



“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” -Prov. 23:23

A Christadelphian publication devoted to gleaning and heralding the Truth concerning the problem of life, here and hereafter, the restoration of the Jews to the holyland, the return of Christ as King of all the earth, and the signs of the approaching end of Gentile times.

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Our Duty in the Present Crisis an Exhortation

One of the definitions used to describe the word *crisis* in Webster's Dictionary is “*an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; esp. one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome.*” Speaking of the last days prior to the coming of the Lord, the Apostle Paul in his second epistle to Timothy describes a time of great crisis and warns, “*that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*” and goes on to advise “*and from such turn away.*” (II Tim. 3:1-5)

As believers in these final days of Gentile times, it must be recognized by the simplest of observation that we in fact now live in a great time of crisis. First of all, there is crisis for the world at large in that there is in fact an impending change on the horizon when Christ returns to this earth, and for many of this age it will result in a “highly undesirable outcome.” We also unfortunately see the wicked trends and influences that have been so well refined and made commonplace by the world becoming increasingly prevalent if not embraced by the Body of Christ. On a day-to-day basis we are faced with critical decisions on how to live our lives—how we should think, what we should believe, how we should spend our spare time, and how we should deal with the sometimes obvious and other times subtle evils that place tremendous pressure on us as individuals, our ecclesias, and the community of Believers as a whole.

We cannot overstate the case by saying that this is in fact a time of crisis. As it directly concerns the Household of Faith, we live in a time of great instability as to the spiritual direction of our Community that will have undesirable consequences if the proper choices are not made. Truths that were once earnestly contended for are no longer defended with the great zeal they once were if not delegated to the realm of uncertainty altogether. Our moral obligations to Yahweh and His Son are no longer viewed as absolute law, but are being molded or “updated” to fit the culture we have come to blend with. Humanism, the philosophy or “religion” of the world at large, that has so greatly influenced society around us has found its way into how a few choose to approach and define Biblical Truth. And for some, the procedures and methods of the churches around us have been adopted as “good ideas.” Then what are we to do? What is our duty in the present crisis?

Contending for the Faith

In these times when we see and hear many evils threatening the small Body of Christ, there are words of encouragement that positively reinforce to us as to what is our duty. All of us are very familiar with the words of Jude 3 that state “*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*” We would like to pause here a moment and consider a key phrase of this often quoted scripture. Considering the expression “earnestly contend”; it comes from the Greek word *epagomizomai*

and according to Strong's it means, "*to struggle for.*" So the Spirit through the pen of Jude exhorts us that the upholding of "the faith" is something that involves a struggle on our part.

A struggle requires a profound degree of energy and effort and implies that there is an opposite influence or principle that we must literally contend or wrestle with. There is a great deal of exertion and "struggling" that is required on our part to insure the continuance and prosperity of "the faith" as tiring as it may be to our mental and physical abilities. In Acts 14:22 we read of the exhortation of Paul and Barnabas to the ecclesias, which they were active in "*exhorting them to **continue in the faith**, and that we must through **much tribulation** enter into the kingdom of God.*" Much of our energies are used in the struggle against the fleshly impulses that arise out of our own nature, but sadly we often must use our strength to struggle against outward influences that undermine the ecclesia itself. Paul passionately warned the believers of such pressures: "*For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. **Therefore watch.***" (Acts 20:29-31).

So not only are we to "**contend,**" and "**continue**" in the faith but we are also commanded to "**watch.**" Such grievous wolves did not wait for the death of Paul to make their move. He referred to their growing influence in II Corinthians 11:13-15, "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*" If the entering in of "grievous wolves" and "false apostles" was taking place in the presence of those that possessed the talents of the Spirit Gifts we fool ourselves if we think that such a thing is not now happening in the Household in the absence of the Holy Spirit.

