



TOWARD THE MARK

***“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE
OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”
PHILIPPIANS 3:14***

*A MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS
OF ALL AGES*

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Dear Reader,

“Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the saying of the prophecy of this book (Rev. 22:7).

We know that the Word of God (Acts 1:7) has not declared to us the day, the month, or the year of the coming of the Lord to take His Church — every one that has owned Jesus as Savior and Lord — to be with Him. Yet three times in chapter 22 of the book of Revelation we have the clear voice of the Lord telling us that He is coming quickly. It would appear that certain characteristics will mark those who keep the sayings of this Book. They will be marked by the character of men who wait for their Lord. Loins girded and lamps burning: that is active in living for Him, serving Him, and witnessing about Him. God is moving on in the accomplishment of His own purpose of making Christ supreme. The prophecy of this Book is to enlighten us as to what God will do and we do well to keep these sayings and to live as those anticipating the coming of the Lord. **We do not look around to events happening in the world around us, but we look up and hearken to His blessed voice saying, “...look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws nigh” (Luke 21:28).**

I trust that you will enjoy the great articles in this issue that the Lord led us to include. They are related to His coming and show us how to set course in relation to that great and sure event.

Thank you, dear readers, for your overwhelming response to the magazine and for your e-mail and notes of encouragement. Please keep praying for the Lord’s blessing on Toward the Mark. **“Even so, come Lord Jesus”**

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

Emil S. Nashed

Please send your questions and comments to:

Toward The Mark
c/o Wayne Christian Assembly
60 Smith Lane
Wayne, NJ 07470-5354
Attention: Emil S. Nashed

www.towardthemark.org

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I have the pleasure to inform you that a mailing list has been set up for Toward the Mark. If you would like to receive an electronic version simply send an e-mail to toward.the.mark@gmail.com or visit www.towardthemark.org to be added to the mailing list. If you also want a copy of older issues, please mention it in your e-mail.

Quotations from Scripture are generally taken either from the King James translation or the J. N. Darby translation.

MILK

"The truth shall make you free"

ADDRESSES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA

REVELATION 2 AND 3

EPHESUS

Scripture considered: Rev. 2:1-7

In our introductory article, it was stated that a particularly valid way of studying the addresses to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 is to see how it outlines the sad general decline of the responsible Christian profession between the day on which the church was inaugurated on the day of Pentecost, and the catching away of those who are Christ's at the Rapture.

The defect in each church comes in by men. The remedy in each case is in the hands of a divine Person – "hear what the Spirit says to the churches." There are different failures or defects in different churches but the remedy is the same. Christ personally, and the recognition of what is due to Him, all made good to the soul in the power of the Holy Spirit!

Right at the beginning of the church's history, there were elements creeping in that were contrary to the revealed will of God. However, there were also those who could discern the adverse trend. Because of their personal sense of holiness they were deeply disturbed. Sadly, others did not seem to notice, or even care.

The decline in the attitude towards evil can be readily traced in the history of the church. At the beginning, there were certainly those who could not bear with evil. Before very long, in the next phase, the evil was tolerated. Later still, the evil was accepted. Eventually, there were those involved who were prepared to actively go over to evil and oppose the truth. This is

well illustrated in 2 Timothy, which tells us of conditions in the last days before Christ comes again. In chapter 1 we read of those who were turning away from the truth, including Phygellus and Hermogenes. In chapter 2, we are told of some, including Hymenaeus and Philetus, who were quite prepared to accept something that was not the truth. The final condition extant in the last days is indicated in chapter 3 in Jannes and Jambres who actively opposed the truth and rebelled against it. This is why it is so necessary to actively promote the truth which has been committed to us. Checking the meaning of the names of the individuals mentioned will demonstrate that their names are indicative of their characters and the action (or lack of action) that they took.

This first letter to the churches, to Ephesus, refers dispensationally to the very earliest days of Christianity. Even during the lifetime of the apostle Paul departure from the faith had already begun. When Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy he said, "All they which are in Asia have turned away from me" (2 Ti. 1:15). This would have included Ephesus.

The first obvious question is, why Ephesus first? The saints there were the product of Paul's ministry. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the topstone of Christian ministry is reached. This brings to mind at least two possible reasons why it was appropriate that the Ephesians were addressed first. On the one hand, when God begins to criticise, He starts with that which is nearest and dearest to Him (1 Pe. 4:17 "judgment must begin at the house of God"). Secondly, Satan always attacks the choicest. However, while Paul's ministry had been the means whereby they had been established, it was left to John to write to them now. This might be because Paul had to lament that all in Asia had turned away from him, and thus, if Paul had written to them, they might never have listened to him. So, the responsibility was given to John. Also, it is a very practical point that by this time Paul was no longer alive.

