

# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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## Contents

Thought for the month	202
Remembering	204
Zechariah—Pt. 12	206
The Herod Family	213
Let us Go to the House of the Lord	216
Written in the Book—Cainan, Son of Arphaxad	223
O Little Town of Bethlehem—A Carol	226
The Gathering Home of Saints—Pt. 4	228
Note on Isaiah 7. 14	238
Notices	239
Index 2019	240



# BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

The Bible Study Monthly, published to promote knowledge of the Bible, sees the Scriptures as a true record of God's dealings with the human race, needing to be understood in our generation. It stands for the pre-millennial advent of our Lord, and His reign of peace and justice on the earth.

*“Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Ephesians 4. 15 NRSV).*

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Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

The human mind is a wonderful thing. It is able to make decisions, put decisions off and change its mind. Its more powerful than a computer and yet its subtle too. It is able to store a large amount of information as we have a memory. It is also the seat of our emotions even if we usually call this the heart as the heart is really just a pump.

Luke 2. 19 (NRSV) says “Mary treasured all these words (principally of the shepherds) and pondered them in her heart.” Or put in other words she remembered these words for decades and contemplated them.

Jesus' disciples were able to remember the words of their Master. One occasion was when they recalled Jesus' words “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”, which they remembered after he had risen from the dead. The holy spirit played a large part in this process as it not only taught them, it also brought to mind the words he had told them from the time when they could not make sense of Jesus' predictions. (John 14. 26)

The Old Testament prophets were able to write down predictions of things that were to happen in the medium term and in the long term including things yet to occur at the consummation of the Gospel age (Christian era). Zechariah was given prophecies of events that have now taken place and things expected to happen in this generation. These are things to keep in mind as time progresses and events transpire especially in the land of Israel.

Other minds seem to conceive plans so cruel and callous that one struggles to see how they can live with themselves. Herod the Great who killed the new-born boys in Bethlehem was one, as was Abimelech who planned to assassinate seventy half-brothers and whole towns in Judges 9, whereas others use their intellect to serve their communities like the Hebrew midwives in Egypt.

The memory is also able to bring people to mind in prayer. Paul writing to Timothy in his second letter stated he remembered Timothy in his prayers as many of the household of faith do for those in time of need.

### Swaddling

When the baby was put into the camels' hair cradle, the mother would swing him on to her back, putting the straps on to her forehead, thus taking the whole weight on her head. If the sun was hot she would pull her long veil through the straps of the cradle and cover the baby right over, so that as she walked down the street one could only see the straps on her forehead and a large hump under the veil, and one knew there must be a baby there, perfectly safe and protected. This was probably how Mary would have carried her baby Jesus.

When Moses was blessing the tribes of Israel, this was the illustration used in the blessing to Benjamin. "The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders." (Deut. 33. 12) It is a wonderful picture of the tender love and care of God for his children.

*Customs and Costumes in Bible Days*  
I.E.D. Gollmick

### **ANOTHER WEBSITE FOR BIBLE FELLOWSHIP UNION**

In addition to our website [www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk](http://www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk) there is a new website which contains previous issues back to 1937.

With thanks for those who laboured so lovingly to bring this about and those who work to maintain our websites.

[www.biblestudymonthly.uk](http://www.biblestudymonthly.uk)

Magazine content. What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

## REMEMBERING

*“But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.”*  
(Luke 2. 19 RSV).

Memory is one of God’s most wonderful gifts. Just how wonderful we hardly realise in the early years when the ability of recall is at its best. We take the gift for granted using it without thought of how wonderful it is. It is only when decay of our frail human nature begins to show itself, that we realise what we are losing. Yet what a rich blessing it is that we can store the events of life, can recapture the characters we’ve known and the activities we’ve enjoyed because of what we have learned.

Mary is generally regarded as having been quite young when Jesus was born. When her firstborn came into the world in Bethlehem she was still in her ‘peak learning time’, her memory still absorbing facts quickly and her recall would be vivid. Before the angel Gabriel came to tell her that she was to give birth to the Son of God, Mary would have spent long hours through childhood memorising the Jewish Holy Scriptures. Her education would include learning well all the ancient stories of the people of Israel. The memories of Jewish children were well trained and there was no easy dependence upon books and computers for them. They could recite long passages from the Old Testament as many Jews can today and their brains were the better trained to do God’s will for focusing upon His word. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, out of the storehouse of memory Mary was able to compose the magnificent poem of Luke 1.46-55.

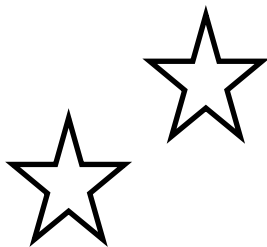
As the events of those stirring days passed so the heart and mind already attuned and focused on godly things, was able to ‘ponder’ and remember what was happening. Shepherds and angels, prophets and Magi, all added to the wonderful tapestry of Mary’s thoughts. Undoubtedly she retained much more than she related to Luke in after years. She saw the growing child, and like any good mother she was excited by each step of her children’s growth and development. Perhaps more than any other mother she vigilantly watched her eldest grow strong and healthy in body and blossom into adolescence. She notices the part He played in family and social life. There must have been times when it was not easy to feed and clothe that growing family. She recalled so well the visit to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve and became ‘lost’. But there is no record that the two were ever at odds with each other in spite of what has been written about Luke 2. 48 and Mark 3. 31-35. The young man had an enquiring mind which was expanding under the power of the Spirit. His mother too had within her the spirit of enquiry and it was inevitable that, like many

of God's servants before and after, she could not keep pace with events in her own life. She turned them over and over in her mind, treasuring the things which revealed her place in the purposes of God. But she was a real human mother and must often have laughed and cried about what was happening in her life. Through it all God revealed enough to enable her to understand and come to terms with these wonderful events; and more importantly come to terms with the wonderful person who had been cradled beneath her heart, and whom she had cuddled and nurtured till he was old enough to go forth into the world. Her memory was marked by the birthdays as he grew. What did she make of the events in Nazareth recorded in Luke 4. 16-30? How did she face the gathering storm and recall those words of Simeon in the Temple?

Mary of Nazareth, mother of Jesus, wife of Joseph the carpenter, daughter in the line of King David, is an example to us of how the memory can be used to good effect. It was not the sordid gossip of Galilee that she remembered nor the moments of pain in family life. Her thoughts were fixed upon the God she served so well and she recalled just those things which enable us to catch a glimpse of a real live boy growing up to be the Saviour of the world.

We too, like Mary, must ever keep our thoughts from wandering, for wander they will. It is not always easy to meditate but prayer and discipline will help us in a day when the media has gone mad and is out of control. But if we ponder Him, who Mary must have thought about so often, then at last we will be ready and prepared to share with Him in the work of redemption of all people including those who would so readily have killed Mary's child. We too must remember and recall the great things that God has done for us, for this is, as the Psalmist often reminds us, the grandest reason for having a memory.

DN



*Genesis 1. 16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.*

## ZECHARIAH, PROPHET OF THE RESTORATION

### 12. "Who is on the Lord's side!"

From his description of the external forces gathering against regathered Israel in chap. 12. 1-9 the prophet now turns to view the attitude of the people in the land. Up to this point the nation has been referred to in general terms as the subject of Divine deliverance soon to be accomplished, but the extent to which the individuals comprising that nation are at heart loyal to God and trusting in His promise has not been declared. As a matter of fundamental principle God can only deliver where there is faith and trust and one of the reasons why it is so repeatedly said in the prophetic Scriptures that only the "Remnant" is ultimately delivered is surely because in all history saving faith is usually found only in the minority; the majority are found unable to pass the test. More than one Old Testament reference to these stirring times indicates that there will be a final purging of the unworthy from the nation on the very eve of Divine intervention and it is only to be expected that Zechariah's very complete foreview of the events should include some reference both to that purging and the turning in faith to God which is characteristic of those who are not thus purged.

This is where the next section of the prophecy, chapter 12. 10 to 13. 6, has its application. The first half presents a picture of what appears to be almost a universal conversion of the nation and wholehearted sorrow for its former blindness to the workings of the Almighty on its behalf; with that comes the swift response of God in establishing a means of cleansing so that they become acceptable in His sight and acknowledged as His people. But concurrently with this the prophet paints a parallel but darker picture; false teachers and idolatrous, anti-God influences in the land, even whilst in the process of being done away, are still active. The false prophets are "ashamed" of their visions and they make excuses, but they give no evidence of repentance and apparently remain false prophets at heart. And there may yet be such among the people when at the final critical moment God stretches out His hand to deliver. So the stage is set for that seemingly strange paradox of the end of chapter 13 and the beginning of chapter 14 when in the very moment of deliverance some who are still in the land suffer deprivation and cutting-off.