Continuing with the exhortation that we are to uphold the Truth, II. Thess. 2:15 reads – "*Therefore, brethren, **stand fast**, and **hold** the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*" Like in Jude 3, we have here another interesting phrase that is worthy of closer attention. The phrase "stand fast" is from the Greek word *steko*, and means "*to be stationary, i.e. to persevere.*" In an age that calls for "open-mindedness" and ignorantly states that there are no absolute truths, we here have the exhortation to be unmovable upon the absolute scriptural principles that we hold. In I Corinthians 15:58 we read, "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye **stedfast**, **unmovable**, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*"

"Open-mindedness" and Properly Holding to "the Faith"

We currently live in an environment, in the world as well as in the Brotherhood, where being "unmovable" is often labeled as being "close-minded" and thought as something to be avoided. We increasingly hear it stated that "we should keep an open mind" when a new theory or questionable project is being promoted in opposition to long proven beliefs. Quoting from a seasoned brother, brother John S. Peake had this to say in the

December 2000 issue of the Christadelphian Advocate, "*Open-mindedness upon heavenly matters is evidence of a lack of concern for the things that God and Christ hold as most important.*" Unquestionably, we must always be willing to hold our beliefs up to the discerning light of Divine Testimony to see if it is consistent with the Spirit Word. All beliefs we embrace should live or die on this ultimate test. But, we are not supposed to be open and tolerant to "*every wind of doctrine*" as it relates to Divine Truth. We do not owe an open ear to various kinds of new theories or philosophies just because someone wants to be heard or thinks that they have the right to be heard. For us to have such an attitude shows a lack of respect to clear scriptural testimony and instead of having a foundation of rock we then find our faith is built on a foundation of sand. Either it is in harmony with the Gospel message or it is not. And if we are well grounded it should not take us long to recognize the difference between error and sound teaching.

Though we are to spend our present time filling in the pleasant and interesting details of "The Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ" we either stand on the True Foundation or we do not. Those who cry for "open-mindedness" either cannot make up their own mind and are angry at those who are sure in their convictions, or they

wish you to be "open-minded" to their own views. Both types are described by the apostle Paul as those who are "*ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" (II Timothy 3:7). Beware of those who wish to introduce "fresh approaches" or a "new way of looking at things." Their new "discoveries" may lead down the same old path known as the "*broad way that leadeth to destruction.*"

"The present state of our society shuns the idea that there are any absolutes or that anyone can claim to have 'The Truth.' The scriptures give quite another view..."

The Truth - a Perfect System

In Jude we are commanded to "contend for **the faith**". Acts 14:22 directs us to "continue in **the faith**." Such wording in the passages we have already referred to clearly indicate that early Believers were a part of a **well defined** and **understood** system of Truth. Both uses of the word "faith" originate from the Greek word "*pistis*" which not only represents belief but the Divine principle of Truth itself as is defined in the Scriptures. Everyone can have faith in something, whether it is true or false, but scripturally speaking there is only one system of Truth that can be defined as THE FAITH. Some in the Household wish to doubt whether or not certain elements that Christadelphians have strongly held for the past 150 years are in fact a part of "THE FAITH." It is even being questioned whether or not it is possible or that we are even expected to thoroughly understand all that comprises THE FAITH. It would seem that the 1st Century Believers must have had a definite idea of what was being talked about when such a term was used. Do we? There is no question that we can spend a lifetime before and after baptism trying to gain knowledge of all that God has to say through His Word and still not absorb or understand it completely, but the Truth is no doubt a perfect system built upon a perfect foundation and any idea, question, or teaching that nullifies another portion of that structure should

not be given a second thought. Two opposing ideas cannot fit into the same system.

The scriptures are very clear in its emphasis that “the faith”, “the truth” is something specific and not a hodge podge of part truth and part opinion. The present state of our society shuns the idea that there are any absolutes or that anyone can claim to have “The Truth.” The scriptures give quite another view on the matter. As far as the way of salvation is concerned we read that Christ refers to the “*straight and narrow way*” that can only lead to everlasting life, while the “*broad way*” describes the path that leads to death. The first century believers were to be guided by the Holy Spirit “*unto all truth*” (John 16:13), and when it comes to “all truth”, though we do not now possess the Holy Spirit, “all truth” (at least what God wishes us to understand) is laid out for us through the pages of Divine Testimony. In seeking after Salvation, which can only come through the understanding and faith of God’s Truth, there is little room for us to tolerate diverging personal perceptions of vital principles that deviate from the perfect system known as THE TRUTH or “THE FAITH.” Sadly some point to such a conviction that we have THE TRUTH as a sign of pride or arrogance based upon their feelings that no one really knows. Knowledge can be a source of pride if not properly handled and that will be up to the Righteous Judge to decide how we used our understanding. But we cannot deny the reality of the precious system of TRUTH that Yahweh out of His mercy has handed to us on a silver platter. Do we recognize that fact or do we keep blindly looking for something else?