To each church, the address begins with a particularly appropriate presentation of Christ, in one of the ways that John saw Him in chapter 1. In every case the Lord speaks first of what He can commend. He then speaks of the failure in their local testimony to Himself. Each address closes with a call from the Spirit to the church. The motive is to promote “overcoming” in those who are exercised to be faithful to the Lord in His absence, and to stimulate their affections now to hold on while they wait for His Coming.

The local believers are considered as responsible servants (1:1), rather than as privileged saints. The angel is representative of the responsible element in that assembly. We need to remember that leadership (carrying the burden of the meeting) is local, but gift is universal. Also, in scripture, leaders are always spoken of in the plural, except one reference in Hebrews 2:10 to Christ Himself as The Leader. In this, as in all things, He must have the preeminence (Co. 1:18).

Let us look at the meaning of some of the terms used in these few verses:

Text	Meaning/Significance/Application
Angel	One in touch with heaven, acting responsibly and with power and authority on behalf of God.
Stars	Individual light-bearers, bearing light from heaven. Those who locally guide the assembly according to the will of God. A star bears light from heaven, especially in a time of moral darkness.
Lamps	A lamp bears light on earth, a major function of a local assembly.
Walketh	Active. The “walking” takes place “in the midst,” not round the periphery.
In the midst	Not around the periphery. He knows what is going on.

Text	Meaning/Significance/Application
Holdeth	Holding in a mighty grip, all the power of the Godhead. In relation to redemption, He has sat down for ever; but here the Lord is walking – still active. There is no lack of control or power in the Lord (His right hand) in spite of our failure. Yet, in the midst of general failure, God looks for those who will move sympathetically with Him in the establishment of His interests.
I know	He knows what is going on. This is characteristic. He says “I know” to each church. He is omniscient. There is nothing that the Lord Jesus does not know about us, either in our individual lives, or in what is taking place in His church. These chapters remind us that He knows and tests everything. Then He commends what is commendable, before directing their attention to what needs remedying.
Thy works	But not “of faith” (see 1 Th. 1:3,10)
Thy labour	But not “of love” (see 1 Th. 1:3,10)
Thy patience	But not “of hope” (see 1 Th. 1:3,10)
The things which accompany salvation (faith, love, hope) come together at least 10 times in the New Testament. They are well worth looking up to see the emphasis in each case.	
Tried	Tested – “for My Name’s sake.” Was His honour at stake in the activity? Did it glorify Him? This is the test.
First love	Best, chief. – The best love of which they were spiritually capable. First, not in time, or in quantity, but first in rank, in quality, as the primary, motivating consideration. See other uses of the same word: Lk. 15:22 (“best” robe); 1 Ti. 1:15 (“chief” of sinners).

Text	Meaning/Significance/Application
First works	First works cannot be done without first love. First works are the product of first love. If we lose “first love,” service in itself will not necessarily receive His commendation.
Remember	Recall to mind.
Repeat	Resume doing them!
Repent	Even a Christian? Oh! Yes! Especially a Christian!
Return	His return is the plumbline when and by which all is measured.
Remove	Responsibilities not undertaken properly will be withdrawn. (Matthew 25, Luke 19)
<u>Thy</u> candlestick	Their personal responsibility stressed. If the assembly fails in testimony, <u>their</u> lamp must be removed. The responsible testimony must be taken out of <u>their</u> hands, and placed in the responsible hands of <u>others</u> .

Additional comments

Need and role of repentance.

Repentance always leads to and is an essential step towards recovery. If first love has departed, repentance will bring us back to our first love. Repentance is necessarily mentioned in relation to all seven assemblies except Smyrna and Philadelphia. If there is self-judgment with regard to the things spoken of in these addresses, there will be recovery. Unless there is repentance and recovery there can be no true light shining.

“I am coming to thee” – it is much happier to have Him coming to us on the line of John 14:3, 18 than on the line of Revelation 2:5.

Verse 6: Nicolaitanes - deeds (see 2:15 doctrine).

