A curse awaits the rebellious.

Revelation 21

V.1 – “And I saw a **new heaven** and a **new earth**: for the **first** heaven and the **first** earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” – This refers to a new order of things **beyond the Millennium** (1 Cor. 15:28). The word “first” means ‘the former’ and is correctly translated by the Interlinear Scripture Analyzer as “former” meaning the Millennial ‘heavens’ and ‘earth’ that have now been superseded. The proof that the first 8 verses of Rev. 21 refer to the period beyond the Millennium is the fact that there is “no more **sea**” (symbol for mortal nations – Isa. 17:12-13; 57:20; Rev. 17:15; 15:2; 4:6). This was the promise of Jer. 30:11 – “though I make a **full end of all nations** whither I have scattered thee (Israel), yet will I not make a full end of thee.” Beyond the Millennium there will only be one nation on earth in fulfillment of the very first promise God made to Abraham – “I will make of thee a **great nation**.” This chapter deals with that promise. The “the holy city, new Jerusalem” is synonymous with that “nation” as Bro. Thomas explains – “It is the Yahweh-Elohistic municipality, symbolized by one hundred and forty-four cubits, each cubit representing one thousand of the numerical symbol of this ‘Holy Nation,’ the Israel of the Deity.” (Eureka Vol. 1 pg. 115).

Important additional proofs that V.1-8 describe the time beyond the Millennium are: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and **he will dwell with them**” (something not possible while mortality exists on earth); “there shall be no more **death**, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more **pain**: for the former things are passed away” (there is always pain and death while mortality exists); “Behold, I make **all things new**” (all things cannot be new if former things remain).

V.3 – “they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” is the language of God’s 5th promise to Abraham (Gen. 17:7-8).

Culmination of the 3 Great Covenants

Rev. 20 – Final fulfilment of Gen. 3:15

The Old Serpent bound and finally destroyed
Sin and rebellion eradicated - death abolished

Rev. 21 – Abrahamic Covenant fulfilled

The Holy City (Abrahamic) completed
One nation – Israel – embraces all
Eternal inheritance experienced by all

Rev. 22 – The Promises to David fulfilled

Divine authority over all the earth
David’s throne established forever
The spiritual house of David complete

V.6 – “It is done” – This is the third and final declaration of the purpose of God in His Son. The three phases of the redemption of the race are: (1) For Christ – “It is finished” – John 19:30; (2) The saints – Ezek. 39:8; Rev. 16:17; (3) At “the End” when God is “all in all.”

V.7 – “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be **my son**” – An incredibly powerful incentive resides in this promise. It is very personal, for it is the singular “son” that stands out. The saints are often called “the sons of God” in Christ, but this is a step closer to the Almighty of whom it is said “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in **bringing many sons unto glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10).

V.9-27 – Typical of the Apocalypse, the end to be achieved is laid out first, and then the way it will be accomplished follows. The development of the Bride of Christ likened to “the holy city, new Jerusalem” (a corporation of people) with multiple symbols and features identifying it with Israel (“the Israel of God”) is too vast a subject to be considered here. See verse by verse notes available on web site <https://jimcowie.info> under the Bible Marking Notes tab.

Revelation 22

V.1 – “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the **throne** of God and of the Lamb” – The water of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; 6:63; Zech. 4:6) “the root of David” (V.16) is disseminated by the Saints from the throne of David (Rev. 4:2; 5:5-6; Luke 1:32). This sustains “the tree of life” (*xulon* – wood or forest) representing the multitude of saints who bring healing to the nations (Cp. Ezek. 47:12. Trees = Saints – Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:7-8; Ps. 92:12).

This chapter deals with the fulfillment of the promise made to David. The family (“house”) that God promised to build for David (the most important thing to him – 2 Sam. 7:25-29) will be completed during the Millennial period.

V.8-9 – John’s humility in falling down before the angel messenger previously referred to on June 30 is an indication of how we feel in the light of all these glorious things revealed. The angels are about to hand over their work to the glorified saints as ‘fellow-servants’.

V.11 is a challenge – “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still” cannot be what Christ wants from his servants. He wants reformation and dedication. What then is he saying? The implication is, that if the outline of world history contained in the Apocalypse that was witnessed unfolding in every generation after John’s, and the visions of glory interspersed among them is not enough to convince us to change our way, then Christ can do nothing more for us. This is why the Apocalypse began with the appeal of chap. 1:3. “The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable” (Rev. 21:8) have no part in the Kingdom of God (V.15). Access to the “holy city” via the “tree (wood) of life” is only to overcomers – Rev. 21:7.

V.16-17 – There is a brilliant parallelism in these verses – “the **root** and the **offspring** of David” is matched and explained by “the **Spirit** and the **bride**” who make the invitation “come.” The Spirit is “the root” of David = Christ (Isa. 11:1-3), and his “offspring” are the members of his Bride.

V.18-20 – Who would be foolish enough to tamper with this Book? The promise is certain – “Surely I come quickly” to which we should say with John, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

APPENDIX 1

The following article by Bro. H.P. Mansfield at the height of the crisis in the Australian Brotherhood during the 1960's and 1970's over the doctrine of the Atonement is important to clearly establish that he did not believe in 'sacrifice for nature' as some have alleged.

June, 1971 LOGOS

It is claimed that we endorse the implantation theory, and the theory of alienation as set forth by the late Brother J. J. Andrews. This is quite incorrect; we do not endorse those theories. We have set out the facts time and again in Editorials (see, for example, our issue for January, 1953), and have never deviated therefrom. Why should brethren suggest this? Because, as is obvious from reading their statements they fail to comprehend the significance of the doctrine as set forth in the Unity Book, and the difference between truth and error in regard to it. For example, correspondence to hand indicates that some brethren believe that we inherit a moral or legal defilement from Adam, and that there was no physical change; others suggest that we inherit both a physical and legal defilement. Let us strive to set out the facts clearly.

The Difference Between Truth And Error

It is obvious from Paul's statement to the Romans that sin wrought a great change in the human race. He wrote: **"By one man's disobedience many were made (or constituted) sinners (Rom. 5:10). "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (v. 18). "Through the offence of one many be dead" (v.15)** These statements (and they could be multiplied) show that by Adam's offence his posterity became related to sin, condemnation, death. How did they do so? There are three main theories.

(1) — The Renunciationists or Clean Flesh Theory. This was set forth by Edward Turney who renounced the teaching of Brother Thomas and was opposed by Brother Roberts. He taught that man's physical state remained unchanged, so that today we are in the same condition of flesh as was Adam and Eve before they sinned. This is described in Genesis 1:31 as a "very good" state, hence the caption of Clean Flesh Theory. But though Edward Turney taught that Adam's descendants inherit the same condition of flesh as that in which he was created, he claimed that they were "morally defiled", in that the stigma of Adam's sin rested on them, for they had "sinned in Adam." That being the case, the human race was in a hopeless condition until a Redeemer was found with a "free life," and he claimed that the Lord was "free" of the moral stigma of Adam's sin by virtue of his birth of the virgin Mary. Turney therefore taught that as humanity inherited only the moral stigma of Adam's sin, flesh, itself, was still in the "very good" condition of creation, and therefore, of itself, can manifest the glory of the Father in perfect obedience. The doctrine is false and blasphemous. False because Scripture clearly states that the flesh is evil and sinful in its tendency, and not "very good"; blasphemous because it virtually teaches that God holds humanity accountable for a sin that it never committed: the sin of Adam.

(2) — The Theory of Alienation.

The other extreme is the theory set forth by the late Brother J. J. Andrew, which likewise lead to a false doctrine. Though J. J. Andrew provided Brother Roberts with the greatest support when the latter was combatting the teaching of Edward Turney, he later proclaimed another theory, which led him from the truth. He taught that though Adam's posterity inherited the physical consequences of the first sin, and thus became "mortal through sin," *in addition* it inherited a "legal" condemnation. That "legal" condemnation meant that mankind was alienated from God through the nature it inherited, and therefore, unless there was justification from "legal condemnation," a person would not rise from the grave no matter how much knowledge of the Truth he might possess. The theory

taught that justification for the Jew was by circumcision, and for the believer by baptism. Unless a person was either circumcised as a Jew or baptised as a Christian, he would not be brought from the grave to judgment, because he was under “legal” condemnation, the effect of which would hold him eternally in the grave. Therefore, an “unjustified” person (a person unfreed from “legal” condemnation) would not be resurrected to judgment, whereas a “justified” person would. The theory is likewise false and blasphemous. It is false because it claims that God holds us accountable (in a “legal” sense) for what Adam did; it is blasphemous, because it teaches that a person can virtually defy God in that though he might know the will of God, he will not be raised to judgment unless he is baptised.

(3) The Truth. The Truth is that Adam was made subject to mortality through sin, and death finally claimed him. As his descendants, we inherit his nature which is mortal because of sin. That mortality has created a bias in our nature which tends to sin. However, we are not held blameable for this, nor does the moral or legal consequences of Adam’s sin rest upon us. All that we have inherited from him are the physical consequences of his sin. We are not alienated from God because of our nature; we are not children of wrath because of our nature; but we are alienated from Him through ignorance (Ephesians 4:18), and we become children of wrath by obeying the natural tendencies of the flesh. This is the clear teaching of the Unity Book. It is endorsed by *Logos*, and by the series of articles recently completed by A.J. However, the unfortunate fact is that some brethren in positions of Ecclesial authority fail to comprehend the facts of the case. A letter to hand from a recording brother writing on behalf of his ecclesia, claims that we inherit moral and legal condemnation, but not physical condemnation. He professes to hold up hands in horror at the idea of us inheriting the death sentence from Adam, but blithely claims that the moral and legal consequences of Adam’s sin are inherited by his posterity!

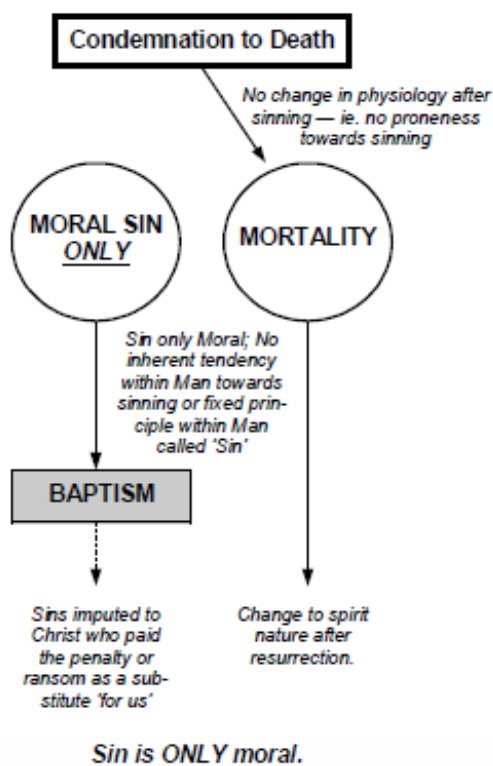
Christ’s Sacrificial Death

Christ’s death was a ritual exhibition of what was due to sinners. But this ritual symbolism is frequently ignored, so that instead of viewing Christ crucified as the sinner’s representative or the “sin-bearer”, he is isolated from his mission and he himself regarded as the “sinner,” “legally guilty” of “original sin,” and subject of “alienation” on account of his nature. On the other hand some go to the other extreme, objecting to the use of the word “sin” in its physical or secondary sense at all, and stumbling over the use of the words “unclean” and “sinful” in their application to the nature we possess, and which Christ shared in common with us all. None can gainsay the fact that our nature is sinful in its tendency, and corruptible in its constitution. This is surely obvious to us all in the incidence of sin, the teaching of Jesus that such come “from within” (Mark 7:21), and the statement of Paul that the “thinking of the flesh is enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7 - mg), “the flesh lusteth against the spirit” (Gal 5:17), and “he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption” (Rom. 8:8). Surely then, it is no misnomer to describe the flesh as “unclean” and “defiled”; and if Christ partook of “the same” (as testified in Heb. 2:14), why stumble over these expressions when applied to his nature as distinct from his character? We suggest that those who do so are hazy in their understanding of the doctrine of the Atonement, or are opposed to its true significance. The cause could be due to the abuse of these terms by some, and the foolish ideas of associating “guilt”, “wrath”, and “alienation” with nature itself, instead of recognising that it is the moral condition which results from it (when the physical law of our nature is not controlled by the law of God) to which these words apply. It is this failure to control our inherited natural sinfulness which makes us displeasing to God, and brings us under individual condemnation. In short, Man needs justification by the sacrifice of Christ, because he is a sinner, and not because God has imputed to him the “legal” liability of the sin of Adam. Christ, as representative of the human race, suffered by crucifixion that which is due for sin, and setting forth the righteousness of God in life and death, rose to immortality. Let us clarify our thinking in relation to this important doctrine. Some are ascribing to the Unity Book