In upholding the Truth our duty is to first identify what THE FAITH is and then to stand firmly by it without any movement or acceptance of ideas that do not build upon the same foundation. No doubt it is our responsibility to continually grow in knowledge and wisdom and to not be stagnate in our walk, but our growth must be within the boundaries of what “THE FAITH” establishes. If we in fact have THE TRUTH there is not to be open-mindedness to those things that fall outside of that perfect system of Truth. Thinking outside that system falls into the philosophy of men and leads us dangerously close to another form of religion.

Dealing With Error

In the WORLD’S REDEMPTION, brother Thomas Williams states that: “*THE TRUTH is such a perfect system that it will not admit of the introduction of one error without making confusion*”. We live in a time when some brethren are increasingly hesitant to strictly define and openly defend “THE TRUTH.” And because of such hesitation, when ideas or practices are introduced that weaken or change definite scriptural principles that have been zealously upheld by those who have come before there then exists a state of confusion and a serious lack of consensus on what to do about it. So what are we to do when error is introduced that challenges “THE FAITH?” Do we stand by and hope that it will eventually fade away? Do we allow it to continue with the thought that it can do no harm? Again, what is our duty?

We read in Romans 16:17, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*” Paul here exhorts us to have no toleration for error, which is consistent with the opening verse of our article that states “*from such turn away.*” Paul tells us to “mark” (see or take notice) those who are in fault and also warns us that such individuals that teach error contrary to the Truth are not always obvious and easy to identify by their “good words” and “fair speeches” that “*deceive the hearts of the simple.*”

In I Timothy 6:3-5 we read, “*If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome (sound) words, even the words or our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting (sick or diseased) about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings...from such withdraw thyself.*”

If we turn to Titus we see even more along this line of thought. In the first chapter, starting in the 9th verse we read, “*Holding fast, the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers (contradictors). For there are many unruly, and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision (the Judaizing influences): Whose mouths must be stopped who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake...Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth.*” And in chapter 3:10 we are told, “*A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject*”.

Our duty is clear- error must be dealt with and the soundness and purity of Truth contended for. Whether it is the teaching of false beliefs or error in conduct we are required to act. Taking an interesting quote from John Thomas on the matter, he states: “*Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show the people their transgressions, and the sons of Belial their sins! I have never heard a man yet, thoroughly imbued with the Truth and love of it, cry out against a hearty and uncompromising castigation of error, ‘as bitter and too severe.’ Where men’s faith is weak, and their minds are full of uncertainty, and they are conscious that their own deed will not bear the light, you will find them full of ‘charity,’ and sensitively fearful of the Truth being too plainly spoken. All their sympathies are with the feeling of the corrupters and transgressors of the Word. They don’t want their feelings hurt lest it should do harm! The fact is they don’t want the Truth too plainly demonstrated, lest it should make them unpopular; or they should be themselves obliged to defend that of which they were not fully assured.*”

“Our duty is clear - error must be dealt with and the soundness and purity of Truth contended for. Whether it is the teaching of false beliefs or error in conduct, we are required to act...”

The Importance of Love in the Present Crisis

In I Corinthians 13, rightly known as the “love chapter,” we have this beautiful exhortation. *“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth...”*

In many of the verses that we have referred we have placed emphasis on words such as “*withdraw thyself*” and “*avoid them*”. No doubt this is ultimately necessary when those who choose a path that is at odds with the “straight and narrow” refuse to repent and change course, but as we are instructed in Titus “*after the first and second admonition.*” If they remain unchanged they become a leaven that “leaveneth the whole lump,” or an evil influence that will eventually affect the thinking and actions of others.

Those things that threaten the purity of Truth (which should be “*first pure, then peaceable*”) must be dealt with, but there is a way that they should **not** be handled. Unfortunately, human nature can go to two opposite extremes in relation to dealing with error. On one hand we can see pride, self-advancement, sarcasm, personal hatred, and rage enter into the picture, but such emotions have no place. We have all heard the phrase “bitter controversy” and surely controversy will arise but it should in no way be “bitter.” No doubt, if we really love the Truth, the introduction of falsehood will upset us, as it should. But we must make sure that we are able to separate personalities from the issues at hand. Horrible things have been done in the name of zeal so let us make sure that our zeal is properly motivated.