If I lose or abandon my first love for the Lord, I will eventually give to man the first place that is due to Christ alone. The “Nicolaitanes” were so-called “conquerors of the people,” “champions of the world.” The rise of clerisy denies the Headship of Christ, the Lordship of Christ and the promptings of the Spirit. Man is given the place Christ should have. The folly of this is immediately seen. The Nicolaitanes clear off when suffering is involved (Smyrna), but come back when the assembly is given a place in the world (Pergamos). When gift is controlled by the wrong lordship, it brings in spiritual death amongst the saints of God. The Lord commends them for taking a stand against anyone who was displacing Him from His Lordship in the assembly.

Verse 7: Commendation, reward, exhortation, promise.

Amidst all this, there is a commendation and reward for the overcomer (look out for this word and its equivalents throughout the Book of Revelation), one committed to be faithful to the Lord in His absence, in an evil day, whatever the enmity and opposition.

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God?”

Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden so that they could not eat of the Tree of Life (Ge. 3:24) in their fallen state. But we read again of the Tree of Life in Revelation 22:1-2: “He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

These verses describe a scene where everything is of God and the Lamb, constantly maintained by the Holy Spirit of God. Life

is abundant. Death and the curse can never enter. Every adverse effect that sin brought in will be healed. Men will serve God willingly. They will always be before His face. They will be known by the Name of their God.

In the midst is the Tree of Life. God is the source of life. Christ is the embodiment of that life to the saints, so that they can feed on that life of which God is the source. The Tree of Life brings to us the preciousness of Christ. Christ personally will be the One Who will cause this world to be fruitful for God. His power will be seen and felt all over the world. He will administer the blessings of God throughout a cleansed universe of bliss. All will be fresh and new.

The overcomer is given to eat now of the Tree of Life, now in foretaste, then the actuality in Paradise. He can feed now on the One who will sustain everything in this world for God's pleasure throughout the one thousand year reign of Christ.

If we are feeding on the great Sustainer of Life according to God, we ourselves shall be sustained for God and His pleasure in this present world today.

Ernie Brown

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. Where did Aaron die?
2. Who outran a team of horses?
3. What will cause all the green grass on earth to be burned up according to the book of Revelation?

MEAT

"Sanctify them by the truth"

EVENTS TO TAKE PLACE ON EARTH BETWEEN THE RAPTURE AND THE ETERNAL STATE

The great event which forms the hope of every true believer on the Lord Jesus Christ is His coming into the air to raise the dead and change the living and translate them to His Father's house in heaven. No event is foretold with greater clearness and precision than this, as we read in 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; John 14:1-3; Philippians 3:20-21.

Though all who have died in faith since Abel's day will be raised in glory at this time, for they all belong to Christ, yet this event has the Church specially in view. It will include all who have believed in Him for the salvation of their souls from Pentecost. He has redeemed the church by His own blood, and He is coming for it and will present it to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5:27). "Behold the Bridegroom."

The Church having been caught up to Heaven, the saints will pass in review before the judgment seat of Christ and the marriage of the Lamb will take place. And God begins to move specially with regard to the earth. This brings us to Revelation 4, where God appears as the eternal and self-existing One who has created all things for His own pleasure, and who is about to assert His rights which have been denied by men upon the earth, and to reconcile all things in heaven and on earth to Himself, that He might find His pleasure in them. In Revelation 5 the Lord appears as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who, having been slain as the sacrificial Lamb, alone is worthy and able to establish God's will upon the earth in power. He takes the seven-sealed scroll of judgment from the hand of God to open the seals of it, and to execute the judgments therein written, for only by judgment can way be made for His kingdom to come.

The Opening of the Seals

Anarchy, with the attendant sufferings, misery, slaughter, famine, and pestilence, follows the opening of the seals (ch. 6), in, we judge, the professedly Christian lands, for they speak of the Lamb (v. 16), a title by which the Lord is known only where the Gospel has been preached. This condition of things is not due to the direct judgment of God, but seems to be the outcome of the unrestrained development of the pretentious and promising schemes by men for their own betterment apart from God. Their wisdom turns out to be folly, and the way that seemeth right unto them ends in death (Pro. 16:25). This condition of things will open the way for the rise of the Beast – the devil-inspired empire and its ruthless head (Rev. 13).

There first appears:

A rider on a white horse, with bow and crown, going forth conquering and to conquer. The victories gained are bloodless, and tell in striking symbol of some great policy or movement that will promise peace, prosperity, and goodwill, and fill the hearts of men with hope and self-congratulation. These hopes are speedily dashed to the ground, for the white horse and his rider are followed by

A rider on a red horse, who takes peace from the earth, so that they kill one another; and this seems to indicate internecine strife rather than war between nations; it will be a class warfare which will play its devilish part; for men, having given up God and His laws entirely, will each hate his neighbor as he loves himself.