At this momentous time, when the "governors of Israel" of Zech. 12. 5-6, the Old Testament stalwarts or "Ancient Worthies", are beginning their task of organising the nation to meet the increasing threat, a strange and wonderful happening occurs. *"I will pour upon the house of David, and*

*upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon”* (ch. 12. 10-11).

This “spirit of grace and of supplication” is obviously one of repentance and a throwing of themselves upon the Divine goodness. Like Daniel of old, they might well be saying “*we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies*” (Dan. 9. 18). So many times there were in Israel’s former history when because of their apostasy “*He brought down their heart with labour...and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses*” (Psa. 107. 12-13). Now the same thing is to happen again and for the last time. There will be no more apostasy. As Isaiah says (44. 3-5), speaking of this same time and event, “*I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring...one shall say, I am the LORD’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel*”. This is definitely a widespread repentance within the nation, from the nature of the description a majority repentance. The dissentients and the unrepentant would appear to be in the minority, and this raises the question as to what has brought about this major reversal of national feeling. Is it inspired by the evidences of God’s moving in the affairs of the nation, or the realisation, at last, of Israel’s historic mission and that the time is at hand for its execution; or is it the effect of the reforming zeal of the heaven-sent “governors” and their evident control of the situation and constant exhortation to faith in God? Whatever it may be, there is no doubt that this is a sincere and lasting repentance. The following words show that. “*They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him*”. At long last, after so many generations of hard-heartedness, they will “look unto Him”, and be saved.

There is a certain amount of doubt as to the textual accuracy of “they shall look upon me”. The speaker in this chapter is God Himself and there is a measure of inappropriateness in thinking of the Most High being “pierced”; the word is *daqar*, meaning to thrust through as with a sword or spear, and implies the death of the subject. To think of God as being thus done to death, even in symbol, seems improper. Neither does the sentence read very grammatically; they shall look on *Me* and they shall

mourn for *Him* without specifying who is the second person thus introduced. Some give “him” instead of “me”, so that some modern translators, including the R.S.V., Moffatt and Ferrar Fenton, adopt “him”, whilst the RV and Rotherham give “him” as an alternative. It is of course tempting to look on this verse as referring to the Crucifixion especially as John in ch. 19. 37 quotes it in that connection, and his words are rendered in the A.V. “*They shall look on him whom they pierced*”. It would appear to be true that on the basis of existing manuscripts there are more or less equal claims for either word. It has been pointed out, however, that the omission at an early date of one letter from the word could transform an original “him” to “me”. The Hebrew word rendered “upon me”, is a preposition in the first person singular masculine which by the addition of one more letter, the Hebrew *vav*, becomes third person, thus changing “me” to him. The following word in the Hebrew text, *AT*, is given by Gesenius as a demonstrative pronoun corresponding to the Greek *autos*, “*this same*”, so that if the hypothetical correction is made the phrase would read “*and they shall look toward him, this same who they pierced*”. Now the Greek of John 19. 37 rendered literally would read “*they shall look unto whom they pierced*”, the “him” being implied. It is possible therefore, that the “*vav*” was in the original text and dropped out at an early date, thus accounting for the alternative renderings in various manuscripts, and that what we have here is a prophetic picture of the repentance of Israel at the Time of the End, and their acceptance of the One whom their forebears crucified. “*They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son*”; this was a term used to denote any unusually intense expression of grief and goes to show how widespread and deeply felt will be that national contrition which will sweep the nation at that time. A similar expression occurs in Amos 8. 10.

Verse 11 colours the picture further. “*In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon*”. This is a simile which is not easy to understand at first sight. There is no other reference in Scripture to the “mourning of Hadadrimmon”. Jerome in the 4th century suggested that it referred to a town called Rummaneh, near Jezreel, but no evidence that there ever was such a place is extant. Hadad in the Aramaic languages means The Mighty, and Rimmon is another name for the Syrian deity Adonis. The story of Naaman the Syrian captain healed by Elisha mentions the house or temple of Rimmon (2 Kings 5. 18). The “mourning of Hadadrimmon” therefore may well mean the “mourning of the mighty Adonis”. This was a well-known ritual observed in the territory of Syria. The legend told how Adonis, the youthful god of Nature in her beneficent aspect, had been



slain, and descended into the underworld. At his going the sun veiled its face, vegetation withered, the crops failed and the cattle died. The world became a cold and dark place in which there was no new life. Then Adonis rose from the grave and Nature smiled again and all was well. The entire myth was probably a picturesque story of the coming of winter upon the world and its succession by springtime. So, every year in early springtime, the festival was held. As soon as the river Adonis began to run red (this was due to the red clay banks crumbling in the sunshine and colouring the water) maidens ran about wailing and mourning the death of the god, whose blood was staining the water. The shepherds pointed to the red anemones blossoming in profusion over the fields—drops of blood from the veins of Adonis. The whole people gave themselves up to this ritual mourning for a week. Then on the sixth day, the note changed. Adonis was risen! Expressions of joy rose on every hand. The days of mourning were forgotten and all was well.

The same custom prevailed in Babylon and Chaldea where Adonis was known as Tammuz, and Ezekiel refers to it when, in describing the idolatrous practices of the Israelites of his day, he says he saw at the gate of the Temple “*women weeping for Tammuz*” (Ezek. 8. 14). So Zechariah was led to liken the mourning of Israel in the Last Days for the “only son” who had suffered death and risen again to that ancient ceremonial with which it had so many elements in common.

The final aspect of this universal mourning in Israel is shown in verses 12-14 of chapter 12. Each family will mourn in privacy and the womenfolk separated from the menfolk. This is reminiscent of the Mosaic laws respecting the ceremonial for cleansing from defilement caused by contact with the dead. (Num. 19. 11-22; 5. 2-4; 9. 6-10). Seven days separation from their fellows, and purification by means of the “water of separation”, had the effect of purifying the man or woman from uncleanness; so here, simultaneously with the great mourning there is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. (Zech. 13. 1).

Four families are specified; the houses of David, Nathan, Levi and Shimei. Two names are well-known, the other two not so familiar. About nine individuals named Nathan appeared in the O.T., including the famous prophet of King David’s time, and eighteen named Shimei. There could be scope here for a number of interpretations based on any particular selection; perhaps the most reasonable conclusion is that Nathan, the son of David by Bathsheba, and Shimei, the grandson of Levi, are intended. We then have David, the leading representative of the

royal house of Israel, and Nathan, a minor member of his posterity, with Levi, the head of the priestly tribe, and Shimei, a minor member of his posterity. The combination of the four names would then picture this great mourning extending to all levels of the people from kings and priests at the forefront to the rank and file of the people below them.

It is probably true that the respective offices of kings and priests will be combined, in that day, in the persons of the “governors”, the princes, but the meaning remains the same. From the leaders to the led there will arise a great expression of repentance for the past and acceptance of God and his ways for the future. This is where ch. 13. 1 has its place. A cleansing stream makes its appearance and in the waters of that stream the sin and uncleanness of the past is washed away and the people stand ready to face their final ordeal, standing thus in the strength of their God.