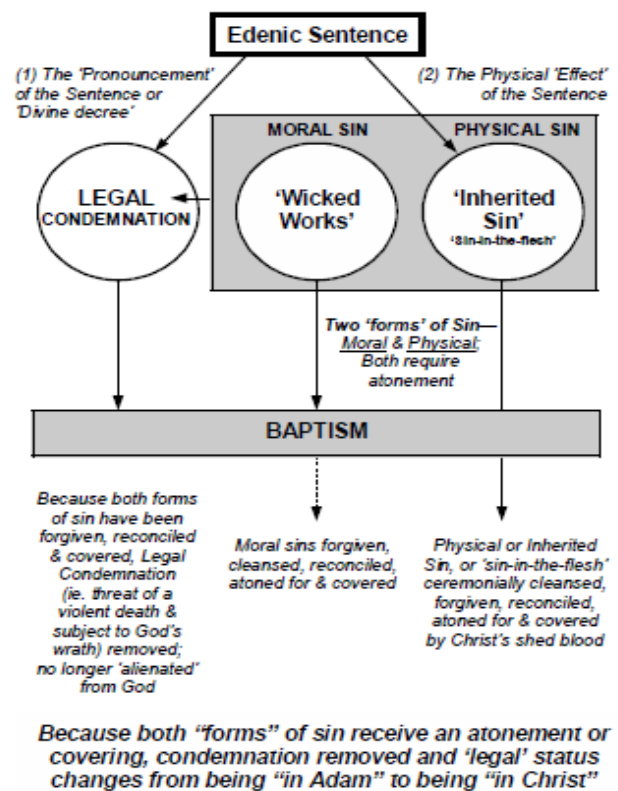
teaching not found therein and are bandying about such terms as “moral” and “legal” condemnation when all that it refers to is the physical defilement of mortality to which mankind is heir through sin: “By one man (not God) sin entered into the world and death by sin” (Rom. 5:12). We suggest that readers take care, and not be beguiled into believing that we have departed from the terms or teaching of the Unity Book, or that this Book provides for any variation of the true intent of the Statement of Faith. A recent letter from Brother Cooper to a local Ecclesia, contains the statement that the Addendum was never intended to supplant the Statement of Faith, nor to vary its obvious teaching.

The following diagrams set out the various theories on the Atonement that have emerged in the Brotherhood since 1869.

“Clean Flesh” / Renunciationist Teaching



JJ Andrew / Thomas Williams Teaching



APPENDIX 2

1 Peter 4:17-18 – “For the time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the **righteous** scarcely be saved, where shall the **ungodly** and the **sinner** appear?”

The above passage is enlightening in relation to the question of who will be responsible to judgement at the return of Christ. The following section extracted from “The Events Subsequent to the Return of Christ” pages 13-14 explains.

RESPONSIBILITY TO DIVINE JUDGEMENT

THE RESPONSIBILITY QUESTION

Speaking to the Romans the Apostle wrote, “we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ”, Rom. 14:10. Likewise to the Corinthians he said, “For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ”, 2 Cor.5:10. In a more general statement in 2 Tim.4:1 he said that Christ would judge “the quick and the dead at his appearing”, but not all the living and dead: only those who like the Roman and Corinthian brethren had become responsible to judgement by their knowledge of the truth.

Knowledge is the ground of responsibility – John 12:46-48, 15:22, 9:41, Rom.2:12-16. Those who have come to a knowledge of the Truth sufficient to bring them to a realisation of what God requires of them will be held accountable to judgement regardless of their response to that knowledge. This is evident from many scriptural passages - Luke 13:24-28, Matt. 8:10-12, Luke 10:9-16, etc. Mankind is divided into two major divisions by knowledge—the enlightened and the unenlightened. The enlightened group may be further divided into three according to the definitions provided by Peter – 1 Pet.4:17-18.

1 Peter 4:17-18

There are three distinct groups among those enlightened by the Truth. They are, according to the Apostle Peter: (1) Righteous or godly saints; (2) Ungodly saints; (3) Enlightened sinners.

The use of the terms ‘saints’ and ‘sinners’ distinguishes those who are responsible to divine judgement from those who are accountable to divine judgement, in this case. In fact mankind is basically divided into two classes, saints and sinners and each of these classes is again divided into two groups, namely, godly and ungodly saints and enlightened and unenlightened sinners.

SAINTS AND SINNERS

Everyone born under the constitution of sin is a “sinner,” being endowed with a nature that leads into sin – see Rom.5:19 and Elpis Israel pgs. 129-131. When one obeys the call of the gospel and enters into covenant relationship with God, he is called a “saint” or sanctified one – Rom. 1:7, 1 Cor. 1:2.

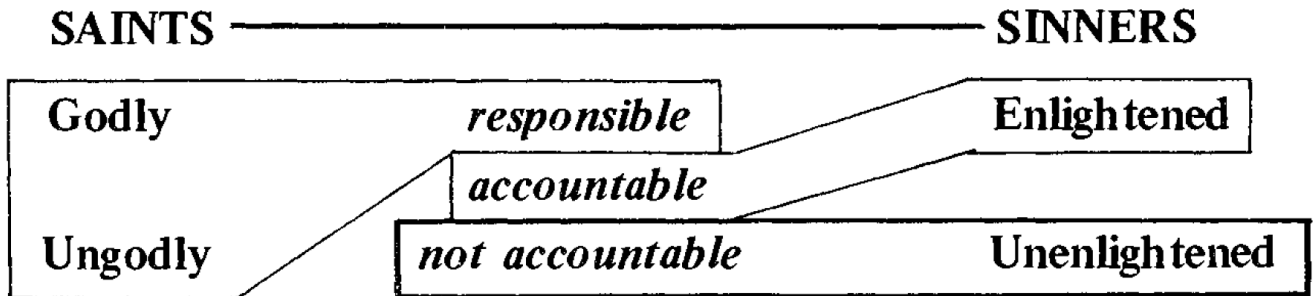
RESPONSIBLE OR ACCOUNTABLE?

Responsibility is the state of being answerable for something entrusted to one’s care. This is the position of those who enjoy covenant status, or “saints”. They must answer for the way they deal with the charge delivered to them and for the way they discharge the responsibilities which covenant status confers upon them.

Accountability is liability to give an account. Those “sinners” who have been enlightened by the Truth but have refused to accept its responsibilities will nevertheless have to give an account

of why they so refused. They will be held accountable to, but not responsible for the Truth they have ignored.

Hence the two classes and four groups may be seen as standing in relationship to divine judgement in the following way:



“Sinners” are justified by faith by responding to the teaching that is delivered to them, thus those who rejected it must give account as to why they rejected the Word – John 12:46-48.

“Saints” are justified by works by living the Word, hence they will be held responsible for the sacred deposit of the Truth delivered to them and must answer for the way they have used it. Thus it will be that they will either be godly or ungodly according to their actions.

UNIVERSAL RESURRECTION UNSCRIPTURAL

Only those responsible to judgement will be raised from the dead. The notion of a universal resurrection advanced by some religious sects is entirely unscriptural as evinced by the following passages: Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:14; 43:17; Ps.49:19-20.

APPENDIX 3

Zephaniah

Chapter 1

¹The ¹word of the LORD which came unto ²Zephaniah the son of ³Cushi, the son of ⁴Gedaliah, the son of ⁵Amariah, the son of ⁶Hizkiah, in the days of ⁷Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

Theme of Zephaniah revealed in his genealogy: The salvation of a remnant "whom Yahweh hid" among the "Cushites" and "made great" through the one "he spoke of" (promised to Abraham) and "strengthened for himself".

²I will ¹utterly consume all things from off the land, ²saith the LORD.

³I will consume ³man and beast; I will consume ⁴the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the ⁵stumblingblocks ⁶with the wicked; and I will ⁷cut off man ⁸from off the land, saith the LORD.

The Character of the Ecclesia in Zephaniah's Times

- Judah steeped in idolatry and worldly practice
- Result of nearly 60 years apostasy – the most part a determined campaign of corruption by Manasseh - 2 Kings 21:1-11
- Irrevocable judgement on Judah passed by Yahweh - 2 Kings 21:10-15; 22:16-17; 24:3-4
- Only a remnant surrounding Josiah upholding truth - Jer. 5:1
- Judah's attitude to reform hypocritical in the extreme - Jer. 5:2-3; 7:2-7; 3:10-11

⁴I will also stretch out mine hand ¹upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the ²remnant of Baal from this place, and the ³name of the ⁴Chemarims ⁵with the priests;

⁵And them that worship ⁶the host of heaven upon the ⁷housetops; and them that worship and ⁸that swear by the LORD, and that swear by ⁹Malcham;

⁶And them that are ¹⁰turned back from the LORD; and those that have not ¹¹sought ¹²the LORD, nor enquired for him.

⁷¹Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at ²hand: for the LORD hath ³prepared a ⁴sacrifice, he

The Prophet – His origins and times

¹dabar – occurs twice in Book. 1st occ. O.T. is Gen.11:1 (cp. context – influence of Babylon).

²"Whom Yahweh hid". Prophesied between 630-621 BC.

³Named after Cush the father of Nimrod. Descendent of Ham – dark races.

⁴"Whom Yah has made great".

⁵"Whom Yah spoke of (i.e. promised)".

⁶Same as Hezekiah = "Strengthened of Yah". It is unusual to give 5 generations. Traces royal origins and therefore association with Josiah and his party. (5 = grace for the remnant).

⁷"Founded of Yah". His reforms were triggered by Zephaniah his youthful contemporary with Jeremiah.

The consuming judgements of Yahweh

¹asaph – to gather. Occurs twice in text for emphasis. 1st occ. O.T. Gen.6:21. Roth. "I will take clean away everything from off the face (pane) of the ground".

²neum – oracle. Roth. "declareth".

³adam and behemah – words used in Gen.6:7. This prophecy fulfilled over 40 years beginning with Josiah (2 Kings 23:5,8) ending with Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:3,20). Cp. day of Yahweh (40 years) and flood - 40 days (Gen. 7:4).

⁴Order of creation is reversed here (Gen.1:20-27). Destruction was to come because darkness covered the earth (Gen.1:2).

⁵makshelah – a stumblingblock; an incitement to sin; i.e. idols. Only other occ. Isa.3:6 (cp. Matt.13:41).

⁶Roth. "even them who are lawless". Int. Bib. "even the wicked".

⁷Karath – to cut off, destroy. 1st occ. Gen.9:11 (used of covenant).

⁸Int. Bib. "from the face (pane) of the ground (adamah)". Used Gen. 6:7; 7:4,23; 8:8.

The titles of Cush – Bel = "the confounder". Symbol was a club – Chald. = "to break in pieces, scatter abroad". Cp. Gen. 11:9; Jer. 50:23; 50:1-2. **Mercury or Hermes** – Egyptian = "son of Ham". The great original prophet of idolatry (Acts 14:12). **Nebo** – identified with Cush. **Moloch** – "king". Same god as Bel.

Judgement on Judah and Jerusalem

¹Specifies the subject of judgements (Vv.2-3). Judah doomed.

²Roth. (Mgn.) "the name of Baal".

³Shem – appellation. 5 occs. in book. See use Gen. 11:4. Cp. Zeph. 3:19,20.

⁴Root word has idea of shriveling, and by a figure to be deeply affected by passion. Occs. Gen.43:30; 1 Kings 3:26; Lam.5:10; Hos.11:8. Has idea of an ascetic, monk or ecclesiastic; an "excited one" who led people in pagan rites. It is suggested their trademark was a black robe.