On the other hand though there are those who cry out the phrase “love and mercy” when arguing that we should be more tolerant or should not confront falsehood. This class wrests the phrase “judge not” to fit their philosophy. We cannot possibly love God, His Son, His Truth, and our Brethren if we allow error to continue. Christ promised to the Seven Ecclesias that if such influences were not removed then the ecclesial lightstands would be removed (which they eventually were). But if we truly have love, as is stated of God in John 3:16, then we should also desire that “*no man should perish,*” and with patience and mercy, but firmness and strict accordance to God’s commands

just the same, try to help fellow brethren who fall into the “broad way” as long as they are willing to be helped. Not only does it make for a better spiritual environment, but it is also our duty.

In modern times our pioneering brethren have fallen under criticism for being too harsh or unloving when they dealt with error, but a brother recently observed that such individuals were “jealous for the Truth.” If we really read what they had to say and how they dealt with problems we find that they and many other stalwarts for the Truth “*rejoiced not in iniquity*” and for the most part dealt with it accordingly. If there were not brethren over the past 150 years that contended for “the faith” by confronting error and making tough decisions we would not

be here today to enjoy the fruits of their labor, the fruits of their primary love. We also **must** be jealous, we must be passionate for the Truth, but at the same time we must make sure that such emotions are based and focused upon those things that are from above and not upon the thinking of the flesh.

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Final Thoughts

We have much to do in these final days of our Probation. Let us then fulfill our duty to God and His Son, His Word, and to our fellow brethren by first upholding the Truth in word and deed, and dealing with error when it unfortunately comes to our attention. May we be blessed with the wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and love for God’s ways to fulfill our duty. *“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever. Amen.”*

Aaron Thomas

The Prophecy of Balaam

“And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!” Numbers 23:7-10

Prior to the nation of Israel entering into the Holy Land, a Gentile named Balaam spoke these words of blessing in the ears of Balak. It was not the curse that he desired, it was not what he expected to hear, but it was the word that the Lord desired for Balak to hear. Indeed, it is the word that the Lord wished for all the Gentiles to hear. It was a prophecy of events yet in **our** future. It was a prophecy of events we hope to be blessed to a part of. When the Lord returns to gather His saints together, he will lead them on a

journey from Teman unto the Holy Land. The words spoken by Balaam point to that great event. Remember that Balaam spoke these words **before** Israel dwelled in the Land, not while they were in the Land of promise. It does not then seem appropriate to apply this prophecy to the natural Jew now living in the Land. Let us now examine the evidence of this premise.

Applying the Words of Balaam

How did Balaam see the **spiritual** and **moral state** of Israel in the prophecy before us? Did he see them as sinful, as morally destitute, or as an ungodly people? No, he did not! Balaam saw a **Righteous Nation**, a people who could not be numbered. *"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"* Balaam saw a people who were righteous in character, a people who he desired to be numbered with. They were a group of individuals, who he implies, had died righteous deaths, and now had been resurrected to positions of glory. There is no other reason he would wish to die a righteous death, so that his end would be like theirs, unless this had been their end.

Can the words of Balaam be applied to the nation of Israel today? Are they righteous? The prophet Ezekiel clearly states that the nation will not be righteous, will not be without sin, until the Lord returns unto them.

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of

their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD." Ezekiel 39:23-29. Ezekiel's description is of a people who are sinful, in positions of shame, and a people in captivity before the Lord's return. A captivity that Ezekiel says does not end until the destruction of Gog is passed. The words of Balaam cannot then apply to the natural seed of Israel dwelling in the Land, prior to the return of Christ. They must apply to a resurrected nation of righteous individuals. A people whom Balaam proceeded to describe as without iniquity or perverseness.

The Testimony of John

The Apostle John saw this resurrected class in the apocalypse. *"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a*

thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection: Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Revelation 20:4-6. *"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung a it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God"* Revelation 14:1-5. Only the Immortal Saints can be described as those who have died the righteous death. Many will wish that they had been made a part of this righteous group. Many will desire to have this be their end. But only those who have not spotted their garments will be given this glorious distinction. Those who are like Balaam will only dream that this could be their end.

"When the Lord returns to gather His saints together, He will lead them on a journey from Teman unto the Holy Land. The words spoken by Balaam point to that great event..."

An Innumerable Multitude

How does Balaam describe the encampment? Is it a small encampment, or a large one? It is so large it cannot be numbered. *"Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?"* This innumerable multitude will find its answer in the encampment of the Rainbow Angel.