A darker part of the picture now comes into view. Some there are in the nation who do not share the general spirit of repentance and supplication. Idolatry is still present in the land and in ch. 13. 2 the Lord declares His intention of rooting out that idolatry and eliminating the false prophets. Idolatry in Zechariah’s day meant the worship of false gods, Baal and Ashtoreth and Molech and others, representative of and associated with the powers of Nature and the more depraved aspects of men’s minds. That kind of worship has long since disappeared, but its equivalent in more modern guise is with us now and to an extent will be present in the regathered nation until consumed in the fire of the final ordeal. Money, commercial gain, political power, control of the minds and lives of men, these are the modern forms of idolatry and these will have their devotees, the false prophets of this chapter, and to an extent their voices are heard in this nation so soon to be tried in the fire that it may be forged into an instrument for God’s purpose. It would seem, though, that chapter 13 envisages a time when national sentiment in general is against them. The great repentance and mourning of chapter 12, the fountain for cleansing of ch. 13. 1, are having their effect, and in ch. 13. 3 a situation is described in which these false prophets are discredited and rejected when they speak. Again the symbolism of the Mosaic Law is invoked. The parents of the false prophet say to him “*Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD*” and they thrust him through, i.e. put him to death. This was the penalty for idolatry laid down by Moses and recorded in Deut. 13. 6-11. The offender’s nearest relative must execute the death sentence. Thus is indicated that the closest of ties will not interfere with the complete separation between the godly and the godless at this critical time. So the false prophets are more or less driven underground, as we

would say today. They endeavour to avoid discovery, "*ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied*" as Zechariah puts it in v. 4, eschewing the distinctive garb of a prophet, the *addereth seir*, the mantle of goatskin or camel skin. They claim instead to be one with the people of the land, and when taxed with an enquiry as to the wounds in their hands they return an evasive reply. "*One shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends*" (v. 6). The idolatrous priests were accustomed to cut themselves with knives and inflict various wounds upon their bodies in the prophetic frenzy—the priests of Baal did this at the time of Elijah's challenge (1 Kings 18. 28)—and the possession of such injuries was another mark of a false prophet. But here in this case the men thus taxed deny the imputation and claim that they received their injuries within their social circle; this is the meaning of the expression "house of my friends". Either blood relatives or close companions are implied. The false prophets are at pains to make it appear that they are at one with the prevailing national sentiment of faith and loyalty toward God but in fact their hearts are far from these things. This passage relating to the presence of false prophets at this time is difficult to interpret and it is only because there are other Scriptural references to the presence of just such a class of men when the hostile nations advance to the attack that it is possible to elicit a meaning at all. Thus Zephaniah, speaking of this same time, of the Lord "rising up to the prey", gathering the nations for judgment preparatory to turning his "pure language" to the people (Zeph. 3. 8-20) goes on to say "*then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride...I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD*". This "remnant of Israel" he says "*shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth*". The 5th chapter of Micah, devoted to the same events, pictured as the "Assyrian" invading the land, (v. 5) includes as an integral part of the Lord's deliverance the banishment of witchcraft, "*and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine (own) hands*". (vv. 12-13) Isaiah in his 66th chapter talks of retribution to come upon those who are following idolatrous practices at the very time He has gathered all nations of the world for the final battle; here again the "remnant of Israel" are the only survivors in the land and they are then commissioned to take the knowledge of God to all nations. This is another way of picturing the "pure language" of the Zephaniah passage just quoted. The association of an unbelieving element with the faithful "remnant" in the land at this crucial time seems plainly to be indicated in

these passages.

It will not have escaped notice that in all these prophetic foreviews the prevailing sin of the unbelieving element is idolatry—the worship of a rival god. It is perhaps only to be expected that in Israel at the final stage there will still be those whose minds and hands are given to the perpetuation of this present order of things, those who would advocate collaboration with the powers of this world rather than dedication to the service and the purpose of God. Perhaps in the Divine wisdom such will be allowed to continue their covert resistance to the reforming work of the “governors”—false prophets “ashamed” of their vision, but at heart false prophets nevertheless and hoping still that their policy will ultimately prevail. But the Lord has declared “*I know their works and their thoughts*” (Isa. 66. 18) and although their continued presence in the land may well be permitted to constitute a test and a refining influence upon the faithful—and this may well be the inference to be drawn from verses 7-9 of chapter 13—it is certain that all who come short of complete and whole-hearted faith and loyalty towards God will find themselves excluded from the deliverance which God has planned for the people of faith. The fourteenth chapter makes it plain that when at last, the long-expected onslaught takes place and Israel enters into the fire, some of the people are not delivered; they go into exile. That can only be because they are not the people of faith. They have yielded their devotion and efforts to the service of idol gods, and to their idol gods they will be abandoned.

*(To be continued)*

AOH

Who is on the Lord's side?  
 Who will serve the King?  
 Who will be His helpers,  
 Other lives to bring?  
 Who will leave the world's side?  
 Who will face the foe?  
 Who is on the Lord's side?  
 Who for Him will go?

By Thy call of mercy,  
 By Thy grace Divine.  
 We are on the Lord's side;  
 Saviour, we are Thine.

*Frances R. Havergal  
 Alexander's Hymns No. 3*

“*There is in store for me the crown of righteousness*” 2 Tim. 4. 8 (NIV)

See the fair inheritance; it is yours! If you believe in the Lord Jesus, if you have repented of sin, if you have been renewed in heart, you are one of the Lord's people. No one else will have your portion...There will be no vacant thrones in glory when all the chosen are gathered in.

*Spurgeon*

## THE HEROD FAMILY

Further Studies in History

There were so many members of the family of Herod the Great that it's not surprising that occasionally someone gets a little confused as to who they are. Four sons are mentioned in the New Testament as well as two grandchildren and three great grandchildren. How much worse would be the confusion if all the family were mentioned. The only member of the family to achieve a good reputation in history was the child of Cleopatra, Herod Philip II who ruled in districts north of Galilee and received no mention at all in the Bible because his activities did not impinge on the lives of Jesus nor his disciples within the early Church. He was a quiet, peaceable man who sought to rule those in his domain with justice. He finally married his grand-niece, Salome, who had requested her step-father to give her the head of John the Baptist on a dish.

After Herod the Great died, just after Jesus' birth, his son Archelaus, whose mother was Malthrace, ruled Judea and Samaria for ten years, which caused Matthew to record that Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Nazareth in Galilee. (Matt. 2. 22-23) He was the nastiest of the tribe, utterly dissipated and very cruel, even worse than his father. He was so bad that aristocrats in Judea and Samaria waived their normal hostile attitude to each other and joined forces to get rid of him. A deputation was sent to Rome to complain of the dreadful things that were happening even by standards current in the first century. Archelaus was removed and Judea was henceforth ruled by a prefect or procurator of whom one was Pontius Pilate. It was a mark of disrespect to be appointed governor of Judea. The province in constant ferment. Jesus told a parable recorded in Luke 19. 11-27, in which there may have been a slight reference to the Archelaus problem in v. 14.

Another son by Malthrace (or Malthrake) was Herod Antipas. Originally he was to have been his father's successor but Rome relegated him to be tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He married the divorced wife of his brother Philip. Herod Philip I was never a ruler and maybe the insatiable appetite for power and fame of Herodias caused her to change her affection from one uncle to the other, Antipas. Her ungovernable passion was the eventual downfall of this royal pair. Her bitter resentment to John the Baptist's preaching against their unlawful marriage demonstrates what an unpleasant person she was. Antipas was a weaker character, riddled with superstition yet really unable to cope with the religious and philosophical problems into which he wanted to delve. This man hated John yet was

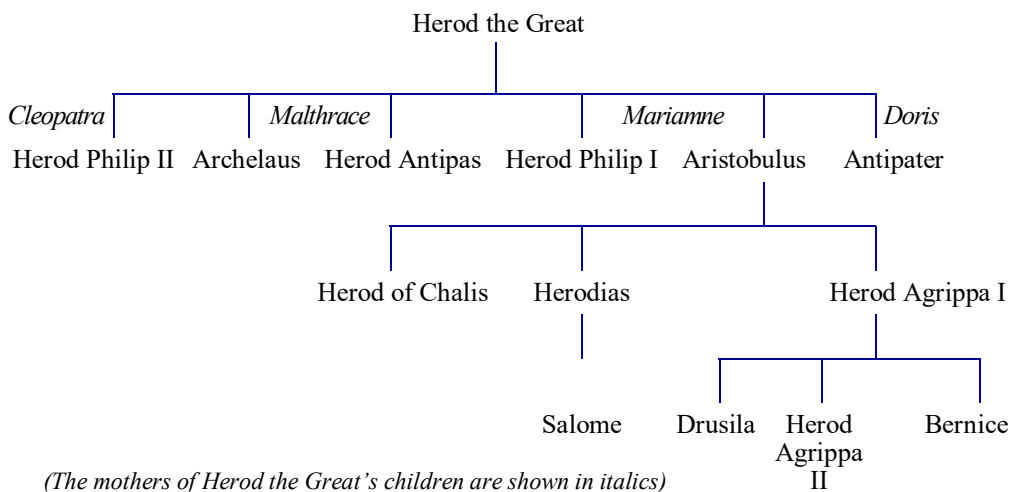
afraid to destroy him. He believed Jesus was the resurrected John, yet only wanted to see him as a novelty. He had the privilege of coming face to face with the two greatest figures that ever moved across the world's stage and he mishandled both occasions. What lost opportunities! No wonder Jesus was silent before such moral and spiritual decadence. When the Pharisees warned Jesus about Herod's desire to kill Him their motives for so doing are uncertain (Luke 13. 31-33). Did they want Jesus out of their sphere of influence, or did they seek to expose him as one who was afraid of Herod by His exit from Galilee? Or was it a gesture of good will? Our Lord's reply shows that like Nehemiah, centuries before, fear could not move him from doing God's will and completing the work which God had committed to Him, unafraid, totally dependent upon and fully trusting in His Father. This is an attitude which the Pharisees and Herod would not understand. Yet Antipas grew up with Manaen his foster brother who was destined to be a leader of the church at Antioch and from whom Luke would gather first hand information about the dissolute ruler (Acts 13. 1).