⁵i.e. Aaronic order. Cp. 2 Kings 23:5,8; 25:18.

⁶Astral worship (2 Kings 21:3,5; 23:4-5; Jer. 19:13; 32:29).

⁷Designed for prayer (Ex.30:3).

⁸They protested allegiance (Jer. 7:4).

⁹God of Ammonites – Cp. 2:8-11; 1 Kings 11:5-7; 2 Kings 23:10; Lev. 18:21. Title of Cush.

¹⁰cuwg – to flinch; go back, to retreat. Trans. "backslider" Prov. 14:14. Cp. Isa. 50:5; Jer. 38:22.

¹¹baqash – search out; strive after.

¹²Heb. includes eth – Lit. "Yahweh himself".

The day of Yahweh at hand

¹hacah – to hush; be silent. Cp. Hab.2:20; Zech. 2:13.

²qarob – near. Occs. v.14. Cp. Isa.13:6; Ezek.30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14.

hath ⁵bid his guests.

⁸And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S sacrifice, that I will punish ⁶the princes, and ⁷the king's children, and all such as are clothed with ⁸strange apparel.

⁹In the same day also will I punish all those that ⁹leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and ¹⁰deceit.

¹⁰And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, *that there shall be* the ¹¹noise of a cry from ¹²the fish gate, and an howling from ¹³the second, and a ¹⁴great crashing from the hills.

¹¹⁵Howl, ye inhabitants of ¹⁶Maktesh, for all the ¹⁷merchant people are ¹⁸cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off.

¹²And it shall come to pass at that time, *that* I will ¹⁹search Jerusalem with ²⁰candles, and punish the ²¹men that are ²²settled on their ²³lees: ²⁴that say in their heart, ²⁵The LORD will not do good, neither will he do ²⁶evil.

Vv.4-6 – 6 Victims of Divine Judgement

1. The idols of Baal in Jerusalem and Judah
2. Idolatrous priests and corrupt Levitical priests
3. Worshippers of the stars on housetops
4. Those with divided allegiance between Yahweh & Molech
5. Those who had turned back from worshipping Yahweh
6. The irreligious who had not sought Him at all.

Note gradation of culpability in order of seriousness, from rank idolaters through to willingly ignorant.

¹³Therefore their ¹goods shall become a ²booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit *them*; and they shall plant ³vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.

¹⁴ ⁴The great day of the LORD is ⁵near, it is ⁵near, and ⁶hasteth greatly, even the ⁷voice of the day of the LORD: ⁸the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

Heb. "day" yome occurs 21 times in book; 18 between 1:1-2:3. Judah's day of judgement projects to the future "day of Yahweh" Zech.14:1; Obad.15; Isa.34:8; Mal.4:5; Joel 2:1-2,11,31.

¹⁵That day is a day of ⁹wrath, a day of ¹⁰trouble and distress, a day of ¹¹wasteness and desolation, a day of ¹²darkness and ¹³gloominess, a day of ¹⁴clouds and thick ¹⁵darkness.

³ Int. Bib. "appointed". Cp. Gen.15:9-12; Jer.34:18-22.

⁴ zebach – slaughter.

⁵ Int. Bib. "sanctified his called ones", e.g. 1 Sam.16:5. Cp. Isa.13:3; 34:6.

⁶ sar – "rulers" (Int. Bib.) Jer. 52:10,24-27. Responsibility James 3:1.

⁷ Josiah exempted – 2 Kings 22:15-20.

⁸ nokriy – foreign. Used Neh. 13:26-27; and malbush – vestment for ceremonial use, 1 Kings 10:5; 2 Kings 10:22. Cp. Ezek.23:12-16, v.4.

⁹ Roth. "leapeth over". Cp. 1 Sam.5:5. Either through superstition or for robbery.

¹⁰ mirmah – fraud. Temple of false gods filled with unrighteous gain of robbery and fraud.

¹¹ Roth. "the noise of an outcry".

¹² N.E. corner of lower city Neh. 3:3. See 2 Chron. 33:14.

¹³ Lower part of city – 2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chron. 34:22.

¹⁴ sheber – a fracture; root to burst. Ygs. Lit. "great destruction".

¹⁵ yalal – howl (with wailing tone).

¹⁶ "Depression". Roth. "of the lower city", i.e. market place.

¹⁷ Canaan – humiliated. Roth. "all the people of traffic". Cp. use Isa.23:8; Hos.12:7.

¹⁸ Int. Bib. "have perished".

¹⁹ chaphas – to seek. Used Amos 9:3 = inescapable judgement.

²⁰ nehr – to glisten; a lamp. Used of 7 branched lampstand. See Prov. 6:23.

²¹ enosh – weak mortal men.

²² qapha – to shrink; i.e. thicken.

²³ Shemer – something preserved, i.e. the settlements. Translated "dregs" Ps. 75:8; Isa. 25:6; Jer. 48:11. Caused by no movement or sifting (Jer. 48:11) = stagnation of undisturbed prosperity – Laodicean inactivity.

²⁴ Roth. "who are saying". A disaffected reforming class had supported Josiah's party, but little had changed, so settled into a Laodicean state (v.6).

²⁵ i.e. there will be no reformation and no judgement – cp. Ps.73:1-17; Ecc.8:11. Cp. Yahweh's challenge to false gods Isa.41:23; Jer.10:5.

²⁶ ra'a – to spoil (lit. by breaking to pieces).

¹ chayil – force; hence wealth.

² mechiccah – plunder. Int. Bib. "a prize".

³ Cp. Deut. 28:30,39.

"The day of Yahweh" occurs 7 times in context = completeness of Divine judgements leading to the Millennial Day. "Day" occurs another 9 times = finality. This is a prophecy with both short and long term objectives.

⁴ Lit. "Is near, day of Yahweh, the great, it is near and hurrying greatly".

⁵ qarob – used v.7.

⁶ Roth. "very speedy". It was 40 years away!

⁷ qol – cp. 7 occs. Ps.29. Joel 2:11; 3:16. Translated "thunderings" Ex. 9 and 19:16; 20:18; Deut.5:22-28.

⁸ Roth. "a strong man therel Bitterly crying out!"

⁹ ebrah – an outburst of passion.

¹⁰ tsarah – tightness; & metsubah – narrowness. Roth. "danger and distress".

¹¹ sho'ah – a tempest (cp. use Ezek.38:9); & me-sho'ah – ruin (i.e. the result).

¹² chosek. 1st occ. Gen.1:2. See use Joel 2:2; Amos 5:18,20.

¹³ aphelah – duskiness, Joel 2:2. Roth. "day of obscurity and deep gloom".

¹⁴ anan – thunder cloud, Joel 2:2.

¹⁵ araphel – gloom (lowering sky). Joel 2:2; Ezek.34:12; Jer.13:16; Ps. 97:2; Ex. 20:12.

¹⁶A day of the ¹⁶trumpet and ¹⁷alarm against the fenced ¹⁸cities, and against ¹⁹the high towers.

¹⁷And I will bring ²⁰distress upon men, that ²¹they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as ²²dust, and their flesh as the ²³dung.

¹⁸Neither their ²⁴silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole ²⁵land shall be ²⁶devoured by the fire of his ²⁷jealousy: for he shall make even a ²⁸speedy ²⁹riddance ³⁰of all them that dwell in the land.

Chapter 2

¹ ¹Gather yourselves together, yea, ¹gather together, O nation ²not desired;

² ³Before the decree bring forth, ⁴before the day pass as the chaff, before ⁵the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you.

³ ⁶Seek ye the LORD, all ye ⁷meek of the earth, which have ⁸wrought his judgment: seek ⁹righteousness, seek ¹⁰meekness: ¹¹it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

⁴ ¹For ²Gaza shall be ³forsaken, and ⁴Ashkelon a desolation: they shall ⁵drive out ⁶Ashdod ⁷at the noon day, and ⁸Ekron shall be ⁹rooted up.

⁵Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea ¹⁰coast, the nation of the ¹¹Cherethites! the word of the LORD is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, ¹²I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant.

⁶And the sea coast shall be ¹³dwellings and ¹⁴cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks.

⁷And the coast shall be for the ¹⁵remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed

¹⁶shophar – cp. Joel 2:1,15. First 3 occs. in O.T. Ex.19:16,19; 20:18 (cp. context).

¹⁷teruwah – clamor, battle cry.

¹⁸First occs. of word is Gen.4:17; 10:11,12; 11:4,5,8. Cities not of God.

¹⁹i.e. the corner towers.

²⁰tsarar – cramp. Deut.28:52.

²¹Cp. Deut. 28:28,29; Isa.59:9-10.

²²aphar – dust; clay, earth. 1st occ. Gen.2:7; 3:14,19. Used of Abraham's natural seed Gen.13:16; 28:14; Num.23:10. Speaks of national death.

²³Cp. use Lev.4:7,11,12.

²⁴Symbols of redemption and tried faith – absent in Judah. Their prosperity could not remedy situation – v.8,9,11.

²⁵erets – earth (Roth.).

²⁶akal – to eat. Roth. "consumed".

²⁷qinah – rt. to be zealous. Key phrase 3:8; Ezek. 36:5-6; 38:19.

²⁸kalah – a completion. Nah.1:8,9.

²⁹kalah (root of above) – to end. Lit. for a full, yea a speedy end".

³⁰Roth. "with all them who dwell in the earth".

An urgent call to repentance

¹qashah – sapless through drought; to forage for wood –

Num.15:32,33. Roth. "Collect your thoughts, aye collect them". Cp. Luke 23:31; Jude 12. Nation was 'dry' – drastic action required.

²kacaph – to be pale through shame. Ges. "a nation without shame".

³Roth. "Ere yet the decree have given birth". "Bring forth" is yalad – to beget.

⁴Lit. "like the chaff shall pass the day". Signifies ephemeral status.

⁵Roth. "the glow of the anger".

⁶baqash – to search out; to strive after (cp. v.6). 3 occs. in verse.

⁷anayv – depressed. 1st occ. Num.12:3. Cp. Ps.76:9; Isa.11:4. Roth. "all ye lowly of the land".

⁸Roth. "who have wrought what he appointed". 4 occs. 3:5,8,15. Cp. Jer.5:4-5.

⁹tsedeq – the right.

¹⁰anavah (cog. with anayv) – condescension. Occs. 2 Sam.22:36; Prov.15:33; 18:12; 22:4. Roth. "seek humility". Opposite attitude to 1:4-12. Cp. Josiah 2 Kings 22:19.

¹¹sathar – to hide (by covering). Roth. "peradventure ye shall be concealed". Allusion to Zephaniah's name. Cp. Isa.26:20-21; 1:15. See root Ps.27:5; 31:19-20. Cp. Josiah 2 Kings 22:20.

Judgement on the nations

¹Warning to Judah – act now!

²azzah – "strong". Note play on words in this section.

³azab – to loosen; relinquish; desolated. Cp. Mic.1:10-16.

⁴"Weighing place", i.e. a mart, becomes shimamah – devastation.

⁵garash – to drive out from possession.

⁶"Ravager". Ges. "a fortified place, a castle".

⁷Roth. "Ashdod! At high noon shall they drive her forth". Noon was time of least danger from invaders.

⁸"Eradication". Rt. aqar.

⁹aqar – to pluck up (by the roots); to exterminate. A direct play on words.

¹⁰chebel – measuring line. Roth. "the line of the sea" (west).

¹¹"Executioner". A life guard. Cp. 1 Sam.30:14-16; Ezek.25:16.

¹²Roth. "therefore will I destroy thee to the last inhabitant". Harks back to 1:2-3.

¹³navah – at home. Roth. "shall become a meadow".

¹⁴karah – a meadow. Roth. "the wells of shepherds".

¹⁵she'eriyyh – a remainder. 3 occs. V.9; 3:13.

¹⁶rabats – to crouch, repose. Occs. 2:14; 3:13. Cp. Gen.49:9,14,25.

thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they ¹⁶lie down in the ¹⁷evening: for the LORD their God shall visit them, and turn away their ¹⁸captivity.