The spiritual seed of Abraham will be this innumerable multitude. Each and every Sunday morning we remind our young Bible students that there is a great hope available to all the servants of Deity, the hope that one day they can be part of this great company if they are baptized into the hope of Israel. *"That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies."* Genesis 22:17. *"And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."* Genesis 26:4-5.

The Glory of God Is Among Them

Balaam also states that this resurrected, innumerable multitude shall dwell alone. This verse is often quoted as "stand alone". But we feel that the import of this pronouncement has been lost in this translation. The Hebrew word for the authorized translation's dwell is the word "*Shakan*". This word is well known unto us in its association of the presence of the Glory of God. It was the Shakinah glory that dwelt in the tabernacle above the mercy seat. It was the Shakinah Glory that

Abode on the top of Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:16). The Cherubim were placed (*shakan*) at the entrance to the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24). The word means, "to reside or permanently stay, to abide or dwell". When this resurrected class of glorified individuals dwells or "*shakans*" alone, it will be because they alone, not the nations, will reside permanently in the glory of God and His Son. It is why this group cannot be numbered with the nations. They cannot be accounted with the heathen, because they have been elevated above them. They "stand alone" because they are "a set apart" people, the Ecclesia (called out ones) perfected, and are the Bride of Christ.

In the second part of Balaam's Prophecy, it is made clear why the Shakinah Glory is among them. It is because Yeshua The Messiah is among them. *"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them."* Numbers 23:19-21. The shout of a King will be among them. This is language that is unmistakable. The shout of this great Host is one of great joy. It is the shout of the King and His people, proclaiming his approach unto the city where he will set His throne. *"Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."* Isaiah 12:6. *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."* Zechariah 9:9.

The Messiah's presence among this glorious Host is mentioned by the words of Balaam in the following symbols. He calls him "The Star out of Jacob", and the "Sceptre out of Israel" in Numbers 24:17. Jesus is the star mentioned by John in chapters 2 and 22. *"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the ecclesias. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."* Revelation 22:16. *"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star."* Revelation 2:27-28.

The mentioning of the Sceptre by Balaam takes us back to the words of Jacob, spoken to his sons before his death. *"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, [For that] Shiloh [shall] come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk."* Genesis 49:8-12.

Two Meanings to the Name Balaam

If these words point to the time of our glorification in the Father, what class of people might Balaam represent? His name means, "not of the people." He was from a city in Mesopotamia. When Spiritual Israel, the Rainbowed Angel, stands poised to enter the Land of Israel to redeem it from the spoiler (**Gog - Ezekiel 38; and Balak, whose name means "devastator"**), there will be many who are not numbered with the Rainbowed Angel, but who have already been conquered by him, who can attest to the nature of this glorious company. Habakkuk states that Midian and Cushan (Mesopotamia - Judges 3:8) will be among the first peoples who will be brought into subjection to the Saints. Among them, there will be many Balaam's, capable of identifying the nature of this people.

Balaam's name is also rendered as "Waster of the people." And apocalyptically he represents those who are rejected by our Lord. There are those who like Balaam, cause Israel to stumble, who cast a stumbling block before the righteous. These individuals have no part in the righteous nation, and John describes their condemnation. *"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the*

children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." Revelation 2:14-16. When the righteous dead are resurrected and granted immortality in Teman, so also

the unjust dead will be cast back into the world, and like Balaam will ultimately be killed (Deuteronomy 23:5) by the righteous in Israel.

Conclusion

Like Israel poised to enter the land, we are at a great crossroads in time. Which class will we fall into when the Lord returns? Will we be apart of the immortal multitude that Balaam saw? Or will we be cast off at the judgment seat as a Balaamite or Nicolaitan? Will we cry out as Balaam did, "Oh that I might have died the death of the righteous"? The signs around us tell us that the time is close at hand. Let us examine ourselves and purge out that which is not useful to the Lord.

Alex Briley

"Like Israel poised to enter the land, we are at a great crossroads in time..."

How Often Do You Stoop Down? a Word Study

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. James 1:25

The word looketh in this verse from James is from the Greek *parakupto* which means literally to “stoop down.” The word implies bending down to see more clearly and more earnestly. It is what each of us must humbly strive to do in our study of God’s word. Sifting out the deep things of God takes effort. It is also what is required to be, as James exhorts, “doers of the word and not hearers only.” We must bend down and examine the word closely, and humbly, or we become the man James has already referred to, who beholds his natural face in a glass then goeth forth and forgets the lesson when it comes to applying it in his life.