A rider on a black horse follows, telling of grim famine, crushing with its miseries those who escape the sword, and making the way easy for

A rider on a pale horse, who will come forth killing with sword, with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. And this is not the end as some men fondly hope that death must be the end of all things for them, for **Hell** follows with him to claim the souls of those whose bodies are slain by the overwhelming calamities that the prophet sees. How quick, how terrible is THIS DESCENT OF MAN from the promise of the rider on the white horse to the hopeless depths of hell. Such will be the descent of man when God's preserving mercy is withdrawn from him. Even now the swift steeds

are bound to the chariot and are straining at the curb, and would take that steep gradient at a headlong gallop, but for the restraining hand of God. Meanwhile men, so blind are they, would fondly believe that they were speeding to the attainment of their most cherished ambitions. The ascent of man is a false dream, a delusion of the old serpent; the descent of man is a terrible fact. The only hope of deliverance from sin and Satan's power, and death and hell is in and through Christ. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

The Seven Trumpets

The Fall of a Great Commercial Power, and the destruction of that which seems prosperous on the earth, is indicated under the Trumpets, by the burning up of a third part of the trees and grass, and a great mountain being cast into the sea destroying a third part of the ships that are in it (Rev. 8) in the same sphere as that affected by the seals; but the awful calamities seem to spread to heathen lands in chapter 9, as indicated by the fact that idolatry comes into the catalogue of crimes in verse 20. We see in these visions a world that has refused God and His Christ at the mercy of men's passions and the malice of demons. Especially under the sounding of the trumpets men seem to be left to the miseries that the devil and his emissaries from hell can inflict upon them.

Palestine Peopled with Jews

At this time the Jews will be fully established in Palestine under the protection of a major political power (Is. 18). Their temple will be restored to them in Jerusalem, but they will still refuse God's testimony and will rejoice when His witnesses are slain (Rev. 11).

Satan cast out of Heaven

The seat of spiritual authority that lies behind all great movements in the world is in the heavens. Satan occupies this position now (Eph. 2:2; 6:12), though God is above all and only permits evil to go so far. But he is to be cast out of this place by Michael the archangel (Rev. 12) to make way for the Church, which is the Lamb's bride, the holy Jerusalem, for it must eventually have that place for the blessing of the world (Rev. 21:9-27), and to prepare the way also for the Lord's kingdom on earth which will have Jerusalem and Israel as its centre. Michael is the great spiritual prince that stands for Israel (Dan. 10:21; 12:1).

The Rise of the Beast

Being cast out of heaven Satan exercises his power and ingenuity in the reconstruction of the Roman Empire. It comes up out of the anarchy of Revelation 6, and to its head, **the Beast** – Satan (the Dragon), gives his power and his seat (Rev. 13), and his authority (v. 2). In this person military dictatorship, godless, blasphemous, diabolical, and ruthless will come to its full power; he will devour and break in pieces, and all those who dare to resist his political schemes – the residue – he will stamp beneath his feet (Dan. 7:7).

The intention of Satan in this, his masterpiece, is to hold the kingdoms of the world against the Lord and His Christ, and the ten kingdoms that form the Roman Empire will join in this, and give their power to the Beast in order to make war with the Lamb who is Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. 17:12-14).

Antichrist will also Arise...

...as the great coadjutor and assistant of the Beast. He will be an apostate Jew, regarding not the God of his fathers (Dan. 11:37), and will be the leader of the Jews in Jerusalem. The Dragon (Satan), the Beast, and the False Prophet (Antichrist) will form a trinity of evil (Rev. 16:13).

The Last Week of Daniel's Seventy Commences

The Prince of the same people, the Romans, who destroyed the temple and city of Jerusalem, i.e., the Beast, will make a covenant with the leaders of the Jews for one week, a week of years, or seven years; this is the last week of the seventy of Daniel's prophecy that still waits to be fulfilled (Dan. 9:20-27). This covenant is referred to in Isaiah 28:14-20 as being on the part of the leaders of the Jews a God-defying covenant. They will at this time believe that they are at last firmly established in their land, and that an era of peace without God has been inaugurated. They will say, "Peace, and there is no peace." They will build a wall of protection about themselves, and daub it with untempered mortar, but a stormy wind will rend it, and great hailstones shall consume it in the wrath of God (Eze. 13:10-15).