Little is known of Aristobulus who was the son of Herod the Great by Mariamne, descendant of the Maccabees. His noble ancestry was respected by the Jewish people so that Agrippa I and Agrippa II enjoyed their loyalty. Aristobulus' son, Agrippa I, ruled Judea for three years till his sudden death during a great gathering of AD 44. After his father's execution in 7 BC he had been sent to Rome. He developed extravagant tastes and squandered his wealth. Only the kindness of relatives and friends in high places saved him from lasting disgrace. Eventually he ruled the territories of his grandfather, championed Jewish causes and prevented the emperor's statue being erected in the Temple. His persecution of Christians increased his popularity and his skill in manipulating power brought the whole populace to his feet during what may have been an athletic games. Luke briefly but graphically tells of his end (Acts 12. 23) and this is interestingly supplemented by Josephus, the Jewish historian.

Herod Agrippa I had three children. Drusilla, who became the wife of Felix, governor of Judea (Acts 24. 24), Bernice and Agrippa II. These last two appear together in the account of Paul's final public hearing in Israel recorded in Acts 25 and 26. The royal pair entered the audience hall with much pomp. Neither Paul nor Luke comment on this immoral partnership. Agrippa II like his father, was very popular with the Jews. He had power to appoint the High Priest and it is evident that Paul respected his knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. He believed the prophets. How near

did he come to believing the Gospel? Can anyone who gives him or herself unreservedly to the delicate balancing acts of politics also totally dedicate their life to the King of Kings? Are not the two incompatible? He strenuously sought to maintain the balance of power in Palestine and protect the Jews from war with Rome. But he was also a supporter of Caesar and his efforts at peace were in vain. It was he who supplied Josephus with much of the material about the Jewish war of AD 66-73. At the end of the first century, the last of this 'royal' family passed from the scene of world events and the remainder of the family into obscurity. In the hand of God's inscrutable providence, each had played a part in His purpose. In a manner which only He can understand, their apparent acts of free will, their moves across the giant chess board of human history, had also been like stepping stones for His people. His will had been done. Some day they, with us, will discover how.

### Abbreviated Family Tree of the Herod Family



DN

The Book of Exodus commences with a tribute to the Hebrew midwives and mothers who defied Pharaoh and saved the life of Israel's future menfolk and indeed of the nation. There can also be no doubt that the basic grounding which preserved Moses from becoming assimilated into Egyptian life and society was provided by his mother.

*They Lived in Israel*  
Laurence Bunker

## LET US GO TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

All reference NKJV unless otherwise stated

These beautiful words, “Let us go to the house of the LORD” (Psalm 122.1 ESV) were written by David and were reportedly sung as the Jewish people made their way up to the Tabernacle in Jerusalem for the solemn feasts, three times a year.

It was in David’s time that Jerusalem became the capital after the tribes of Israel accepted David as their king. It would become the place where the temple of God would be built and where Jehovah would be worshipped. It was during his reign that there were two tabernacles and a great desire to build a permanent house for the Lord.

The opening portion of the verse “I was glad when they said to me” shows the joy that David had when the people requested “Let us go to the house of the LORD.” This was no burden to him, even with all the duties and responsibilities of being their King, his heart drew him to this house of prayer, providing an opportunity of public worship with his people.

When we look at the first three kings of Israel and the how the house of the Lord was represented during their reigns, we see that this could picture three periods of time, the Jewish age, the Gospel age (Christian era) and the Millennial Age.

Saul’s reign could represent the Jewish Age; the Tabernacle was the place of worship, a tent which although a temporary structure symbolized to the Jews the place where God’s presence dwelt. It was the place where the priest would offer sacrifices for the people and where once a year the High Priest would enter the Most Holy to sprinkle the atonement day sacrificed blood on the mercy seat. The Tabernacle served as a “...copy and shadow of the heavenly things”, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the Tabernacle; for, “See” He says, “that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” (Heb. 8. 5)

David’s reign could represent the Gospel Age (Christian era); the Tabernacle was still around, the temple was not built, but the preparation work for the Temple was started. During the Gospel Age the foundation stone has been laid and the work of preparing the stones has begun. “You are...fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,



Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” (Eph. 2. 19-22)

Solomon’s reign could represent the Millennial Age. The preparation work had been accomplished during David’s reign and now the finished products were brought together. As “the temple, when it was being built, was built of stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.” (1 Kings 6. 7)

A more detailed look at each of these ages can be related to in David’s Psalm 122.

During Saul’s reign, the house of the Lord was the Tabernacle or the tent of meeting. It had been built under God’s instructions to Moses. “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” (Exod. 25. 8) The first ordinance given to Moses, after the proclamation of the outline of the law from Sinai, related to the ordering of the Tabernacle, its furniture and its service, as the type which was to be followed and during the forty days of Moses’ first retirement with God in Sinai, an exact pattern of the whole thing was shown him and all was made according to it. The materials to build the Tabernacle were a freewill offering made by the people. “Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.” (Exod. 25. 2) So the people in their homeland had a place for the home of God.

The Tabernacle and its services enabled the Jews, who had no visible representation of God, to feel the reality of God and religion. The Tabernacle as the most beautiful and costly object in the nation, and ever in the centre of the camp, set forth the truth that religion was the central and the most important part of the people’s lives. The pillar of cloud and of fire was a visible symbol of the living God. The Altar of Burnt Offering (Brazen altar) was a perpetual symbol that forgiveness could only come through the offering of blood. The access to the holies and the Most Holy were restricted, only the priests had access to the holies and the High Priest alone to the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement.

Before the Israelites were settled in the Promised Land, the Tabernacle

moved with the people, when they stopped it was in centre of the camp. "The people of Israel shall camp each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' houses. They shall camp facing the tent of meeting on every side." (Num. 2. 2 ESV) The Tabernacle was thus the centre of their worship and yet they did not have access. Only the Levites were allowed to care for it. It finally came to rest at Shiloh.

Saul's reign certainly mirrored that of the Jewish people. Saul started out as a reluctant King. But the lot fell upon Saul, his tribe and family and Saul was presented as the stateliest man in all Israel and he was thrown in the air to cries of, "God save the king!". (1 Sam. 10. 17-27 KJV) Saul returned to his home in Gibeah with a bodyguard, a band of men whose hearts God had touched. On reaching his home he dismissed them, and resumed the quiet toils of his former life. Unfortunately, Saul did not remain humble for long and began to ignore God's instructions until God told Saul through Samuel. "Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king" (1 Sam. 15. 23).

The Jewish Nation which had been delivered from bondage in Egypt also started with a humble heart. As recorded, Moses "took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, 'All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient'"! (Exod. 24. 7) The trouble for the majority of the Jews was that instead of following Jehovah's laws they followed the traditions of men and the idols of the nations around about. As a result, it says in John 12. 40 (ESV) "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them." The leaders, like King Saul did not follow God and led their people away from God. Like Saul who lost the privilege of seeing his son on the throne, they lost their right as a nation to privileges available during the Gospel Age. "When the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 13. 45-46)

### **David's reign and lessons for this Gospel Age**

It is interesting that during David's reign that there were two tabernacles. The original one was at Gibeon where offerings burnt on the altar continually morning and evening, even according to all that is written in the law of the LORD (1 Chron. 16. 39-40). The Ark of the Covenant had

been taken from the Israelites by the Philistines after they were defeated in battle and thirty thousand soldiers were slaughtered. (1 Sam. 4. 10-11). The story of the taking of the Ark finishes with the words “The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.” (1 Sam. 4. 22)

The Ark of the Covenant was not returned until all the twelve tribes of Israel were united under David. The ark was not returned to the Tabernacle; instead it was placed in a tent that David had constructed. David and all the house of Israel brought the ark of the Lord with shouting and the sound of the trumpet to the city of David. The ark of the Lord was set in its place inside the tent which David had pitched, and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. (2 Sam. 6. 15-17) It was not till the Temple was built, that the ancient Tabernacle was allowed to perish and be forgotten.