⁸I have heard the ¹⁹reproach of ²⁰Moab, and the ²¹revilings of the children of ²²Ammon, whereby they have ²³reproached my ²⁴people, and ²⁵magnified themselves against their ²⁶border.

⁹ ¹Therefore as I live, saith the ²LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as ³Sodom, and the children of Ammon as ⁴Gomorrah, even ⁵the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the ⁶residue of my people shall ⁷spoil them, and the ⁸remnant of my people shall ⁹possess them.

¹⁰This shall they have for their ¹⁰pride, because they have ¹¹reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the LORD of hosts.

¹¹The LORD will be ¹²terrible unto them: for he will ¹³famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall ¹⁴worship him, every one from his place, even all the ¹⁵isles of the heathen.

¹²Ye ¹⁶Ethiopians also, ye shall be ¹⁷slain by my sword.

¹³And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and ¹⁸destroy Assyria; and will make ¹⁹Nineveh a desolation, and ²⁰dry like a wilderness.

¹⁴And ¹flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all ²the beasts of the nations: both the ³cormorant and the ⁴bittern ⁵shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall ⁶sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the ⁷thresholds: for he shall ⁸uncover the ⁹cedar work.

¹⁵This is the ¹⁰rejoicing city that ¹¹dwelt ¹²carelessly, that said in her heart, ¹³I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall ¹⁴hiss, and wag his hand.

Chapter 3

¹Woe to her that is ¹filthy and polluted, to the ²oppressing city!

²She ³obeyed not the voice; she ⁴received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she

¹⁷ Contrast v.4. – promised time of rest.

¹⁸ shebiyth – exile. Roth. “and bring their captives back”.

¹⁹ cherpah – blasphemous contempt.

²⁰ “From (her) father”, Gen.19:36-37. Play on words. Root idea of cherpah – pudenda (shame), i.e. Lot’s shame.

²¹ gidduphah – vilification.

²² “Tribal” i.e. inbred (by incest).

²³ charaph – to pull off; expose, by fig. to defame. Ps.83.

²⁴ am – root of Ammon. Another play on words.

²⁵ gadal – to twist; to make large.

²⁶ gebul – a cord; a boundary.

¹ This had been called in question.

² Lit. “He will be armies the mighty ones of Israel”.

³ “To scorch, burnt”.

⁴ “A ruined heap”.

⁵ Roth. “a possession for the thorn”.

⁶ Translated “remnant” v.7; 3:13.

⁷ bazaz – plunder, Dan.11:41.

⁸ yether – residue (Roth.).

⁹ nachal – to inherit. Remnant of Judah to spoil – Israel to inherit.

¹⁰ gaown – arrogance. Roth. “This they shall have instead of their pride”.

¹¹ These words used in v.8.

¹² yare – to cause fear; frighten.

¹³ razah – emaciate; make thin. Only other occ. Isa.17:4 (wax lean).

¹⁴ shachah – to prostrate. See Isa.2:2-3; Mic.4:1-2; Zech.14:16.

¹⁵ iy – island. 1st occ. Gen.10:5. Significant uses Esther 10:1;

Ps.72:10; Isa.42:4,10,12; 51:5; 60:9.

¹⁶ “Cushite”. 1st occ. Gen.2:13; 10:6,7,8. Refers to original Cush – source of idolatry and religious corruption. See reference to “north” v.13.

¹⁷ chalal – pierced.

¹⁸ Nimrod (first god of the earth = papacy) established Assyria (Gen.10:8-11). Origin of all idolatry in Judah.

¹⁹ “The place of habitation”. Enshrined all Nimrod stood for (Gen.10:11-12; Gen.11). Power to subdue men and beasts.

²⁰ Roth. “dry as the desert”.

¹ rabats v.7. Refers to the remnant of Israel (3:13) possess Nimrod’s territory.

² chay – alive. Roth. “each living thing of a nation”, i.e. Israel. Cp. Mic.4:8.

³ qa’ath – the pelican.

⁴ qippod – the bittern, the long legged swamp bird. Cp. Isa.34:11. Type of nations, Rev.18:2.

⁵ Roth. “in her capitals! Shall roost”.

⁶ Roth. “resound”.

⁷ caph – a vestibule. Int. Bib. “doorsill”.

⁸ arah – to be bare.

⁹ Lavish paneling stripped.

¹⁰ alliyz – exultant.

¹¹ yashab – to sit.

¹² betach – safety. Roth. “this is the city exultant, that sat secure”.

¹³ Cp. Yahweh’s claim (Isa.45:5,6,18,22). Contrast Assyrian god-kings – cp. Nimrod.

¹⁴ sharaq – to shrill; whistle in scorn. Cp. Job 27:23; Nah.3:19.

The sins of Judah and Jerusalem

¹ mara – to rebel. Roth. “rebellious”.

² yana – to rage; be violent.

³ shama – to hear intelligently. Roth. “she hath hearkened to no voice”. Jer.7:23,24; 22:21.

⁴ muwcar – chastisement. Roth. “accepted no correction”.

drew not near to her God.

³Her princes within her are ⁵roaring ⁶lions: her judges are ⁷evening wolves; ⁸they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.

⁴Her prophets are ⁹light and treacherous persons: her priests have ¹⁰polluted the sanctuary, they have done ¹¹violence to the law.

⁵The ¹²just LORD is in the ¹³midst thereof; ¹⁴he will not do iniquity: ¹⁵every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, ¹⁶he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame.

4 Elements Essential to Salvation

1. Harkening to the Word
 2. Acceptance of correction
 3. Trusting in Yahweh
 4. Drawing near to God
- Four is the number of righteousness*

⁶ ¹⁷I have cut off the nations: ¹⁸their towers are desolate; ¹⁹I made their streets waste, ²⁰that none passeth by: ²¹their cities are destroyed, ²²so that there is no man, ²³that there is none inhabitant.

⁷ ²⁴I said, Surely thou wilt ¹fear me, thou wilt ²receive instruction; so their ³dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I ⁴punished them: ⁵but they rose early, and ⁶corrupted all their doings.

⁸Therefore ¹wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the ²prey: for my ³determination is to gather the nations, that I may ⁴assemble the ⁵kingdoms, ⁶to pour upon them mine ⁷indignation, even all my ⁸fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

The finality of Zeph.3:8 – This verse contains every letter of the Hebrew alphabet including the five final letters – 27 (3x9) = total fullness and finality.

⁹For then will I ⁹turn to the ¹⁰people a ¹¹pure ¹²language, that they may all call upon ¹³the name of the LORD, to serve him with one ¹⁴consent.

"nations" – goh'y (2:1,5,9,11,14; 3:6,8) and "people" – am both occur 7 times in Zephaniah = Covenant issues.

¹⁰From ¹⁵beyond the ¹⁶rivers of ¹⁷Ethiopia ¹⁸my suppliants, even the daughter of my ¹⁹dispersed, shall bring ²⁰mine offering.

⁵ sha'ag – to rumble or moan.

⁶ ariy – lion (because of its violence). Ps.10:8-10; Prov.28:15-16; Isa.1:23; Jer.22:17; Ezek.22:6,25,27; Mic.3:1-4,9-11.

⁷ Symbol of pitiless ferocity – Ezek.22:27; Jer.5:6; Hab.1:8.

⁸ Roth. "They have left nothing until morning".

⁹ pachaz – bubble up or froth. Only other occ. Jud.9:4. Roth. "reckless".

¹⁰ Roth. "profaned the holy".

¹¹ chamac – be violent; maltreat. Ygs. "they have violated law".

¹² tsaddiyq – just.

¹³ qereb – nearest part; centre. Cp. Isa.12:6; Hos.11:9. 6 occs. in book.

¹⁴ Roth. "he dealeth not perversely".

¹⁵ Roth. "morning by morning His justice bringeth he forth to light".

Cp. Isa.33:2; 50:4; Jer.21:12; Ps.37:6.

¹⁶ Roth. "He is not found lacking".

¹⁷ Roth. "I have cut off nations". As example to Israel (Isa.37:26). Cp. Jer.25:17-33.

¹⁸ Roth. "deserted are their towers".

¹⁹ Roth. "made desolate their streets".

²⁰ Roth. "that none passeth through".

²¹ Roth. "ruined are their cities".

²² Roth. "for want of men of note".

²³ Roth. "from lack of any dweller". Cp. 1:2-3,18; 2:13-15.

²⁴ God's judgement designed to warn Israel of consequences of idolatry and corruption.

¹ Roth. "reverence".

² Same words as v.2.

³ ma'iyin – abode. Often used of Yahweh's habitation (v.5).

⁴ paqad – to visit; punish.

⁵ shakam – to incline the shoulder to a burden; to load up, i.e. to start early in the morning.

⁶ shachath – to decay; ruin.

A remnant restored and redeemed

¹ chakah – to adhere to; wait – Hab.2:3; Isa.64:4; Dan.12:12; Isa.8:17.

² Nimrod became a god-king as a hunter (Gen.10:9). Yahweh now becomes the hunter. Cp. occs. "prey" Gen.49:27; Isa.33:23.

³ mishpat – verdict, judgement.

⁴ qabats – to grasp; collect, i.e. for Armageddon.

⁵ mamlakah – dominions. 1st occ. of this word is in Gen.10:10 of the kingdom of men.

⁶ shaphak – spill forth, gush out.

⁷ zaam – fury, rage (Isa.26:20).

⁸ charon – burning of anger.

⁹ haphak – to turn about; return. Cp. Gen.11:1-9.

¹⁰ am (plural) – peoples. 1st occ. Gen.11:6.

¹¹ barar – to clarify (brighten).

¹² sahphah – lip. The word used Gen.11:1; Mal.2:6,7. This refers to a single tongue leading to pure religion.

¹³ Heb. shem. Cp. use Gen.12:8.

¹⁴ shechem – to shoulder a burden (last occ. in O.T.). Cp. Gen.12:6 - Abraham's choice.

¹⁵ eber – root of the word Hebrew (cross over). Cp. Josh.24:2,3.

¹⁶ nahar. First 4 occs. of this word are Gen.2:10-14. Context is return from Babylon.

¹⁷ Cush; i.e. Babylon.

¹⁸ Roth. "shall come my worshippers".

¹⁹ puwts – used Gen.11:4,8,9.

¹¹ ¹In that day ²shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast ³transgressed against me: for then ⁴I will take away out of the midst of thee them that ⁵rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be ⁶haughty ⁷because of my holy mountain.
¹² ⁸I will also leave in the midst of thee an ⁹afflicted and ¹⁰poor people, and they ¹¹shall trust in the name of the LORD.

¹³ The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak ¹²lies; neither shall a ¹³deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall ¹⁴feed and lie down, and none shall make them ¹⁵afraid.

¹⁴ ¹Sing, O daughter of Zion; ²shout, O Israel; be glad and ³rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

¹⁵ ⁴The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath ⁵cast out thine ⁶enemy: ⁷the king of Israel, *even* ⁸the LORD, is in the midst of thee: ⁹thou shalt not see evil any more.

¹⁶ In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, ¹⁰Fear thou not: *and to Zion*, ¹¹Let not thine hands be slack.

¹⁷ ¹²The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; ¹³he will save, ¹⁴he will rejoice over thee with joy; ¹⁵he will rest in his ¹⁶love, ¹⁷he will joy over thee with singing.

¹⁸ I will gather them that are ¹⁸sorrowful for the solemn assembly, ¹⁹who are of thee, ²⁰to whom the reproach of it was a burden.

¹⁹ ¹Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that ²halteth, and gather her that was ³driven out; and I will get them ⁴praise and ⁵fame ⁶in every land where they have been put to shame.

²⁰ At that time ⁷will I bring you *again*, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you ⁸a name and a praise ⁹among all people of the earth, when I turn back your ¹⁰captivity ¹¹before your eyes, ¹²saith the LORD.

²⁰ minchah. Roth. "shall bear along a gift for me". Ezek.20:40-41; Isa.66:20; Mal.3:3,4; 1:11.

Remnant of Israel Redeemed

¹ The day of Yahweh = 40 years – Second Exodus.