To make the kind of effort that *parakupto* implies requires our time. Unfortunately, as is evidenced by the signs in the world around us, time is not on our side. Our Lord’s return and the day when we must all stand before him and give account is nigh upon us. The “bending down” or “stooping” time of our probation is coming to an end. We will soon be on bended knee before the judge of all the earth. May our efforts be found earnest and sincere.

The Perfect Law of Liberty

What exactly is the “Perfect Law of Liberty” referred to in this verse? Is it not the perfect “law of the Spirit of life” in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2)? This law liberates or makes us free from the hopeless condition we are naturally in as children of Adam (Eph. 2:12). Is this not exactly what the apostle says in this verse from Romans? *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* And we know that this freedom is a present benefit for all those in Christ. Young’s Literal translation has *for the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus **did** set me free from the law of the sin and of the death.*

It is the atoning efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice that has “perfected” this law of liberty. It is our participation, through belief and baptism, in his sacrifice that frees or liberates us from our former master sin. However, this is only the beginning. We must continue to study to show ourselves approved unto God and apply what we discover in our lives.

A Thing the Angels Desire to Look Into

It is interesting that the Apostle Peter uses this same word *parakupto* in his exhortation to us in his first epistle. He wrote: *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. **Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently** (they “stooped down”), who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: **Searching** what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. **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** (*parakupto*) **into.** (1 Pet. 1: 7-12)*

If the Gospel message, embodied in the atoning work of Christ, is something the angels have a desire to “stoop down” on bended knee and earnestly look into, how much more should we?

Mike Jasionowski

“We will soon be on bended knee before the judge of all the earth. May our efforts be found earnest and sincere.”

Gleanings...

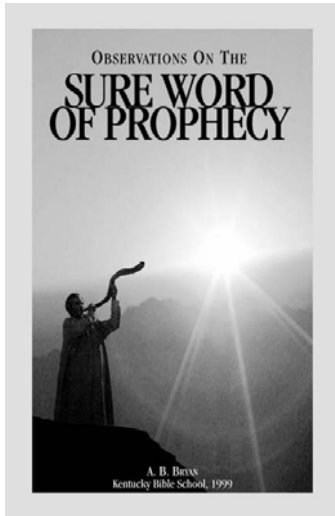
Let us Defend the Truth

I have said with sincerity, and will say, perhaps, many times over again, because they are the words of sober truth - that God has revived the Truth in our age by Bro. Thomas, and that the best work a man can put his hand to, in this age, is to defend that work against all assaults, whether the open antagonism of those who call the Truth “blasphemy,” or the insidious attacks involved in theories that make the Word of God of none effect.

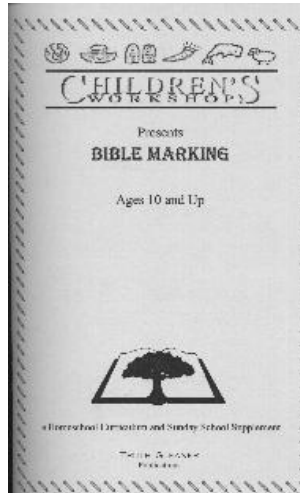
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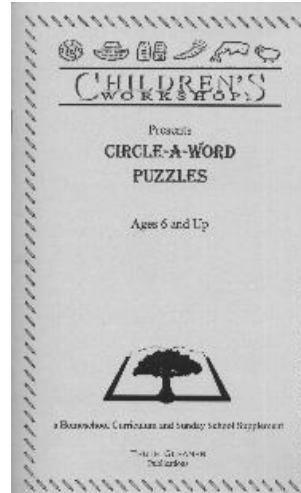
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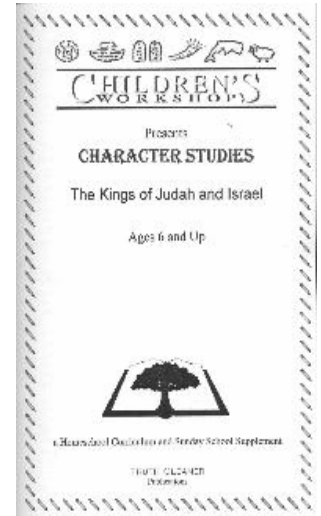
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