David however had a great desire to build a suitable dwelling place for God. Nathan the prophet seeing his desire answered “Go, do all that is in your mind, for the LORD is with you.” (2 Sam. 7. 3 NASB) However then Nathan received word from God that David would not be the one to build the Temple, but his son Solomon.

Then King David rose to his feet and said, “Hear me, my brethren and my people: I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. But God said to me, ‘You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.’ However the LORD God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler. And of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make me king over all Israel. And of all my sons...He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. Now He said to me, ‘It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father.’” (1 Chron. 28. 2-6)

Although David was not permitted to build the Temple it says that he was able to prepare the materials for the Temple. So, David gave orders to gather the foreigners who were in the land of Israel, and he set stonecutters to hew out stones to build the house of God. David prepared large quantities of iron to make the nails for the doors of the gates and for the clamps, and more bronze than could be weighed; and timbers of cedar

logs beyond number, for the Sidonians and Tyrians brought large quantities of cedar timber to David as David said, “Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries.” So, David made ample preparations before his death. (1 Chron. 22. 1-5) (1 Chronicles chapters 28 & 29 records all the plans made by David and how he divided the work amongst the Levites.)

### **Lessons from David’s reign and words**

By our Lord Jesus’ time Solomon’s Temple had been destroyed and Herod’s temple was in place. It was inferior to the original as it was without the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of God’s presence, the place where the blood was placed on the mercy seat. The High Priest no longer was able to perform his duties according to the law. At Christ’s death the veil of the temple was rent in two, the sun was obscured and Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” and he breathed his last. (Luke 23. 45-46 ESV)

Christ had paid the ransom for Adam and so access to the heavenly was now open for those who accepted Christ. No longer was the Tabernacle or the Temple the acceptable way to worship our heavenly Father. The Samaritan woman had asked Jesus where the acceptable place of worship was, and our Lord intimated the change that would come after his death in John 4. 23-24. “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”

The coming to the house of the Lord had altered in another significant way. The Jews had many ceremonies and sacrifices that were required to fulfil the law. The sacrifices had to be carried out by the priest, the High Priest was the only one that had had access to the Most Holy. Now the individual has access to God through Christ. The coming to the Temple and the synagogue to worship was replaced with house meetings and meetings in public places. They had to bring animals and produce as sacrifices to God. We have to offer up personal spiritual sacrifices. “I entreat you, therefore, Brethren, by the tender compassions of God, to present your bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, well-pleasing to God—your rational religious service.” (Romans 12. 1 Diaglott) Our sacrifice is our time, our money, our talents in service to our Heavenly Father. It also involves our services to others as it states “Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what

you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” (Hebrews 13. 15-16 ESV)

The preparation for the building of the Temple took place during David’s reign. This picture equates to the preparation of the spiritual temple during this Gospel Age. The stones had to be prepared for the Temple just as we have to be prepared for the spiritual temple, “coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2. 4-5)

One other interesting fact was that many of the workers were not Jews as we read in 1 Chron. 22. 2, “So David commanded to gather the aliens who were in the land of Israel; and he appointed masons to cut hewn stones to build the house of God.” Material was also sought from the nations that were around Israel. Both of these can picture the fact that the majority of the material and workers came from the Gentile nations, just as the majority of the gospel church are made up from the Gentile nations. “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1 Peter 2. 9-10 ESV)

Like the stones for the Temple that had to be chiselled and cut to the right shape to fit perfectly together we too also must be shaped. “You are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” (Eph. 2. 19-22 ESV)

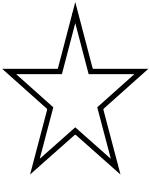
The people could only wonder at the work being done to prepare for the Temple, they could give from their hearts and yet not really comprehend the beauty that would come from this work. This fits in with the development of the Church during the Gospel Age. Paul reminded the reader that “we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew...but as it is written: ‘eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’” (1 Corinthians 2. 7-9 margin)

It was in Solomon's reign that the work of the people would be seen with the completion of the Temple. It was twice as large as the Tabernacle that it replaced. The hard work had paid off. The already finished stones were put in place quietly.

This is the same in the Millennial Age, the work has been completed and the temple is made ready and "he who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. I will write on him My new name." (Revelation 3. 12)

Once again Jerusalem will be a place of worship, a place to learn of God. "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isa. 2. 2-4)

RC



*Genesis 49. 10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

*Job 38. 5-7 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

## WRITTEN IN THE BOOK—CAINAN, SON OF ARPHAXAD

*This article discusses points cited by modern scholarship apparently impugning the veracity of Bible history or miracle.*

*Is there an inconsistency in Luke's summary of the genealogy of Christ where in Luke 3. 35-36 he interposes the name Cainan between Arphaxad and Sala, whereas none of the three "family trees" in the Old Testament, Gen. 10. and 11, and 1 Chron. 1 contain this name. Does this not impugn the reliability of the Bible generally? It is admitted the point is of little importance except perhaps to chronologers.*

It is true that the present Hebrew text (the Masoretic) from which the Authorised Version and most modern translations are derived, omits this name. The Septuagint, the Greek rendering from the Hebrew made about 250 B.C., contains it. The Septuagint was the Bible in use at the First Advent and if Luke took his genealogies from the Book of Genesis he would naturally use this version and thus Cainan would appear in his list. It is thought though that he may have had his information from Temple or family records which then also would have had the name. This however only leads to the question; which is correct, Masoretic or Septuagint?

There has been a fair amount of crossing of swords over this problem. Existing copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Bible of the Samaritans, which diverged from the Jewish Hebrew several centuries before Christ, omit the name and this is hailed as evidence from antiquity which should be given due weight. The earliest extant copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch, however, do not go back before the 10th A.D. century and it cannot be dogmatically stated that the name was not included in earlier copies. More significant is the fact that neither Josephus nor Philo of Alexandria, the two great Jewish historians of the 1st A.D. century, mention the name. Origen, 2nd A.D. century, indicates that in his day it was in the Septuagint but not the Hebrew copies he used.

Testimony to the affirmative comes from another source, the "*Book of Jubilees*", which is dated to about 150 B.C., the work of a pious Jewish priest. This book not only presents Cainan as the son of Arphaxad and father of Sala but gives some information about him. It appears that Cainan was a transgressor; he set out to find for himself a community whose possessions and dwelling-place he might seize by force for himself, and while so engaged came across an ancient inscribed monument which recorded the teachings of the rebellious angels who had caused such havoc

in the days of Noah. Although he knew this knowledge to be unlawful, he read it and copied it. So, says the chronicler, “*he sinned owing to it*”. Dr. R. H. Charles, whose critical work on “*Jubilees*” has resulted in the present-day translation, says that internal evidence points to it being based upon an independent Hebrew text other than those which led to the Masoretic and the Septuagint. Whether such possible variant text did contain this story of Cainan’s sin is impossible of verification; even if it is only a Jewish legend there must have been some foundation in older writings.

The position is, therefore:

Omits the name:

Masoretic Hebrew text (Oldest existing AD 800)

Samaritan Pentateuch (Oldest existing AD 900)

Josephus “*Antiquities*” AD 100

Syriac Peshitto (Oldest existing AD 464).

Includes the name:

Septuagint (Oldest existing Alexandrinus circa AD 450)

*Jubilees* (Oldest existing circa AD 350-450).

There is no logical reason for the Septuagint translators or the author of “*Jubilees*” to invent the name and incident; there is much to support the view that it was deliberately expunged from copies of the Hebrew text during the few centuries immediately before and after Christ and that when the Massorites standardised the Hebrew text during the period AD 100 to 700 this expunging was made final. There are two possible—and probable reasons. The first is that this Cainan, recorded as a great transgressor, was “blotted out of the Book” on that account, as unworthy of a place in history. If so, he was not the only one to be thus treated. The length of the period of the Judges demands that a couple of generations have been dropped from history between Obed and Jesse in the line of Christ; in that lawless period quite likely for the same reason. The four apostate Judean kings—Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah and Jehoiakim—are omitted from Matthew’s record of Christ’s genealogy in the same fashion. There are other such cases. The second is that the Palestine Jews of the 1st AD century began making alterations to the chronological indications in Genesis to disprove the Christian claim that the appearance of Jesus at nearly six thousand years from creation—according to the Bible chronology of their time—was evidence of fulfilled prophecy and his Messiahship. Something like twelve hundred years was lopped off the patriarchal period, in two stages; this accounts for the difference between the A.V. and the Septuagint chronology. The expunging of Cainan completely



would give them another hundred and thirty years.