The Great Tribulation

In the midst of the week the Beast will treat his covenant with the Jews as "a scrap of paper," to be scorned and torn according to his imperious will. The great tribulation will then begin, which will spend its greatest fury upon the Jews (Jer. 30:7; Daniel 12:1; Mt. 24:8), but which will also try all that dwell upon the earth (Rev. 3:10). During this period all will be compelled to receive the mark of the Beast and worship him, or suffer boycott and death (Rev. 13:16,17). A remnant will be preserved by the power of God (Rev. 12:14,16). The Church will not be on earth but in heaven during this period of greatest distress, for she is to be saved out of the hour of it (Rev. 3:10).

The Remnant and their Service

At this time there will appear the two witnesses for God at Jerusalem, in the power of Elias (Rev. 11), and the remnant which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 12:17). To these Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21:8-19, 25-33 will apply. The commission given to the apostles in Matthew 10 will be taken up again, and the sufferings and persecutions and martyrdoms there promised will be endured, and by this remnant a people will be prepared amongst the Jews to receive the Lord at His coming, and "they shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come" (v. 23). Others will go further afield and preach "this Gospel of the Kingdom...in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Matthew 24:14).

Babylon the Great, the corrupt Church of Rome, overthrown

After the translation of the true Church to heaven, the false profession in Christendom will all be merged into the Romish Church, and this will become more powerful and greater than ever in the past, and as the scarlet woman, corrupt, blood-drunken, and splendid, she will ride upon the Beast, the political and military power, but she is to be destroyed by it as described in Revelation 17 and 18.

The Great Apostasy

Then there will be no semblance of *public* religion in Christendom or in Jewry (for the Jewish sacrifice will be stopped by the law of the Beast, Dan. 9:20), except the worship of the Beast himself, the

exaltation of man above all that is called God. Then the great apostasy will have come to its head (2 Th. 2:3-12), and the abomination of desolation will be set up in the Temple at Jerusalem, probably an image of the Beast (Dan. 9:27; Mt. 24:15). At this sign those who are faithful to God amongst the Jews in Judæa will flee to the mountains (Mt. 24:16).

Invasions of Palestine will take place

Towards the end of the second half of Daniel's last week the *King of the South* (Egypt) will invade Palestine, in order to attack Antichrist (the wilful king) at Jerusalem. Simultaneously the *King of the North* will sweep down upon the land and attack the armies of the south and overthrow them and compel the whole force from the south to submit to his will and support his campaign against Jerusalem (Dan. 11:40-45). **The King of the North is the Assyrian** of Old Testament prophecy, the overflowing scourge.

The Gathering of the Kings for Armageddon

Revelation 16:13-16 describes how the kings of the whole earth and of the world will be gathered into Palestine at this time, and Joel 3:9-11 foretells that war will be the supreme business of all nations. "They will beat their ploughshares into swords and their pruning hooks into spears." Various political reasons will doubtless move these kings to march upon the Holy Land, but the object of Satan, who will move behind the scenes so as to involve all in this crisis, is to fight against the Lamb and hold Jerusalem and the Holy Land against Him. But God will turn all to His own glory. So that in reality God will gather them there (Zech. 14:2), and will stain the pride of all militarism and glory of men, and smash it for ever outside the city which He has chosen to place His name there. The *kings of the East*, probably four, with an almost countless host, will also gather there (Rev. 9:13-19; 16:12). The four angels that are to be loosed beyond Euphrates, seem to represent four great nations, in the east, and that river is to be dried up to make the way of these kings and their vast armies easy. This is probably the true "yellow peril," and the invasion of Europe the purpose. It may be that the armies of Europe under the Beast march into Palestine to withstand them. Anyhow these multitudes will be gathered in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3), not to destroy one another, but to be judged by the Lord.

The Coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords

The sudden appearance of the Lord in this character has special reference to the Beast and false prophet and their armies, for the Beast will have assumed this place and title, which is the Lord's alone. These two devil-inspired leaders of men are cast into the lake of fire, and their armies are destroyed by the word of the Lord (Rev. 19:11-21).

In Flaming Fire taking Vengeance

Simultaneously all who had not obeyed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they must have heard to be judged on this ground, whether with the armies of the Beast or not, will be destroyed at the glorious appearing of the Lord (2 Th. 1:7-9).