² Roth. "wilt thou not turn pale for all thy deeds" (cp. v.7).

³ pasha – break away, trespass.

⁴ See notes v.5. Ezek.20:38.

⁵ alliyyz (2:15). Ga'avah – arrogance or majesty. Roth. "thy proudly exulting ones".

⁶ gabahh – to soar, be lofty.

⁷ Roth. "in my holy mountain".

⁸ Cp. v.5,11. Always remnant saved in every era (2:3,7,9).

⁹ aniy – depressed, afflicted. Cp. use Isa.66:2; Zech.9:9; Prov.3:34.

¹⁰ dal – dangling; weak or thin.

¹¹ chacah – to flee for protection; confide. Ps.34:8; Isa.57:13; Nah.1:7.

¹² Roth. "falsehood".

¹³ tarmiyth – fraud.

¹⁴ ra'ah – to tend or graze a flock. Cp. 2:7.

¹⁵ charad – to shudder with terror. Jer.30:10; 46:27; Ezek.34:28; 39:26; Mic.4:4; Isa.17:2.

Rejoicing of Redeemed Israel

¹ ranan – to shout for joy. Isa.12:6; 44:23; 49:13; 54:1; Jer.31:7; Zech.2:10.

² ruwa – to split the ears with sound (shout for joy). Used Zech.9:9.

³ alaz – to jump for joy, exult.

⁴ Roth. Yahweh hath set aside thy judgements".

⁵ panah – to turn; to face. Ygs. "He hath faced thine enemy".

⁶ yeb – hating. Refers to Gog (Assyro-Babylonian Empire).

⁷ Yahweh displaces Nimrod/Papacy. Cp. Gen.10:8-14.

⁸ Christ (Yahweh in manifestation) – Zech.9:9-10; 14:9.

⁹ Roth. "not fear calamity".

¹⁰ Cp. context Isa.35:3-4; 41:10,13,14; 43:1-2; 44:2; 54:4.

¹¹ Roth. "let not thy hands hang down". Cp. Isa.35:3.

¹² Yahweh/Christ greater than Nimrod. "Mighty" is gibbor (Gen.10:8).

¹³ yasha. Close to Joshua – Yahweh's salvation.

¹⁴ An enthusiastic and full joy.

¹⁵ charash – to be silent; to let alone. Roth. "will be silent in his love", i.e. will not recall to remembrance their sins.

¹⁶ ahabah – affection.

¹⁷ Roth. "will exult over thee with shouts of triumph".

¹⁸ yagah – to grieve. Unable to keep the solemn feasts.

¹⁹ i.e. truly of Zion (Ps.87).

²⁰ Lit. "the burden upon it was reproach". Ygs. "bearing for her sake reproach".

¹ Roth. "Behold me dealing with all thine oppressors".

² tsala – to limp. Only other occs. Gen.32:31; Mic.4:6,7. Cp. Jer.31:1-14; 30:4-17; Isa.35.

³ nadach – to push off. Cp. Jacob.

⁴ tehillah – laudation.

⁵ shem – a name. Cp. v.12,20.

⁶ Roth. "in the whole earth that hath witnessed their shame".

⁷ Jacob becomes Israel (Hos.12:3-6) – God's work.

⁸ Same words as v.19 reversed.

⁹ Cp. Gen.11:6; Deut.32:8. All peoples to be incorporated into one nation – Israel.

¹⁰ Plural = end of all dispersion.

¹¹ As in Ex.14:13-14.

¹² Yahweh occs. 34 times and is last word in book. Guarantee!

APPENDIX 4

Citations from Eureka about the Gnostic heresy

Eureka Vol. 1 pages 198-200 (Logos Edition)

But the Judaizers were not alone the perverters and vanquishers of the people. Another faction arose from among the Gentile element of the Star-Angels. This was composed of the “wolves” referred to in Paul’s first letter to Timothy, ch. 6:20, where he says to him, “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane, vain babblings, and oppositions of Gnosis, or knowledge falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith.” These came to be called Gnostics because of their professing what they called Gnosis, or knowledge, a false science, whose principles were subversive of the truth. The same thing is styled in our day “theological science,” “divinity,” “ethics,” “hermeneutics,” and so forth; terms invented to amaze the ignorant, and to impress them with the necessity of schools and colleges for the indoctrination of pious youth in the mysteries they learnedly conceal. Now the principles of this ancient and modern Gnosis are subversive of the truth; for “some professing them,” says Paul, “have erred concerning the faith.” He refers to them again in his second letter, ch. 2:16, saying, “Shun profane, vain, babblings; for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their word will eat as a gangrene; of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.”

These Gnostics were a sort of immersed philosophers—Gentile professors of “the wisdom” then current in the world among the admirers of Plato, and other heathen speculators upon the unknown. They had acquired a smattering in the truth, and had been immersed, and so “brought in unawares.” Having still a hankering after their old foolishness, and not relishing the mockery and persecution their new profession brought upon them from their old associates, they conceived the idea of so commingling the speculations, or fables, of heathenism with the doctrine of the apostles, as to make the compound palatable to the respectability and learning of the age. In this way, they conceived the offence of the cross of Christ would cease with the Gentiles, as it had done with the Jews by mixing up the Gospel with the law. Thus “the thinking of the flesh” set to work to elaborate a theology that would popularize Christianity, make it a respectable and fashionable profession, and acceptable to the learned world. And in this diabolical enterprize they succeeded but too well. Being of the world, they derived their inspiration from the feelings and imaginings of the flesh, from whatever it approved, and therefore “the world hears them”—it heard them then, and it hears them to this day. Their word has eaten gangrenously into the body, reducing it to a mass of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; which represents the existing condition of what is “falsely called” Christianity in the world.

The Gnostics commenced their department of the Nikolaitan University, with the dogma first enunciated by the Serpent in the Eden- Paradise. By this dogma the lie was given direct to the truth of God. The Spirit has declared, that man, without qualification, was dust; and that he should return to dust, if disobedient to the law of Him who created him; in other words, that “dying” he should “die.” But the Serpent, the most sagacious of all animals under man; and endowed with the faculty of speech to express the perceptions and reasonings of its observant brain; by which argumentation it might be proved, whether man would believe and obey the Eternal Spirit, rather than the sophistry of the flesh—the Serpent, I say, denied that death should be the consequence of disobedience. “Ye shall die no death,” said he; “ELOHIM knows that in the

day of your eating from it your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as ELOHIM knowing of good and of evil. The Serpent had seen “Elohim” in Paradise; he had listened to their discourse with man; and was aware of the existence of “the Tree of the Lives in the midst of the Garden.” His brain being merely percipient, reasoning, and propensitive, and therefore utterly devoid of a moral sense, he spoke in harmony with its ratiocination. He had learned, that the Elohim had experienced evil as well as good; and that consequently their eyes had not been opened to evil: that the eating from the tree of knowledge would have a like effect upon the human eaters; and that, as to their dying any death at all, was quite out of the question, seeing that all they would have to do was to eat from the tree of their lives, which would prove an antidote to all mortal and corrupting tendencies, the other tree might possibly impart. Such was his speculation upon the premises before his mind. It was a speculation not entirely devoid of truth; for on eating their eyes were opened; they did become as Elohim; and they did know evil as well as good. This is proved by the testimony which says in Gen. 3 : 7, “the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked;” and in ch. 3:22, “Behold, said YAHWEH Elohim, the man has become like one of us for to know good and evil; now therefore lest he put forth his hand, and take also from the Tree of Lives, and eat and live during the Olahm; therefore YAHWEH Elohim sent him forth from the Garden of Eden.”

Eureka Vol. 1 pages 201-202 (Logos Edition)

Being bewitched by this pagan myth, the **Gnostics** were impelled to the assertion of many things utterly subversive of the gospel of Christ. The first thing they affirmed was that “*the resurrection is past already*.” This was tantamount to saying that “*there is no resurrection of dead ones*”—1 Cor. 15:12; 2 Tim. 2:18. Upon what ground could they affirm that “it is past?” By falling back upon the resurrection of the saints, who came out of their graves after Jesus rose—Matt. 22 : 52. This was a past resurrection, which was admitted by the deniers of a future one.

Eureka Vol. 1 pages 202-204 (Logos Edition)

The next thing these Nikolaitanes were impelled by their *gnosis* to affirm was, that the real Son of the Deity was “the Immortal Soul” that tabernacled in the body, which body was nothing else than the son of Joseph and Mary, consequently, that the Son of the Deity had no real humanity. That it was the son of Joseph who died on the cross, was buried, and rose again, while the Son of God being immortal, did not, and could not, die upon the cross, but only appeared to die. Now this was tantamount to saying, that Jesus was not the Christ; because the Christ was to be both Son of Deity and Son of Man, in a special sense, at the same time; but they allowed that Jesus was no more than Son of Man, and therefore could not be the Christ promised in the prophets.

Some of the **Gnostics**, however, admitted that Jesus was really the Son of God; but then they nullified this admission by affirming that “*He did not come in flesh*.” They would not allow that he had the same kind of flesh and blood, nor “*in flesh*,” as we. They considered it a holy and immaculate appearance, entirely free from all the emotions and affections of our nature. The operation of this heresy upon the truth, was to destroy it, and to annihilate the hope of all that confided in it. For, if Jesus Anointed did not partake of our nature, but obtained, somehow or other, a pure physical organization, or was only “a similitude,” such as Daniel beheld by Ulai, then Paul’s testimony is untrue; for he has testified, that “forasmuch as the children (of the Deity) are partakers of flesh and blood, Jesus also himself likewise took part of the same;” and “in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren;” and “God sent his own Son in likeness of Sin’s flesh, and for sin condemned the sin in the flesh”—Heb. 2:14,17; Rom. 8:3; but if the principle of

corruption had not pervaded the flesh of Jesus, or if he were not flesh, he could not have been tried in all points as we; nor could sin have been condemned there; nor could he have “borne our sins *in his own body* on the tree.”

Thus the dogma of immortality inherent in Sin’s flesh, impelled the **Gnostics** to a denial of the faith, and to the subverting of the souls of all who heeded them. They, in concert with the Ebionites, set up a Jesus and a Gospel which were totally at variance with “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” by the apostles. As a whole, it constituted the *Nikolaitanism* of the first century, and became the foundation of the kingdom of the Clergy, which, as the deadly upas, poisons every thing beneath its shade. Well might the Spirit say, “the works and doctrine of the Nikolaitanes I hate.” They had “a form of godliness, but they denied its power.” These were they “who crept into houses, and led captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts. Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. And as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so did these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, of no judgment concerning the faith” —2 Tim. 3:8. They blended law, gospel, and heathen philosophy all together, in one indiscriminate hodge-podge, and called it “Christianity.” They founded schools, of which that at Alexandria in Egypt became the most notable, for the education of beardless youths in its mysteries, and from which went forth a multitude that filled the world with strife, debate, and bloodshed in the name of Christ, so that every succeeding century proved the truth of Paul’s words, that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

The heresies of the Nikolaitane Ebionites and Gnostics were the germ of what Paul terms “THE APOSTASY,” and John, “*the Deceiver* and THE ANTICHRIST.” “Many deceivers are entered into the world,” saith the latter, “who do not confess that Jesus Anointed is come in flesh. This is the deceiver and the Antichrist”—2 John 7. And again, “Every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Anointed came in flesh, is not from the Deity; and this is that of the Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it comes, and is now already in the world”—1 John 4:3. The spirit of a thing precedes the thing itself. First, the idea, and then its embodiment. The ideas of Nikolaitanism were its spirit. These were first conceived in the brains of corrupt and shallow men, who sought a present distinction and position in the world, at all hazards. Their ideas were perverse and perverting, and were spoken for the purpose of drawing away disciples after them. All who received their dogmata imbibed their spirit, and as they increased in number and influence among the people, became a power which continued to grow, until it was prepared to contend with older powers for the ascendancy, and in the struggle gain the victory. This has been the career of the Nikolaitane heresy. It began by affirming the insufficiency of the gospel without the law for salvation; affirming, also, the immortality of an inner man; and denying the proper humanity of Jesus; and it prevails as the ANTICHRISTIAN APOSTASY embodied in the Beasts, False Prophet, and appendices thereto belonging, as apocalyptically exhibited in the book in hand. If men had been faithful to the principle of “the gospel being the power of God for salvation to the believer”—Rom. 1:16, they would not have tried to commend themselves to the Deity by Mosaic observances in respect of sabbaths, meats, drinks, holy days, &c. If they had closed their ears against the dogma of an immortal man in the mortal body, they would not have denied the resurrection and the judgment taught in the scriptures; nor would they have believed in going to heaven when the body ceases to breathe; nor in purgatory; nor in wicked impostors, called priests, praying souls out of its flames for a fee, or retaining them in its fires for want of it; nor would they have worshipped the ghosts of dead men, they call saints. If some of them, while admitting that Jesus was flesh, had not affirmed the spotlessness of that flesh, “the immaculate

conception of the Virgin” would not have been invented in order to account for it. All these old wives’ fables, and lying traditions, are embodied in the ecclesiastical institutions of the world. The Protestant abominations are all based upon immortal-soulism. With respect to this dogma, they are as pagan as Plato and the papists. Their superstitions are all Gnostic schemes to save a “soul” that has no existence, save in the imagination of the flesh. Their heaven and hell are as fabulous as purgatory, and the paradise of Mohammed. In short, “the Mother of Harlots and All the Abominations of the earth”—the Babylonish Jezebel of Rome, and all her Protestant and Sectarian progeny, are Nikolaitanism fully manifested —the plant of the first century become a tree in the midst of the earth, in whose boughs the fowls of the heaven rest, and by which all the beasts of the nations are sheltered and fed. “I hate it,” saith the Spirit. Then hew it down as a cumberer of the Ground! This is its coming fate.