The general view of scholars, that the mention of Cainan is an unwarranted addition to the Septuagint text, is based purely upon the number of versions—Syriac, Latin and some Greek, derived from the Hebrew Bible of the present era—which omit the name. The above-mentioned considerations have not been given due weight. It is much more likely that St. Luke was fully knowledgeable on this matter and that when he included the name of Cainan in his genealogy he did so on the strength of reliable and definite records which he knew to be correct. The Hebrew text certainly contained the longer patriarchal chronology in his day; logically it contained the name of Cainan also.

AOH



## THE TWO WITNESSES

There are two accounts of the circumstances surrounding the nativity of Jesus, one in the Gospel of Matthew and one in that of Luke. Matthew was one of Jesus' disciples and wrote his Gospel in or about the year 50 (A.D.), some sixteen years after the Crucifixion. Luke, a companion of Paul, wrote his record less than ten years later. He spent some time in Judea with Paul and must have been acquainted with Mary. It is noticeable that Luke's account of the circumstances is written with Mary at the centre, whilst that of Matthew is from the standpoint of Joseph. Matthew may have known Joseph and could have had the story from him. At any rate both accounts were written by men who had been in contact with the people most concerned, and the facts they recorded were matters of personal knowledge and not hearsay. We can rest assured that the details related in these two Gospels came directly from Joseph and Mary themselves, and their trustworthiness is assured by the integrity of these two.

*Extract—The Virgin Birth of Christ*  
AOH



1 Corinthians 15. 40-41 *There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.*

## O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM—A CAROL

O LITTLE town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie;  
Above thy deep and dreamless  
sleep  
The silent stars go by:  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary;  
And gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels  
keep  
Their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together  
Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the King  
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently  
The wondrous gift is given;  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessing of His heaven:  
No ear may hear His coming;  
But in this world of sin  
Where meek souls will receive  
Him, still  
The dear Christ enters in.

O Holy Christ of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the heavenly angels  
The great glad tidings tell:  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord, Emmanuel.

Words so familiar in the festive season. A carol which many could sing without reading these words. They were written in 1868 by Philip Brooks (1835-1893) an Anglican minister from Massachusetts, U.S.A. According to Christmas Carols by Andrew Gant he was devoted to the idea of congregational singing. The tune used in North America is called 'St Louis' and it was written by Brooks' church organist Lewis Redner who wrote it hurriedly just in time for Christmas Eve.

In the U.K. the tune 'Forest Green' is synonymous with these words. Vaughan Williams decided to combine these words with the tune of a folk song he heard in the lanes of Forest Green, Surrey, England in 1903.

Here are some verses which may have been the inspiration of the man who penned them;

Job 38. 7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Isaiah 7. 14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 60. 19-20 The LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting

light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Mic. 5. 2 Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Matthew 1. 16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

Luke 2. 1-20 There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed...And Joseph also went up from...the city of Nazareth...unto the city of...Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there...she brought forth her firstborn son...And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them...And the angel said unto them...behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord...And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And...the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

1 Peter 1. 12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

John 4. 10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

John 1. 9-12 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

John 8. 12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

2 Corinthians 9. 15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Galatians 4. 4 When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

# THE GATHERING HOME OF SAINTS

Part 4

## THE MARRIAGE OF GOD'S DEAR SON

A wedding is a time of joy. The joy of this wedding will surpass the total joy of *every human ceremony that has taken place*.

Even the thought of it brings joy, and in that joy a sense of encouragement, and with it, a sense of blessed urgency that motivates to greater zeal and endeavour in the preparation that precedes our completed union with the Lord. “The marriage of the Lamb *is come*.” The sound of that glad proclamation, how it stirs our hearts! Now, in every way this marriage has to be the most remarkable of all, because the completion of union involves every faithful saint of the age.

*Oneness...!*

A full assembly of the firstborn church, the gathering home of the saints of light. Each one united with each other in *perfect oneness*—oneness of mind, and of every deep feeling of the heart, one in every thought. Harmony and concord—not of polite low-key and deferential diplomatic smiles from afar, but intensely alive sharing of deep love for truth and holiness and one another and, most of all, for the Lord Jesus. Each one perfectly in tune with the Lord. The mind of Jesus, perfection of accordance with the mind of God, a mind of purity and light, a mind totally full of wholesome holy thought, and yet so deeply aware of all that goes on in each other mind of that whole assembly of saints. An intellect full of understanding, rich beyond present thought in treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Creative of all that is beauty, capable of every perfect expression of all that is lovely.

This glorious mind of Jesus, reflected like the sun in 144,000 characters like gems, each one a precious part of His Father's peculiar treasure. A composite Christ, with one heart, and one holy anointing without measure, and in one mind, the mind of Christ. “I in them...perfect in one...” This present anticipation of that joy of full oneness in completed union is something that each saint has shared with the Lord. Fellowship with Jesus has involved a sharing of this desire, and the depth of that fellowship at each stage of the way could be measured by the depth of that joy and the sanctifying power of that hope. As the heart has been enlarged to comprehend more and more of the love of our beloved Bridegroom so that veil has seemed to grow thin before us, as though something of the brightness of that awaiting glory was shining through its folds as light of

the most blessed reality sent forth to greet us, to welcome, and to bring us to His holy hill, into the radiance of the presence of His glory.

Yet it is like looking at the sun through darkly smoked glass. There is, there has to be, limitation in what the Lord is able to share with us in our present state—or we, like Saul of Tarsus, would need to be led about, blinded by a glory this frail body was not designed to bear.

This situation, I suppose we could call it the Rebekah and Eliezer journey, is fertile ground for the development of that needed trust and confidence in the One calling us, sending His Spirit to bring us to a glory beyond the power of human mind to conceive or trace. As day followed day, Rebekah would ask more and more of Eliezer. Day after day the picture grew in her heart of the one who waited to share with her such mutual delight and joy. But until that moment of meeting she knew only in part, and so do we. And we prophesy in part, we talk together now on the basis of a partial knowing yet to be swallowed up in the full brightness of perfect day.

What will that meeting be with that One Who, having not seen, we love...? We have mentioned how we are told in Genesis 24. 64, that at the sight of Isaac meditating (we think we know what about) in the field, she *fell off her camel!* (TLV) One polite translation says she “dismounted quickly,” but the word means to fall! Such were *her* emotions; *what will be ours?*

So long has our Master waited—waited for that moment of completion in every saint of the work of grace—waited for that hour of total sharing with no limitation, with full mutual appreciation and comprehension of all eternal and divine truth. “Father...” He had prayed so earnestly near His darkest hour, “*Father, I want these to be with Me, I want them to see My glory, I want them to share it.*”

It is His desire, *my Master's desire*, that I should be with Him where He is, and that I should behold His glory—without a veil. (Gen. 24. 65) No language can describe the blessedness, the happiness, the deeply shared joy, when Jesus with each saint together realize the fulfilment, the filling full, of each other's heart's desire. This is the consummation, not of earthly love, but something grander, higher far than all earthly love, the consummation of uttermost love.

That full measure of a Father's love was first expressed in Jesus. It was Jesus Who first loved, and it is He Who undertakes by that continual

immersion in this realization and every other sanctifying truth of the Word that needful cleansing of the mind, that singleness of heart-longing for Him, the bringing of every thought to the adoration and obedience of Christ. All to one blessed end. And every thought of holiness that Our Lord inspires, and every attitude of praise and act of loving acclamation and desire, is a step along the aisle.

When, at last, the point is reached, the perfect merging of my every thought with His, the full triumph of divine grace within my heart, true holiness beautifying His dwelling place therein, it will be that “love for me once crucified” that will then joy over the fruitage of that same love’s labour in me.

“Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?” Leaning—that implies trust, but more than mere knowing He is there. It speaks of loving confidence that He Who drew me from a spiritual desert into the pastures of love will still pursue in me His task, and at the end present me to Himself, not me alone, but all who have been drawn and captivated by that same love; a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Can we envisage ourselves without one blemish? “Able to present me faultless...”