His Feet shall Stand upon Mount Olivet

He shall appear for the salvation of the godly remnant of Israel who look for Him (Heb. 9:28), and who have fled to the mountains according to His Word (Mt. 24:16). In the same manner as, and from the same spot from whence He went up He shall return (Acts 1:11; Zech. 14:4). And then the Lord will sit to judge the heathen round about (Zech. 14; Joel 3:12-16).

Israel Delivered and the Kingdom Established

Those of the Jewish nation who have been faithful to Him during the great tribulation now brought to an end by the coming of the Lord will have a special place in His Kingdom, but He will gather His elect, not of the Jews only, but of the ten tribes also from north, south, east, and west (Mt. 24:31), and all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26). The nation born again, and with the law written in their hearts, shall live unto God (Eze. 37).

The Invasion of the Land by Gog and Magog

This invasion of a mighty host from Russia and adjacent lands foretold in Ezekiel 38, 39, after the striking description of the restoration of Israel in chapter 37, appears to take place after Israel has accepted their Messiah, and when they "are at rest and dwell safely" (ch. 38:11). The destruction of these armies is described in chapter 39.

The Judgment of the Living Nations

The last section of mankind still alive on the earth to be judged of the Lord are those that have been farthest off from Him, morally and spiritually, and who have had the least knowledge of His will, the heathen nations. This judgment is described by the Lord in Matthew 25:31-46. It is not as the Messiah of Israel that He judges these nations, but as Son of man, who is set over all things, and it takes place when He sits upon the throne of His glory in that character. The test for all who stand before Him then and there will be how they have treated His brethren (v. 40), who had preached to the ends of the earth “*this Gospel of the Kingdom,*” who had been the heralds of His kingdom.

Peace and Blessing...

...will follow which shall be earth-wide, having its centre on earth in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-5). But all the light and wisdom and blessing will come through the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the wife of the Lamb, His helpmeet in the place of administration that is given to Him (Rev. 21:24). This will be the Millennial age of which the Old Testament prophets spoke in glowing words, and in it will be made manifest to all the glory that is to follow upon the sufferings of Christ (1 Pe. 1:11).

Principalities and Powers and Dominions...

...other than those connected with the earth will have to be subdued by Him, and these vast spiritual dominions will by His power be reconciled to God (Col. 1:20), for “*He must reign,* till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death ... and when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Co. 15:25-28).

The Close of the Thousand Years...

...reveals the fact that millions who had been born during their peaceful course had not been born again, and that they will be in heart and character just what man has ever been since the fall, ready to rebel against God; which they do with great enthusiasm when Satan, who had been chained up in the bottomless pit during the millennium,

is released for a little season (Rev. 20:7-9). The devil is then sent to his eternal doom, the lake of fire (v. 10).

The Great White Throne

This will be the last judgment, the judgment of the dead who have died in their sins, all who stand there have but one judgment; they are shut off from the God whose mercy they had refused, and cast into the lake of fire, where the devil is whom they had served (Rev. 20:11-15).

The Eternal State

The earth and the heaven having fled away from the face of the judge upon the throne, a new heaven and a new earth come into being, and the “tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these things are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. 21:3-6).

J.T. Mawson

(edited and abridged)

ANSWERS TO SCRIPTURES SEARCH!

1. Mount Hor (Numbers 20:25-29)
2. Elijah (1 Kings 18:46)
3. Hail and fire mixed with blood (Revelation 8:7)

Exercise

“Exercise thyself unto piety”

THE GOD OF REFRESHMENT

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh languisheth for thee, in a dry and weary land without water” (Psalm 63:1).

David wrote this psalm in the wilderness of Judah, a land literally dry and weary, a land that yielded no such refreshment as that for which the heart of man thirsts. His lonely experiences in scenes so barren of comfort and prosperity were intended by God to teach him that the world itself is a barren wilderness, spiritually speaking, in which no true blessing can be found to refresh the heart of one who has known the sweetness of the grace of God. He must seek his refreshment outside of it all, and in the living God.

Through such things the believer learns that God is not far off, as though He were merely an impersonal Creator of the universe, having little interest in His creatures. He learns to know God as his own God, and his heart is moved to seek Him early, with no delay; for the very time of felt deprivation is the time when the sweetness of the presence of God should be cultivated. On such occasions of being alone with God, the thirsting soul will find delight in the comfort of fellowship with God.