APPENDIX 5

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE Bible Marking Notes

Jude the Lord's brother Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3. Epistle written just before AD 70 – late among the epistles. Purpose – to combat growing apostasy in the ecclesias and warn of impending judgement. Confirms that the apostasy predicted by Apostles had come to pass. Jude refers extensively to 2 Peter 2 and quotes 2 Pet. 3:2-3 in Vv. 17-18.

Use of triplets in the Epistle is characteristic – see V.1, 2, 4, 5-7, 8, 11, 19, 22-23. Epistle is based on 2 Peter. Cp. 'conversion' of Peter – his life marked by threes – 3 calls, 3 confessions, 3 denials, 3 declarations of love (see Acts 10). Principle of new life (seed) bearing fruit by death to the old way – Luke 22:31-32; 1 Pet. 1:22-25.

¹ Jude, ²the servant of Jesus Christ, and ³brother of James, to them that are ⁴sanctified ⁵by God the Father, and ⁶preserved in Jesus Christ, and ⁷called:

3 Key Words – (1) "beloved" 3 occs. V. 3, 17, 20; (2) "ungodly" 6 occs. V. 4, 15, 18; (3) "preserved" (tereo) 5 occs. V. 1, 6, 13, 21.

² Mercy unto you, and ⁹peace, and ¹⁰love, be ¹¹multiplied.
³ Beloved, when I gave ¹³all diligence to write unto you of the ¹⁴common salvation, ¹⁵it was needful for me to write unto you, and ¹⁶exhort you that ye should ¹⁷earnestly contend for the faith which was ¹⁸once delivered unto the ¹⁹saints.

Profile of false teachers – Not Gnostics (developed later and appealed to Gentile converts), but Jewish converts who, released from formalism and bondage of the Law, swung to the other extreme of libertinism. They preached, "Let us sin that grace may abound" Rom. 6:12; 3:8. Lamech was the first to turn grace into license (Gen. 4:15, 23-24); Enoch the first to earnestly contend for the faith against such (Gen. 5:24).

⁴For there are certain men ¹crept in unawares, who were ²before of old ordained to this ³condemnation, ⁴ungodly men, ⁵turning ⁶the grace of our God into ⁷lasciviousness, and denying ⁸the only Lord God, ⁹and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Three Main Errors Combated – V.4

1. God's grace turned to license
2. The Atonement denied in walk
3. Rejection of God manifestation

⁵I will therefore put you in ¹remembrance, ²though ye once knew this, how that ³the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, ⁴afterward destroyed them that ⁵believed not.

⁶And the ⁶angels which ⁷kept not their ⁸first estate, but ⁹left ¹⁰their own habitation, he hath

The need to contend for the Faith

- ¹ Judah = "praise"; Rom. 2:29.
- ² doulos with no def. art. - Lit. "of Jesus Christ a slave". Humility John 6:63.
- ³ Endorses and identifies with brother's message for increased effect and authority. Cp. Matt. 13:55; Gal. 2:9.
- ⁴ hagiazo – to make holy, clean, to sanctify. Some texts have different word – "beloved" (R.V.). Int. Bib. "having been loved".
- ⁵ en – in; a being within, remaining within.
- ⁶tereo – to watch over, guard, preserve.
- ⁷ kletos – a call or invitation, appointment to take office (root klesis – ecclesia); Acts 15:14 – separateness/status.
- ⁸ Our first and greatest need.
- ⁹ eirene – peace, rest (in contrast with strife). Flows from mercy – fellowship.
- ¹⁰ agape – Col. 3:14; 1 Tim. 1:5.
- ¹¹ plethuno – to increase, make full, i.e. by manifestation.
- ¹² agapetoi – 3 occs. Reveals essence of Jude's character.
- ¹³ spoude – earnestness, zeal and sometimes haste to do a thing.
- ¹⁴ koinos – belonging to several (akin to koinonia – fellowship). Proposed a treatise on basic truths.
- ¹⁵ ananke – a necessity imposed whether by external circumstances or inward pressure. TCNT – "I felt that I must write to you at once".
- ¹⁶ parakaleo – to call to one's side; to admonish; to urge one to pursue some course of conduct – always prospective, always looking to the future.
- ¹⁷ epigonizesthai – to contend about a thing as a combatant. The strongest word in N.T. (only occ.). Lit. "super-agony" – striving of athletes for mastery.
- ¹⁸ Roth. "once for all" – a finality.
- ¹⁹ hagios – Cp. V.1. Reaffirms status of believers.

The problem of false teachers

- ¹ pareisduno – to settle in alongside; to lodge stealthily; to slip in; insinuate oneself. Cp. Gal. 2:4; 2 Pet. 2:1.
- ² prographe – to write before; i.e. in O.T.
- ³ krima – judgement; the decision resulting from an investigation.
- ⁴ asebes – one defiant of God; not merely one missing the mark.
- ⁵ metatithemi – to transfer or exchange.
- ⁶ Refers to the whole process of redemption.
- ⁷ aselgia – excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, wantonness – Rom. 6:1; 3:8.
- ⁸ Some texts have despotes – sovereign (from 2 words; deo – to bind; pous – the foot). Hence denied in walk – 2 Pet. 2:1; Titus 1:16.
- ⁹ R.V. - "our only master and Lord (kurios) Jesus Christ". Diag. - "denying the only sovereign and our Lord Jesus Christ". Refers to Yahweh in manifestation.

The evidence of Scripture

- ¹ hupomimnesko – to call to one's mind, privately, silently, by hints or suggestions. Jude shows how – by diligent Bible study.
- ² Wey. "although the whole matter is sufficiently familiar to you". RSV – "though ye were once for all fully informed".
- ³ Saved for purpose (Jer. 13:11) – failed to comprehend it (Ps. 106:7). Cp. V.4.
- ⁴ deuterios – the second time. Yahweh acted twice. Saved (baptism), then destroyed.
- ⁵ pisteuo – to believe, be persuaded, trust, reliance.
- ⁶ aggelos – a messenger. Cp. Rev. 2:1; Luke 7:24; 9:52. Refers to Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16). See also Gen. 6:1.

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|---|---|
| <p>reserved in ¹¹<u>everlasting</u> ¹²<u>chains</u> under darkness unto the ¹³<u>judgment</u> of the ¹⁴<u>great day</u>.</p> <p>⁷Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and ¹⁵<u>the cities about them</u> in like manner, giving themselves over to ¹⁶<u>fornication</u>, and ¹⁷<u>going after</u> ¹⁸<u>strange flesh</u>, are set forth for an ¹⁹<u>example</u>, ²⁰<u>suffering</u> the ²¹<u>vengeance</u> of ²²<u>eternal fire</u>.</p> <p>⁸ ²³<u>Likewise also</u> these <u>filthy</u> ²⁴<u>dreamers</u> ²⁵<u>defile the flesh</u>, ²⁶<u>despise dominion</u>, and ²⁷<u>speak evil of dignities</u>.</p> | <p>⁷tereo – cp. V.1. An important responsibility. ⁸ arche – beginning; commencement. Roth. & R.V. (mgn.) “principality”; i.e. an elevated position by God's selection. ⁹ apoleipo (active) – to leave behind. ¹⁰ Wey. – “deserted their proper abode”. Roth. – “had forsaken their proper dwelling”. Num. 2:10-16; 3:29. ¹¹ aidos – a continuing period of time. ¹² desmos – bonds or means of restraint. Num. 16:30-31. ¹³ krisis – the process of judgement – trial, sentence, execution. ¹⁴ Contrast with darkness – day of revelation. ¹⁵ Permissiveness is highly contagious. ¹⁶ ekporneuo – excessive indulgence in fornication. ¹⁷ Int. Bib. – “going away after”. ¹⁸ Roth. “other kind of flesh”. Rom. 1:27. ¹⁹ deigma – a specimen or example. ²⁰ hupeko – to hold under; to undergo. ²¹ ekdikesis – that which proceeds out of justice. ²² Cp. 2 Pet. 2:6; Lam. 4:6. Cp. Rome Rev. 11:8; 14:10; 18:4,8. ²³ TCNT – “yet in the very same way...these men too cherishing vain dreams”. Summary of Vv.5-7. Related to false teachers V.4. ²⁴ Roth. “in their dreamings”. Sometimes a Divine agency (Acts 2:17), but see Deut. 13:1-5; Jer. 23:22-32. ²⁵ Like Sodom – cp. 1 Cor. 3:16-17. ²⁶ Wey. – “set authority at nought” – like Korah, Dathan and Abiram. ²⁷ blasphemo doxas – Lit. blaspheme glories. Cp. 2 Pet. 2:10. Like Israel who blasphemed God's glory in manifestation – Num. 13:31; 14:2-3, 9-10.</p> |
| <p>Three Grounds for Contending</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The challenge of holiness “in God the Father”. 2. The need for preservation. 3. The privileges of the call – For the Name – Acts 15:14. | |
| <p>⁹ ¹<u>Yet</u> ²<u>Michael</u> the ³<u>archangel</u>, when ⁴<u>contending</u> with the ⁵<u>devil</u> he ⁶<u>disputed</u> about ⁷<u>the body of Moses</u>, ⁸<u>durst not</u> bring against him a ⁹<u>railing accusation</u>, ¹⁰<u>but said</u>, The Lord rebuke thee.</p> | <p>The example of Michael ¹ de – whereas (Roth.); but (Wey. & Int. Bib.). ² “Who is like El”. Angel of presence (Isa. 63:9; Ex. 23:20-23; 33:14). Manifestation of Yahweh's glory. ³ Roth. “chief messenger”. Israel's prince – Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1. ⁴ diakrino – to separate the evidence; weigh the evidence; make a decision or judgement. Refer Zech. 3:1-2; Ezra 4 & 5. ⁵ diabolos – false accuser, slanderer (“Satan” in Zech. 3). Samaritan opposition in collusion with disaffected priests – Ezra 4:1-6; 2:61-63. ⁶ dialogomai – to reason, to speak to and fro; dispute. Refers to discussion between Jews, Samaritans and Persians which Michael overshadowed as “the eye of God” – Ezra 5:5. Cp. Dan. 10:13 – not seen but in control. ⁷ soma – body (living or dead). Called “ecclesia in the wilderness” Acts 7:38 = Israel 1 Cor. 10:1-2 (cp. 1 Cor. 12:27). ⁸ Int. Bib. “he did not dare”. ⁹ blasphemia krisis – Lit. a blasphemous judgement. Cp. Ezra 4:11-16. ¹⁰ Cited from Zech. 3:2. See Deut. 32:35. However, his voice was not heard!</p> |
| <p>Zech.3:2; Jude 9 – “The Lord rebuke thee” – How?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Michael had procured for “the body of Moses” (Israel the decree of Cyrus – Dan.10:13,20-21). 2. Joshua and Zerubbabel contended against false claims of Samaritans by upholding the decree. 3. This faithful contention was the way Yahweh said “The Lord rebuke thee”. 4. Divine contention against false brethren can only be done by our earnest contention for the faith. | <p>Natural Brute Beasts ¹ blasphemeo – used V.8. Those of V.4. ² oida – knowledge in a general sense. ³ epistamai – to fix one's mind upon; i.e. to understand (carnally). ⁴ zoon alagos – animals without reason. Wey. – “in things which like the brute they do understand instinctively”. ⁵ ptheiro – to destroy by means of corrupting. Roth. – “bringing themselves to ruin” - 2 Cor. 11:3. ⁶ ouai – exclamation of grief and indignation. ⁷ hodos – a road, path – John 14:6; Heb. 10:20. ⁸ “Gain”. Misunderstood Atonement. Offered only minchah – Gen. 4:3-5; Heb. 11:4. ⁹ R.V. “ran riotously”. Wey. “rushed on headlong”. ¹⁰ “Waster of the people” – by turning grace into license – Rev. 2:14; Num. 22-25. ¹¹ misthos – pay for service, hire, wages. ¹² apollumi – to destroy fully. ¹³ antilogia – contradiction. Challenged Yahweh's manifested authority.</p> |
| <p>¹⁰But these ¹<u>speak evil</u> of those things which they ²<u>know</u> not: but what they ³<u>know</u> naturally, as ⁴<u>brute beasts</u>, in those things ⁵<u>they corrupt themselves</u>.</p> <p>¹¹ ⁶<u>Woe</u> unto them! for they have gone in the ⁷<u>way</u> of ⁸<u>Cain</u>, and ⁹<u>ran greedily</u> after the error of ¹⁰<u>Balaam</u> for ¹¹<u>reward</u>, and ¹²<u>perished</u> in the ¹³<u>gainsaying of Core</u>.</p> <p>¹²These are ¹<u>spots</u> in your ²<u>feasts of charity</u>, ³<u>when they feast with you</u>, ⁴<u>feeding themselves</u> without fear: ⁵<u>clouds they are</u> without water, ⁶<u>carried about of winds</u>; ⁷<u>trees</u> whose fruit withereth, without fruit, ⁸<u>twice</u> dead, ⁹<u>plucked up by the roots</u>;</p> | <p>Six Graphic Metaphors ¹ spilais – a hidden rock or reef. Roth. “hidden rocks” – 1 Tim. 1:19-20. ² agapais – love-feasts (so R.V., Roth., Diag.). Matt. 26:26; 1 Cor. 11:2—22. ³ suneucho – to entertain sumptuously. RSV – “they boldly carouse together”. ⁴ poimanio – to exercise the whole office of a shepherd. Cp. Ezek. 34; Isa. 56:11; 1 Pet. 5:1-4. ⁵ Impressive, full of promise but empty – 2 Pet. 2:18. ⁶ TCNT – “driven before the winds”. Eph. 4:14.</p> |