In language so beautiful, yet familiar, of marriage, we have a remarkable illustration of the Lord’s way to reach our finite minds without exploding them, for His thoughts are higher than ours as heaven is higher than earth. The language is human, the truth divine. The eyes of our heart are open wide, yet when every spiritual sense has indulged that new mind of His creation and saturated and satisfied its hunger and thirst for the knowing of its Lord, each saint is well aware that yet there is more...the half has not been told us.

The thought of a betrothal, a marriage, and its joy, this is the Lord’s selection from human experience. From man’s beginning did the Lord institute what was ideally designed to be the most joyous act of human-kind. And this He takes and uses as an analogy to draw our minds away from every joy of earth to high above the loftiest realm of human thought, to drift indeed in realms unknown to man and glimpse the glories of eternity. How can we grasp the concept of that “forever with the Lord”?

The endless age composed of countless gemlike moments of perfect alignment of all thought and activity in heart delight and mutual joy. I in Him, enveloped in Him, and He in me. When every saint will think as

one, and act and speak in the unity of one single mind, that of the Lord Himself, and yet contribute, each its special part to play, to that one glorious Body, each supply according to one blest design that which will enrich each other part.

Grace, unmerited and undeserved favour from a divine heart, grace is at work this moment, taking the things that are nothing, to make of each a valued part, a precious contribution, not one superfluous, to that glorious whole.

Each step of this way, each day, it has been our joy to find in Jesus our every want. "I need Thee every hour." When we are not singing the words the sentiments are there expressed in hearts that ache for the Lord. That aching must be precious to the Lord. But what is our emotion when we hear the Master's voice, as in a dream, and know it is of me He speaks the words, My glorious Head, as He surveys His work of grace in me, the least of those uncomely parts, "**I, your Head, *need you.***" So here eternally *my utmost need and His* together meet, and perfect love in perfect oneness flows.

### **Reception at the Father's House**

The Lord's Own choice of human analogy now will prompt the heart to reach beyond that blessed moment of completed union, Bridegroom and Bride, to that scene of joy, that festal occasion of such shared delight—the marriage supper.

In eastern custom this glad feast of revelry and dance and love would last for many days, and involve a whole community. That which began with the Bridegroom's approach to the home of His Bride in accordance with His betrothal vow... "I will come, and take you unto Myself," now continues in rejoicing as He takes her to His Father's House.

"I go to prepare there a place for you." With feeling must those holy lips have framed those words, and yet He surely knew that words could not convey to finite minds, still strangers to the place of which He spoke, the fullness of the glories of His Father's House. For this is Heaven itself, to which the Holiest of the Sanctuary point in Tabernacle and in Temple, where shone between the gold-winged cherubim that light of the very presence of God, the glory illuminating that sacred place. Hidden from the eye of common man, that glory remained veiled throughout those days of shadowy vague portrayal, and to this hour the veil of human limitation intervenes between the state of man and things divine.

With all the advancing knowledge of our day, a knowledge increasing at such rapid rate, and doubling within decades the accumulated knowledge of man's history past, man has but scratched the surface. These are but *the edges of His ways*. Countless are the secrets that remain and mysteries too even in the material realm. If we do not comprehend earthly things how shall we fathom heaven?

Earth is a place. The universe occupies space, each star and nebulae having position and magnitude in material terms. But Heaven is not a place in that sense. It is a different realm of existence to that of man. Long centuries past have men looked upwards from the earth, some from the north, some south and others east and west, and pointed to the starry space beyond terrestrial things when indicating heaven. In such vague gesture only could he point to where God dwells. For space expands the further we might go, the opposite of finite here on earth.

This is our Father's realm, immeasurable in human terms, not place, but state divine. Here human language, formed to describe all human experience and thought, at once must fail when venturing into the divine, or else must coin expressions incomprehensible to the mind of man. Thus words like "omniscience," "omnipotence," are like "the ether" terms confessing ignorance, a way of alluding to the indescribable.

This is His Father's House where Jesus said He went again, that in that holy realm of things divine He might prepare for each of His beloved friends in partnership to share, that He might come again and take His own within that palace of blessedness, that home of love, and "habitation of thy (His) holiness and glory." (Isaiah 63. 15)

No man has heard His voice or seen His shape, yet in our Saviour do His glories shine, and while the natural eye has never seen the glorious things prepared for sons of love, yet to our hearts the Spirit shows such precious glimpses of these things for us to yet be fully known. The intellect draws back. With no precision can it view those scenes in heaven when the Lamb with such rejoicing brings His Bride, yet even now, by that Spirit's power, we rise as if on eagle's wings, and feel the warmth of heaven's love and apprehend the joy of that blessed hour that lies beyond the sphere of natural sense and opens to eternal life.

What comfort lay in the Master's assurance that His Father's House embraced so many resting places for the sons of His love. Since the common version used the word "mansions," four centuries ago that word



has somewhat lost its onetime simple thought of *home*. Verse 23 of that same chapter John 14, repeats the word. There it is translated “abode,” and in its roots John’s favourite word “abide,” gives a clue to that sense of warmth and rest, and satisfaction of the soul, first our rest in Him, then, wondrous thought, His rest of satisfied desire in us. “O sweet home of the soul...”

What feasting and rejoicing there awaits the holy hearts of saints! What untold depths of a Father’s heart of love will find their full expression of delight as He draws His family to Him, precious jewels in His glorious crown. The love like sweetest incense that will fill that holy Temple, each heart delighting in its treasure in each other’s precious company. And as each child of love is now brought forth resplendent in a body like the Lord’s the Father from His treasure house of things divine delights to share those sacred holy things dear to His heart, whose glory and whose brightness in our previous state we could not bear. The riches of His Wisdom, and the wonders of His Skill, and every blessed purpose of His Holy Perfect Will.

Only the best of fare becomes a marriage feast, and poorer families with modest means may well incur great debt to rise to such an occasion, or else depend on gifts to supplement their own provision. What nightmare, what great disaster, and what shame if before the climax of the feast the wine ran out! No wonder it was known to water the wine and eke out the rich food with cheaper fare when the effect of the first and better provisions had made the heart glad and the senses less discerning.

The feast our Father has prepared for those that love Him reflects both riches beyond dream and highest taste. Nor will the fare decline with time, for as the feast progresses further guests appear, and joys are shared and thus increase, until all shall turn to fellow and confess “the best He kept until the last.”

At such a wedding festival two families meet and celebrate the new-formed bond that now unites the people of the Bride with those of the Groom. Thus in the course of this great feast as men begin to hear the sound of truth, catch notes of joy in heaven at their response, and taste the blessings stemming from this union above, the Bride with God’s dear Son, they too will come, men will respond in heartfelt joy to that glad call to celebrate and join with hosts above, acknowledging the union that will forever bind the family of God in heaven with that of earth.

Psalm 45 verse 12, includes amongst the guests that come to share that atmosphere of nuptial joy and great exuberance of spirit, one named the “daughter of Tyre.” And look! She bears a gift! In holy Writ we know that Prince of Tyre, is another name for Satan with his pride and arrogant power. This one was born in his domain, and once had known indeed the power of sin, the pride of this world’s life estranging every soul from God. From that poor wretch the sevenfold power of Satan had been cast. The life, once waste, now fills with purpose and resolve. No longer servant to the king of Tyre, yet neither to herself did she belong, for she was purchased, wondrously redeemed with price that spoke such volumes of great love. A deep compulsion now lays claim, persistently it draws her to respond to Him Who gave His all on her behalf. And now, responding to that love, she comes, to bring her gift of gratitude and praise, a willing offering of her heart. The seal on the alabaster box breaks to pour forth those contents, oh so precious to her Lord, while at the sight all heaven rejoices with great joy. And are there tears in Bride and Bridegroom’s eyes as now they turn to feast upon that blessed smile that radiates the Father’s face?

So will the excitement grow as more and more come into truth’s most blessed light and fellowship, and learn to sing the songs of life with hosts above, until from every corner of the earth the incense rises and the chorus grows to form with that same song from every part of heaven a mighty anthem full of joy and praise from lives reflective of their Lord, and hearts that love His Ways.

Dear to the hearts of saints who know their God is this delightful thought. Amid the rapturous scenes of heaven above when glory fills the souls of all who share that sacred place of love at Jesus’ side, their Saviour’s joy will yet be fully known when from that table of delights are portions sent to those who once had feared that for them nothing was prepared. What fellow feeling will be shared as beggars from the dunghill, everyone those saints in glory seated busily will send, in sympathetic language to the heart of every man, the invitation... “Come!”