Too frequently believers allow themselves to be discouraged and downcast by the wilderness life. They may feel the lack of fellowship with others who love the Lord: they think they need the exhilaration of exciting circumstances. Yet the Lord may have put them in totally different circumstances, intending to have them learn their need of the precious fellowship of His own love and goodness.

If then in faith we cry out for the living God, languishing for Him as in a dry and weary land without water, the results will be far better than we had ever expected. Our inmost soul will be refreshed and filled with goodness.

L M Grant

Rest

“Shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?”

THE GOLDEN LINING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DARK CLOUD

The Present Portion of the Christian

Amid all the terrible state of things at the present, we may well ask, what is the Christian’s portion? One thing is certain; they cannot escape the trials and tribulations common to men. If heavy taxation, for instance, must rest upon the nation, the Christian must, perforce, have his share in this. Are prices high? They affect the Christians and those who are not alike. Is conscription to be the order of the day? It will affect believer and unbeliever alike. But what is the *golden* lining on the other side of the dark cloud?

It consists of DIVINE FACTS, the contemplation of which will comfort our hearts.

God and His Care for His Own

The first fact we may briefly consider is one of great comfort and consolation to the believer’s heart. We know GOD and His care for His own. How sweet it is if we can *really* take up the language of Scripture:—

“We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour [literally PRESERVER as to temporal things] of all men, SPECIALLY of those that believe” (1 Ti. 4:10).

How happy it is to be assured that God is “the LIVING God.” He, who made the eye, can see; He, who made the ear, can hear; He, who made the heart, can love; He, who is our Father, cares for His children.

Are we wondering how rising prices are to be met, and how increased taxation is to be faced? Let us trust God. Paul, with a confidence begotten of knowledge and experience, could triumphantly exclaim, *“My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).* What triumph there is in the use of the

personal pronoun “*my*.” What a wonderful measure of supply! Who can fail in comfort with such precious promises given!

Elijah of old was fed by the ravens, the greediest of birds. And when the brook Cherith dried up, God’s care was still as powerful as ever. He raised up a poor, indigent widow to care for His servant, and performed a daily miracle to accomplish it.

Nor was Elijah alone in that day cared for, for we read of Obadiah feeding with bread and water one hundred prophets by fifties in a cave.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace, and Daniel in the den of lions, are striking instances of God’s care and power.

In the New Testament we read of Peter released from prison, and of Paul, standing on the deck of the vessel, when “no small tempest” lay upon the voyagers, being able to say, “There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve” (Acts 27:23). How full of encouragement is Holy Scripture!

God’s Cheer for His People

Terrible judgments are about to be poured out upon this world—so terrible as to make the heart quail, even in the reading of them. How cheering it is to have the prospect of being soon caught up to be for ever with the Lord. *The Church will NOT go through the Great Tribulation.* One verse of Scripture proves this in the most convincing of language. The Lord says to His own:—

“Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev. 3:10).

The Lord has given to us the word of His patience, that is the truth as to His coming for His people, and instructions how to patiently wait for His coming. Added to this He promises to His people that they shall be kept from (*literally*, out of) the hour of the fast-approaching world-wide tribulation which shall try all earth-dwellers.

Mark the exactitude of the language. It is not merely that the saints are to be kept out of the temptation, but out of “THE HOUR” of temptation. And seeing the tribulation is to be worldwide, and no part of the world’s population will escape it, there is only one way this

Scripture can be satisfactorily fulfilled, and that is by the Lord’s people being removed by the summoning shout of the Lord (see 1 Th. 4:16-17). There is no way of being kept out of *the hour*, save by being taken *out of time* and being placed *in eternity*. There is no way of escaping the worldwide tribulation, save by being removed from the sphere of it, that is the whole world.

So we get in the next verse a promise and an exhortation, which suit us admirably at this present time:

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:11).

Revelation 3:10-11, most conclusively proves the believer will not go through the great tribulation, but may expect the Lord at any moment. How cheering! What a *golden lining* we have to our dark cloud!

Meanwhile!

Yes, meanwhile, and how short a space of time may suffice for it, for the Lord’s coming is *very* near, we have God’s care and the priesthood of Christ to help us through. We have God’s wonderful care of which we have spoken; we have all the sympathy and succour of our Great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God; we have the throne of grace to come to for help in time of need. Our High Priest is “touched with the *feeling* of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15). It is not only that He knows. He does know, fully, completely, every anxiety, every sorrow, every pain, every bit of pressure and anguish, but He *feels*. No wonder the writer of the Hebrews can exhort:

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

A Summary

In short our past is met by His mercy; our present, whatever it may be, is met by His care, our future is glowing with the ineffable glory of His own presence and likeness.