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| <p>¹³ ¹⁰<u>Raging</u> waves of the sea, ¹¹<u>foaming out their own shame</u>; ¹²<u>wandering stars</u>, to whom is reserved the ¹³<u>blackness of darkness for ever</u>.</p> <p>¹⁴And ¹<u>Enoch</u> also, ²<u>the seventh from Adam</u>, ³<u>prophesied of these</u>, saying, Behold, the Lord ⁴<u>cometh</u> ⁵<u>with ten thousands</u> of his ⁶<u>saints</u>,</p> <p>¹⁵To execute judgment ⁷<u>upon all</u>, and to ⁸<u>convince</u> all that are ⁹<u>ungodly</u> among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their ¹⁰<u>hard speeches</u> which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.</p> <p>¹⁶These are ¹¹<u>murmurers</u>, ¹²<u>complainers</u>, walking after their own ¹³<u>lusts</u>; and their mouth speaketh ¹⁴<u>great swelling words</u>, having men's ¹⁵<u>persons</u> in ¹⁶<u>admiration</u> because of ¹⁷<u>advantage</u>.</p> <p>¹⁷ ¹<u>But</u>, beloved, ²<u>remember</u> ye ³<u>the words which were spoken</u> before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;</p> <p>¹⁸How that they ⁴<u>told you</u> ⁵<u>there should be</u> ⁶<u>mockers</u> in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.</p> <p>¹⁹These be they who ⁷<u>separate themselves</u>, ⁸<u>sensual</u>, ⁹<u>having not the Spirit</u>.</p> <p>²⁰But ye, beloved, ¹<u>building up yourselves</u> ²<u>on your most holy faith</u>, ³<u>praying in the Holy Ghost</u>,</p> <p>²¹ ⁴<u>Keep yourselves</u> in the ⁵<u>love of God</u>, ⁶<u>looking for</u> the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.</p> <p>²²And of some have ⁷<u>compassion</u>, ⁸<u>making a difference</u>:</p> <p>²³ ⁹<u>And others</u> ¹⁰<u>save with fear</u>, ¹¹<u>pulling them</u> out of the ¹²<u>fire</u>; hating even the ¹³<u>garment</u> ¹⁴<u>spotted</u> by the flesh.</p> | <p>⁷ RSV – “fruitless trees in late autumn”. Whole cycle of growth completed but no fruit. Cp. Mk. 11:13.</p> <p>⁸ “Dead” previous winter – then revived – no fruit by autumn – dead in reality (1 Tim. 5:6). Cp. second death Rev. 20:6.</p> <p>⁹ Aorist tense – Lit. “they shall be plucked up”.</p> <p>¹⁰ agrios – wild; vehement, furious, i.e. uncontrollable and destructive (Isa. 57:20).</p> <p>¹¹ Shame is plural – by-product of ungovernable behaviour.</p> <p>¹² planetes – a wanderer. Stars are fixed in relation to earth. Refers to bright meteors – useless for light or guidance, but impressive.</p> <p>¹³ Meteors swallowed up in oblivion – eternally lost. Contrast Dan. 12:3.</p> <p>The prophecy of Enoch</p> <p>¹ “Dedicated”, “Initiated”. Man of sign to this generation – Heb. 11:5.</p> <p>² Lamech's contemporary (Gen. 4:19-24). Cp. V.4. Lamech = “Powerful overthrower”.</p> <p>³ False teachers the same in all ages.</p> <p>⁴ erchomai – the act of coming.</p> <p>⁵ Lit. “in holy myriads of himself” (Diag.); i.e. God manifestation V.4 – an innumerable host – Deut. 33:2 (1 Cor. 4:15; 14:19).</p> <p>⁶ hagiais – cp. hagios V.1 = separation.</p> <p>⁷ kata (with Genetive) – Lit. down upon. Diag. “against all”; i.e. judgement of household complete – only rejected and world to be judged.</p> <p>⁸ exelencho – to convict thoroughly.</p> <p>⁹ asebes – one who is impious, defiant of God.</p> <p>¹⁰ skeleros – hard, rough, dry, harsh. Roth. - “hard things”.</p> <p>¹¹ gongustes – to mutter, murmur or grumble. Lxx for Ex. 15:24; 17:3; Num. 14:29; cp. V.5.</p> <p>¹² mempsimoiroi – Lit. blamers of fate, Discontent with their lot in life because of demands of Truth. See 1 Tim. 6:6; Phil. 4:11, cp. V.6.</p> <p>¹³ epithumia – a longing, strong desire for forbidden. TCNT – “they follow where their passions lead them”. Cp. V.7.</p> <p>¹⁴ huperogkos – over-swollen, pompous, boastful, highflown things. Used in 2 Pet. 2:18. See Ps. 12:1-4.</p> <p>¹⁵ prosopon – the part seen – the face.</p> <p>¹⁶ thaumazo – to wonder, marvel, be astonished; to regard with wonder and reverence.</p> <p>¹⁷ ophelia – profit, gain. Only other occ. Rom. 3:1.</p> <p>The prophecy of Peter fulfilled</p> <p>¹ R.V. – “But ye beloved (agapetos V.3)”.</p> <p>² mnaomai – to think much of a thing.</p> <p>³ See 2 Pet. 2:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; Acts 20:30-31.</p> <p>⁴ lego – to pick out, gather, collect, then to lay before. Refers to the substance and meaning of words. Cp. Rom. 3:19.</p> <p>⁵ Roth. & Wey. – “there shall be”.</p> <p>⁶ empaikeis – in part derived from pai – a child. See Lxx. Isa. 3:4. Only other occ. 2 Pet. 3:3.</p> <p>⁷ apodiorizo – to mark off, set up bounds, create sects or cliques. Diag. – “These are marking out boundaries”.</p> <p>⁸ psuchikos – what pertains to the animal (V.10).</p> <p>⁹ Lacked power of Truth through the Word – 1 John 5:6; John 17:17; Rom. 8:14.</p> <p>The way to contend – Available resources</p> <p>¹ epoiokodomeo – to build a house upon. See use Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 3:10-12,14; Eph. 2:20; Col. 2:7. First of 4 steps.</p> <p>² Purity of practice requires purity of doctrine – 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 4:13-16.</p> <p>³ Diag. – “praying with holy spirit”. Int. Bib. & Roth. no def. art. Cp. Rom. 8:26-27; John 15:7. See Prov. 15:8-9.</p> <p>⁴ tereo – V.6, 13. – personal responsibility.</p> <p>⁵ agape. Cp. John 15:9-10.</p> <p>⁶ prosdechomai – from pros – to or towards and dechomai – to accept by a deliberate and ready reception. Int. Bib. – “eagerly awaiting”.</p> <p>⁷ eleeo – to show mercy; to have the desire of relieving the miserable to show kindness by beneficence or help.</p> <p>⁸ diakrino – to separate, distinguish, judge, contend. In accusative case and middle voice – R.V. “who are in doubt”; Roth. “such as are in doubt”.</p> <p>⁹ ous de – but some. A weaker class than V.22.</p> <p>¹⁰ Cp. Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 10:12-14.</p> <p>¹¹ harpazo – to snatch away. Cp. 1 Thess. 4:17.</p> <p>¹² Symbol of divine judgement. Cp. Zech. 3:2.</p> <p>¹³ chiton – undergarment. Same as Christ's coat without seam – John 19:23. Cp. Ex. 26:31-32; Ps. 133 = unity of body. See Zech. 3:3.</p> |
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| <p>²⁴Now unto him that is ¹<u>able</u> to ²<u>keep</u> you ³<u>from falling</u>, and to ⁴<u>present you</u> ⁵<u>faultless</u> before the ⁶<u>presence</u> of his glory with ⁷<u>exceeding joy</u>,</p> <p>²⁵⁸<u>To the only wise God</u> our ⁹<u>Saviour</u>, <i>be</i> glory and ¹⁰<u>majesty</u>, ¹¹<u>dominion</u> and ¹²<u>power</u>, both now and ¹³<u>ever</u>. Amen</p> | <p>¹⁴ spiloo – stain, defile. Cp. Lev. 13:47-52.</p> <p><u>Final prayer for preservation</u></p> <p>¹ dunamai – to have power, be capable.</p> <p>² phulasso – to keep, guard.</p> <p>³ Roth. “from stumbling”. Vine – “surefooted”.</p> <p>⁴ histemi – to cause to stand. R.V. – “set”.</p> <p>⁵ amomos – without blemish (sacrificial term). Cp. use Rev.14:5; Eph. 5:27.</p> <p>⁶ katenopion – directly in front of; in the very presence of – Col. 3:4.</p> <p>⁷ agalliasis – exultation, great joy. Int. Bib. – “unspeakable joy”.</p> <p>⁸ Roth. – “unto God alone”.</p> <p>⁹ See Isa. 43:11; 49:6; 2 Cor. 5:19.</p> <p>¹⁰ megalosune – greatness, dignity, majesty.</p> <p>¹¹ kratos – manifested or exerted power (through others).</p> <p>¹² exousia – freedom of action, authority.</p> <p>¹³ ainos (plural). Diag. – “both now and throughout all the ages”.</p> |
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Abbreviations

RV – Revised Version
 RSV – Revised Standard Version
 Roth. – J. B. Rotherham Emphasised Bible
 Diag. – The Diaglott Translation
 TCNT – Twentieth Century New Testament
 Int. Bib. – Interlinear Bible (Green)
 Wey. – Weymouth Translation
 Lit. – Literally Cp. – Compare

APPENDIX 6

Slides on the character of the seven ecclesias of Asia to whom Christ wrote.