The Feast of fat things that will gladden earth has its great beginnings in those scenes in heaven when Jesus takes His Bride within His Father’s House, to drink anew with her the wine of sacred love that seals a covenant of grace yet to beget to life abundant all mankind. Nor will that marriage supper end until from every corner of this earth all men that river of His pleasure come to drink. And not only will they from that river drink but each will in its crystal waters take their stand, and as its waters cleanse

their feet and walk, they will indulge in bathing every part until in full immersion they are swept along to find the blessed fullness of that life eternal of full knowing of their God.

The Father's arms are aching for that hour when from their worthless ways all men will turn. A long way off the Father has enjoyed the prospect of a family in heaven and in earth complete. The best robe waits, the ring of everlasting love, the feast and the rejoicing when at last He will proclaim. "This one who once was dead to Me and heaven's love, is now *alive!*"

Then will the Christ, with healing in its beams, rise as the sun to gladden hearts on earth with cheering warmth, and overspill to man the joys of truth and righteousness, that atmosphere of love, that pure devotion to His Will that fills all heaven. And thus the Father's House, His dwelling place, expand, to then include the hearts and lives of men that fill a sin-cleansed earth. So will His House become a House of Prayer for all mankind, when all desires of human hearts there meet and satisfaction find forever in their God, in Whom are all their springs.

They all will eat the fatness, drink the goodness of the Lord, and come to know the treasures of His Wise and Faithful Word, while showers of blessing gladden all the earth.

The Word resorts to *poetry* to describe what still defies man's language to portray. The bliss of spirit realms is still beyond our thought, though now so thin the veil that intervenes. Yet wisely did He choose this form of speech. How else could He enable us to bear the glories that await us there? We need that hope, we need its sanctifying power now in our lives. We find such joy in even the vaguest glimmers through that veil of untold realms beyond this mind to comprehend save now in part. What will it be, that '*face to face*'?

The language of a marriage and its joys is part of that poetry. It conveys in contemplation now to minds too limited to fathom all its depths something of glory we are yet to fully know—enough, and more than we could have hoped for here below! This is no abstract truth, but truth which centres in a person we have come to know and love. Whatever scenes await us there beyond, we know Our Lord will not be stranger to His own. With Him they walk today, and in His Name they pray for those desires He prompts within our minds, and for the longings He has kindled in our hearts.

When Jesus said, “I will return and take you to myself within My Father’s House, the language of betrothal did He use, so precious to the heart of every saint. And we the language of betrothal also spoke when to the invitation of the Spirit we replied “*I will*,” and echoed there those words that changed Rebekah’s life.

Those blessed expressions of His heart and mine began this fellowship, and ever since propelled our feet towards one goal. And nothing in our lives is now more real than this relationship with Him. So real, it has dismissed the things of earth as if a dream, for we have eyes for Him alone. These truths we know, and yet, like Sheba’s queen, our breath is taken at the sight of Him Who sits on glory’s throne, and they who share the honour at His side.

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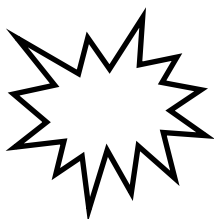
the Beauty  
of Holiness

an Invitation to Surrender

## Jesus the Saviour—Messiah

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Matthew 1. 18-25 (NASB)



## NOTE ON ISAIAH 7. 14

### The Isaiah Prophecy

Some difference of opinion exists as to the relevance of the prediction in Isaiah 7. 14 to the birth of Jesus. Matthew quotes the verse and cites the event as its fulfilment. “*Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel*” (Matt. 1. 22-23). It is very frequent practice of Matthew to quote Old Testament passages as predicting incidents in his Gospel, and sometimes it is fairly obvious that he is not really claiming his quotations as specific fulfilment but merely illustrative of the incident under discussion. The controversy over this particular application by Matthew arises from the fact that the Isaiah passage is very difficult to dissociate from its immediate context and fit into a Messianic setting. The birth of the child to the virgin in Isaiah is intimately connected with the political happenings of the day and the immediate relations of Isaiah himself with King Ahaz. It is also argued that the Hebrew *almah* in Isaiah 7. 14 means equally a virgin or a young woman of marriageable age so that the prophecy does not necessarily demand a virgin birth and this is true. The Greek Septuagint, though, has *parthenos* in this text, which word means virgin simply and solely, although some second and third century fragmentary versions of the Septuagint have *neanis*, which means young woman. The fact that Matthew uses *parthenos* in his quotation would appear to indicate that this was the accepted rendering in his day (the Septuagint was the version at that time in general use). It is evident that Matthew understood it in this manner and this, at any rate, confirms that he intended to assert the reality of the virgin birth. It is this factor which is of importance; the precise interpretation of Isaiah 7. 14 is not so relevant. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth rests upon the actual happening as recorded in the New Testament and not upon the application of Old Testament prophecy.

*The Virgin Birth of Christ*  
AOH



Revelation 22. 16 *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

**NOTICES**

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**Gone from us**

Audrey Seddon (Warrington)

**UPDATE FROM DAWN BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

The Dawn plans to open a satellite office in the Orlando Florida area. This is being done following a survey of the Orlando brethren in which a commitment to aid in supporting the work of the Dawn at a satellite office was obtained. After much research into this, a site has been found which appears to be suitable to meet the needs of the Dawn. The Dawn is planning to enter a three-year lease, with a five-year renewal option, on a site located in the Orlando area.

Over time all printing, shipping, inventory storage and related clerical work currently done at the physical plant in New Jersey will be transferred to the new facility in Orlando.

The Dawn is beginning the process for the eventual sale of the Dawn House in Rutherford and the Dawn plant in East Rutherford.

The Trustees want to stress that the mission and work of the Dawn will continue as it has for nearly 87 years. With the advent of technology many brethren work for the Dawn remotely from various parts of North America and abroad and they will continue to do so in the future.

## INDEX 2019

ARTICLE	PAGE	ARTICLE	PAGE
Almighty, The—The Eternal—A booklet	157	One Lamb in the Morning & one at Even	72
Ananias and Sapphira	33	Our humble King	71
Arise and Shine	5	Paradise on Earth—A booklet	193
As Ye Have Therefore Opportunity	115	Patient in Suffering	179
Asaph The Chief Musician	173	Paul's Shorter Prayers	150
Cainan, Son of Arphaxad, Written in the Book	223	Philip the Evangelist	128
Chosen in Him	94	Prayer and the Bible—Pt. 13	14
Come let us join our cheerful songs—A Hymn	62	Prayer and the Bible—Pt. 14	103
Crown of righteousness through faithfulness unto death	124	Question Box—Psalm 149. 9	156
Data Privacy Notice	28	Remembering	204
Days, Weeks, Months and Years	29	Repentance, Consecration, Baptism	89
Easter and Passover	74	Resurrection of the Dead, The	78
From Emmaus to Paul	76	Spiritual Drought	164
Gathering Home of Saints, The—Pt. 1	112	Stand up! Stand up for Jesus—A	142
Gathering Home of Saints, The—Pt. 2	153	Standing at the portal—A Hymn	22
Gathering Home of Saints, The—Pt. 3	190	Take my life and let it be—A Hymn	92
Gathering Home of Saints, The—Pt. 4	228	Thought for the month	2
God's Safe Holding	107	Thought for the month	42
Heavenly Calling , The	182	Thought for the month	82
Herod Family, The	213	Thought for the month	122
His Way is Best	77	Thought for the month	162
If I be lifted up	65	Thought for the month	202
Jehoiada—Priest and Patriot	51	Thought on Gen. 8. 22	167
Jonah and the Whale, Take 2?	119	To fulfil all righteousness	116
Let us Go to the House of the Lord	216	To the One Who Overcomes	145
Let your Light shine	101	Waiting	144
Love—The Bond of Perfectness	24	Wonderful Hands	64
Man—the Image of God—A Booklet	37	Zechariah—Pt. 7	8
Meaning in Moses and the Exodus	44	Zechariah—Pt. 8	57
Nicodemus	84	Zechariah—Pt. 9	108
Note on Isaiah 7. 14	238	Zechariah—Pt. 10	134
Note on Psalm 32. 8	38	Zechariah—Pt. 11	168
O Little Town of Bethlehem—A Carol	226	Zechariah—Pt. 12	206

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