Fix your mind on these three following words and feast upon them.

“SPECIALLY”(1 Ti. 4:10). **“BOLDLY”**(Heb. 4:16). **“QUICKLY”**(Rev. 3:11).

A.J.Pollock

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. What did the Lord Jesus mean when he said “Now learn a parable of the fig tree” (Mt. 24: 32); what is the fig tree?

Anna

A. Dear Anna:

The fig tree in scripture is ever a figure of Israel as a nation for God, while characteristically the vine is the religious system. In Matthew 21 the Lord pronounced a curse on the fig tree – there was no fruit for Him, just empty profession (leaves) – though He had come to them as foretold (Zech. 9:9) and been amongst them for three years – the nation by its leaders rejected Him.

In chapter 24 the Lord having prophesied the destruction of the temple responds to the disciples questions “when shall these things be, and what is the sign of Thy coming and the completion of the age?” He tells them of wars and threats of war, of famine, pestilence and earthquakes, all to be part of the preliminary judgment, followed by the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom throughout the world, the restoration of all Israel to the land the great tribulation and all the associated fearful judgments followed by a sign in heaven and then the coming of the Son of Man in power and great glory. (See the article by J.T. Mawson in this issue for a more complete outline.)

Thus the parable of the “Fig Tree” is in remarkable distinction to the establishment of the Kingdom by Joshua and David. What characterized the kingdom then was victory after victory - all foes defeated and introducing the glorious reign of peace under Solomon.

Because the nation has been unfaithful and rejected the King then judgments and sorrows must follow, the people must be brought to the realization of their sin and failure. Only after their repentance toward God will the days of peace and glory come. Thus through grace, and under the new covenant, will Israel shine forth and the fig tree will once more bring forth fruit under the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus judgment is the necessary work of God to bring about the conditions wherein the fig tree will once more flourish.

JAP

FULLNESS OF JOY

PART I

OH, bright and blessed hope!
When shall it be
That we His face, long loved,
Revealed shall see?

Oh! when, without a cloud,
His features trace,
Whose faithful love so long
We've known in grace;

That love itself enjoy,
Which, ever true,
Did in our feeble path
Its work pursue?

O Jesus, not unknown,
Thy love shall fill
The heart in which Thou dwell'st,
And shalt dwell still.

Still, Lord, to see Thy face,
Thy voice to hear;
To know Thy present love
For ever near;

To gaze upon Thyself,
So faithful known,
Long proved in secret help
With Thee alone;

To see that love, content,
On me flow forth,
For ever Thy delight,
Clothed with Thy worth!

J.N.Darby

REVOLUTIONS, UNREST, ECONOMIES ON THE BRINK,
EARTHQUAKES, TSUNAMIS, NUCLEAR MELTDOWNS,
DEATH... WHAT IS NEXT?...

...exclaims a national weekly news magazine!

Dear friend, what is next for you?

“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27) declares the Word of God, the Bible! A few years ago, an atheist professor was invited to address a group of students and their family members. He poured out his verbiage against the very thought of God, and heaped ridicule upon all those foolish enough to believe in God and in the Bible as the Word of God. After he finished he asked if anyone had any questions.

One of the students’ mother, a widow, rose to her feet and asked him “Sir, I cannot answer your arguments; your learning is beyond me. With your superior intelligence will you answer me one question? I have been a believer in Christ for many years, I have rejoiced in his salvation, and I have enjoyed my Bible. This comfort has been a tremendous joy. If, when I die, I come to learn that there is no God and that the Bible is not true and that there is no salvation by believing on the Lord Jesus and there is no heaven, Sir, what have I lost by believing on Christ?” The room was very still. The professor answered in quiet tones, “Madam, you won’t stand to lose a thing.” Hearing this, the women spoke again, “You have been kind to have answered my question. Permit me to ask another. If when you die, you discover that the Bible is true, that there is a God and that the Lord Jesus is real, and there is a heaven and a hell, Sir, what will you stand to lose?” There was a great silence and no answer!

Dear friend, you do not know what will happen tomorrow!

“Because [there is] wrath, [beware] lest he take thee away with [his] stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee” (Job36:18).

Accept God’s offer of salvation for “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” (Heb. 2:3).

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).