“John to the seven ecclesias which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Ephesus – The hard ecclesia

❖ Received Christ's commendation for:

- works, labour, patience and intolerance of evil men;
- trying of the spirits and rejection of liars;
- patient endurance and unwearied effort;
- hating the deeds of the Nicolaitanes.

❖ But criticised for:

- losing their first love.

In withstanding false doctrine there is a danger of becoming distracted and hardened. Sustaining our first love and zeal over the long haul is a serious challenge. So, what is “first love”? The clue is in Rev. 2:5 – “...do the first works.” There is therefore a need to establish what “first works” are.

Matt. 13:45-46 – “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” = forsaking all.

Gal. 4:15 – “...for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me” = personal sacrifice.

1 Thess. 2:13 – “...when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” = absolute conviction.

Acts 19:5 – “When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” = humility and submission.

Col. 1:4 – “Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints” = love of the Brotherhood.

Regaining “first love” is about restoring the enthusiasm, total commitment and sacrifices that attended the time of our baptism into Christ and the early years that followed.

Smyrna – The persecuted Ecclesia

- ❖ Received Christ's commendation for:
 - works (some texts omit);
 - endurance of trial;
 - material poverty due to giving priority to the Truth;
 - richness of faith under trial;
 - opposition to false "spiritual Jews".
- ❖ There is no condemnation or criticism.

We should expect troubles. The promise is not that we will be spared, but that we will overcome. We should avoid leaving a difficult situation, but rather try to overcome the problem.

Rev. 2:10 – 'ten days' = 10 years of intense persecution AD 110-120 under Trajan.

V.11 – "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" – Many would die the 'first death' prematurely, but were assured not the 'second death'.

Pergamos – "Citadel", "Fortress"

- ❖ An ancient royal city - the seat of the kingdom of Pergamum - Bequeathed by Attalus III to the Romans in 133 BC - became the official capital of the Roman Province of Asia.
- ❖ Set proudly on a rocky hill in the broad plain of Caicus some 25 km (15 miles) from the sea.
- ❖ Its history and site spoke of permanence, strength, sure authority and great size.

Pergamos – "Citadel", "Fortress"

- ❖ The city acquired prominence when the Macedonian general Lysimachus chose its acropolis as a stronghold for his treasure (the Fort Knox of the past!).
- ❖ First city in Asia to receive an Augustan temple (dedicated to the worship of the Emperor).
- ❖ A centre of Roman government it imposed Roman authority and pagan religion on all its constituents.

Pergamos – The embattled Ecclesia

- ❖ Received Christ's commendation for:
 - works (omitted by some texts);
 - holding fast to Christ in the seat of Roman power in Asia;
 - not denying the faith under trial.
- ❖ But criticised for:
 - tolerating adherents to the doctrine of Balaam;
 - tolerating adherents to the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.

It is insufficient to be faithful personally even under persecution. We must withstand error strenuously. It is possible to be so loving that we tolerate false doctrine and place our ecclesia in peril.

Antipas – "The name is typical of a class at that time, and signifies against all Nicolaitanes, Balaamites, children of Jezebel, false apostles, and spurious Jews, who, as Justin says, 'are called Christians, but are atheists and impious heretics, because that in all things they teach what is blasphemous, ungodly and unsound.'" Eureka

"Balaam" – "Waster of the people." Jude 11 – "ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." = self interest.

"doctrine" – Balaam taught compromise with the world's religions. Some here taught the doctrine of expediency over offering incense to Caesar.

"Nicolaitanes" is formed of 2 words - *nicos* – victory & *laitos* – people = vanquishers of the people. A class of errorists who introduced gentile philosophy – 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:12. The faithful would be given a 'new name' (V.17; 3:12) – Yahweh. Their choice was! – repent or retain Christ's 'name' for them – Balaamites or Nicolaitanes!

Thyatira

- ❖ The least notable city of all seven, historians record little of it in the 200 years before AD 96.
- ❖ Was fortified by the Greeks as a military fortress because it stood in the Lycus Valley which ran north and south joining the Hermus and Caicas valleys.
- ❖ Losing its military significance during Roman times it became a large and prosperous commercial centre.

Thyatira

- ❖ 80 kms (50 miles) east of Pergamos, it was that royal city's guard post to slow down invaders from the east.
- ❖ Noted for its trade guilds (e.g. Guild of the Dyers), every skilled worker was a member of a union and was expected to support his association.
- ❖ Truth started here by the work of Lydia (converted at Philippi - **Acts 16:14**), and Paul while at Ephesus (**Acts 19:8-10**).

Thyatira – The compromising Ecclesia

- ❖ Commended by Christ for:
 - works, love and service;
 - faith and endurance;
 - more works (**focus on doing not doctrine**).
- ❖ But criticised for:
 - toleration of a seducing Jezebel class.

V.24 - Only one thing is required of them – eject the teachers of error from their midst!

Even when the faithful know and do many right things, an ecclesia can be endangered by false teachers. We must steadfastly hold fast to the faith once delivered to the saints.

Thyatiran Epoch – AD 606 to 1572 when true witnessing came to an end – Jezebel ascendant in the Papal system. Without purity of doctrine there is no salvation – 1 Tim. 4:12-16. Allowing error to be taught results in shipwreck – 1 Tim. 1:19-20. Proven teachers of error must be ejected – Titus 3:1-11; Gal. 1:8-9.

Sardis – “Escaping ones”

- ❖ 53 kms (33 mls) south of Thyatira. From 1200 BC had been a proud city protected by a virtually impregnable fortress.
- ❖ Once a great and splendid city. Capital of kings of Lydia. Once wealthiest city in world. Gold taken from River Pactolus. Famous for temple of Cybele.
- ❖ Had a long history of warfare and had prevailed over nearly all nearby cities.
- ❖ Destroyed by earthquake AD 17. Rebuilt with assistance from Tiberius Caesar.

Sardis – A reputation!

- ❖ Prevailed in wars against the Greek cities and inscribed its coin with the words, “Sardis the First Metropolis of Asia, and of Lydia, and of Hellenism”.
- ❖ Went into decline under the Romans and turned to trade rather than the spoils of war.
- ❖ Twice in its history overthrown by enemies climbing the unguarded cliffs on the north, thought to be impossible to scale – Cp. **Rev. 3:2-3**.

The unfounded confidence of Sardis – In the war between Croesus king of Lydia and Cyrus king of Persia in BC 546 a Lydian soldier dropped his helmet over the northern wall. He climbed down and retrieved it and was noticed by soldiers in the Persian army. The Persians thus entered the city and overthrew it.

Christ warned the ecclesia – “...thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”



Sardis – The dead ecclesia

- ❖ Commended by Christ for:
 - a few worthy members who had not defiled their (Christ) garments.
- ❖ But criticised for:
 - having a reputation of vitality, but being spiritually dead;
 - unfulfilled works before God.

It is possible for an ecclesia to be large in number and of good repute but to be dead due to a lack of spiritual dedication. In an age of permissive tolerance this is a real danger.

Rev. 3:2 – “watchful” – *gregoreo* – to keep awake. Bro Thomas – “become watchful.” Need for spiritual alertness to recover sensitivity to the Truth.

“strengthen” – *sterizo* – to set fast, fix firmly, make steadfast.

“for I have not found thy works” - RV – “no works of thine.” Works are

unacceptable without faith – James 2:26.

“perfect” – *pepleromena* – fulfilled. Their vow of baptism was not carried out.

“before God” – *mou theos* – RV – “my God.”

V.3 – “received” – In the Past Tense. Sardis relied on privilege and reputation. They needed to recognise the true value of the gift of the truth.

“hold fast” – *tereo* – to watch over, take care of, watch narrowly, give heed.

“repent” – *metanoeo* – to change one’s mind and purpose. There was a need for action.

V.4 – “garments” – *himatia* – Refers to figurative garment received at baptism – Rev. 7:13-14.

Philadelphia – “Brotherly love”

- ❖ Derived its name from Attalus 11 (BC 159-138) whose love and loyalty for his brother Eumenes gained him the epithet Philadelphus.
- ❖ Situated in the valley of the Cogamis, a tributary of the Hermus River, it became tied to Pergamos in BC 189.
- ❖ A centre of Graeco-Asiatic civilisation, it served as a focal point for education in Greek language and manners.

Philadelphia

- ❖ Destroyed by an earthquake in AD 17, it was rebuilt with the aid of the Emperor Tiberius and for a time assumed a new name “Neokaisareia” (the new Caesar), and thereafter lived in fear of earth tremors.
- ❖ About 43 kms (26 mls) S.E. of Sardis.
- ❖ Today known as Alashehir – the city of God.

Philadelphia – The beloved ecclesia

- ❖ Commended by Christ for:
 - works accomplished with little strength;
 - keeping his word;
 - not denying his name;
 - endurance under trial – V.10.
- ❖ There is no criticism or condemnation.

This beloved ecclesia is worthy of praise for its faithful, vigorous preaching even in the face of persecution. The Lord promised to bless their efforts but there would be no relief from persecution. They were faithful even under severe trial from outside the ecclesia.

“Let no man take thy crown” – *stephanos* - coronal wreath. Crown of victory. Symbol of eternal life (1 Pet. 5:4). A coronal of justification (prize of an over-comer).

Laodicea – “Justice of the people”

- ❖ Situated in the Lycus Valley about 60 kms (35 miles) from Philadelphia on the main trade route to Ephesus.
- ❖ Its role as protector of the caravan trade routes afforded it access to boundless commercial opportunities.
- ❖ Strongly fortified against attack, it had one great weakness; no water supply of its own. Soda-laden warm water from thermal springs was piped from Hierapolis 13 km north.

Laodicea and Rome

- ❖ Named in honour of Laodice, wife of Antiochus II (BC 261-246) who rebuilt the city.
- ❖ A very large city situated in a volcanic region built on 7 hills.
- ❖ In apostasy this ecclesia became mother church of 16 bishopricks. Thus foreshadowed Rome as Mother of Harlots.
- ❖ Three theatres and circus (one 30,000 capacity).

Prosperous Laodicea

- ❖ Trade wealth was bolstered by manufacturing of textiles made from its soft-textured black wool.
- ❖ Also made collyrium, the famous Phrygian eye-salve.
- ❖ A famous banking and financial centre.
- ❖ Destroyed by earthquake in AD 65, it proudly refused outside help to rebuild, trusting its own prosperity.

Looking from Hierapolis to Laodicea



Laodicea – The complacent Ecclesia

- ❖ There is no commendation by Christ.
- ❖ Criticised by Christ for:
 - lukewarmness in their attitude and works;
 - confidence in their prosperity;
 - blindness to their true spiritual state.

But repentance was still possible!

It is possible for an ecclesia to be so self-sufficient that in fact it denies the need for the grace of God in Christ.

There is no forgiveness for those who do not think they need it and therefore do not ask for it. In our affluent materialistic age we too can fail to rely on Christ.

“I would thou wert cold or hot” – Lukewarmness is nauseous to Christ. We can be like Prov. 25:13 – “As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he

refresheth the soul of his masters,” or like Ps. 39:3 – “My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,” but not lukewarm.

The Laodicean epoch – The perilous present – an era of prosperity and complacency to Christ’s return. Prosperity exists right up to Christ’s return – Luke 17:26-33. Sodom’s problems exist again – Ezek. 16:49. Laxity and anxious care about everyday life precede Christ’s return – Luke 21:34-35. Christ knew Laodicea’s problems would be repeated – Luke 17:32.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.”