

*Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps, set thine heart  
Toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest (Jer 31:21)*

# THE CHRISTADELPHIAN WAYMARK

**Volume 6: Issue 4**

**December 2007**

**Devoted to the Defence and Proclamation of the Way of Life  
in Opposition to the Dogmas of Papal and Protestant Christendom**

<i>“They hated me without a cause”</i> .....	2
<i>Predestination</i> .....	7
<i>“Worthy is the Lamb”</i> .....	1
<i>The Firstborn</i> .....	21
<i>Secretary's Notes</i> .....	28
<i>“Seek ye Yahweh”</i> .....	29



*“I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that  
sat upon him had a bow; and a crown was  
given unto him: and he went forth conquering,  
and to conquer” (Rev 6:2)*

*“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable ...” (Jas 3:17)  
“Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)*

## **“They Hated Me Without a Cause”**

One of the themes that run throughout Scripture - from the very first to the very last chapter - is that of Light and Darkness, and particularly the division, or enmity that Yahweh has set between the two.

Genesis 1:3-5 reads:

“And Elohim said, Let there be light: and there was light. And Elohim saw the light, that it was good: and *Elohim divided the light from the darkness*. And Elohim called the Light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:3-5).

So we find then, that the first Creative act upon the formless earth (Gen. 1:2), was marked by *division*, yea, a Divinely ordained division, between the two principles of Light and Darkness. Notice also: the commandment for Light to come into being is the first time in Scripture that we have words spoken, and it is command of the Creator. So it is, that Light entered into, and dispelled darkness, as a result of Yahweh’s Word being uttered.

These principles are brought together by the inspired Apostle in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, where we read that the manner in which the first words were spoken forms a pattern for the words of the Gospel being proclaimed – the means by which the New Creation is formed:

“God, *who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4).

And 2 Corinthians 4:3 informs us that the “knowledge of the glory of God” is enshrined in “the light of the Glorious Gospel of Christ” that shines to those who are able to receive it. This parallel between the beginning of the Old and New Creations goes further: just as Genesis tells us there was a “division” between Light and Darkness, so John informs us that this same condition existed in his day:

“In the beginning was *the Word*, and *the Word* was with God, and *the Word* was God ... in it was life; and the life was *the light* of men. And *the light shineth* in darkness; and the darkness *comprehended (or, overcame)* it not” (Jno. 1:5).

Notice that we have the same three elements being brought to the fore: the Word, the Light, and the distinction between Light and Darkness. In the preaching of the glorious principles of the Gospel, by the very nature of things established from the beginning, there is a marked *division*. The Gospel itself makes that division, because it contains ideas, precepts and principles that the natural man cannot “receive” (1 Cor. 2:14) any more than darkness can receive light. As in the natural, so in the Spiritual – there is a Divinely ordained division between Light and Darkness.

### ***THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD***

Our Master, Jesus the Christ manifested himself as a “light”:

***“I am the light of the world:*** he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jno. 8:12).

Notice Messiah’s identification with the first chapter of John, cited above: *“light of life”*. He was the Light of the World, and that Light was the life of men. But the Pharisees, being unable to see beyond the natural state of affairs, did not comprehend his saying. Rather, they sought to destroy him, and so extinguish that light which manifested their deeds to be of men, and not of God:

“ *t h i s i s t h e* condemnation, that ***light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.*** For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (Jno. 3:19-21).

Those who scorned and rejected Messiah, hiding in the shadows and obscurity of darkness, perished without hope. Being unable to bear the “reproof” of the Word (2 Tim. 3:16), they hated the Light – and therefore the supreme Light Bearer: Yahweh manifest in Christ.

We read of this enmity between the carnally minded, and those who have the mind of Messiah in our New Testament reading for the day, in John chapter 15:

“if the world ***hate*** you, ye know ***that it hated me before it hated you.*** If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, ***therefore the world hateth you ... He***

*that hateth me hateth my Father also ... now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their Law, They hated me without a cause”* (Jno. 15:18, 23-25).

The benighted world hates those who cause their light to shine before men (cp. Mat. 5:14-15), because it inevitably reproves them and their deeds (Eph. 5:11). It exposes them to be lovers of men, seeking the praise of men, as distinct from lovers of God, seeking His praise at the last.

### **THE EXAMPLE OF JOSEPH**

Our Master was not the first to be hated of men because of the words he spake. Revelations were given to Joseph, who related them to his brethren. They already hated him, for the love that Jacob had to him, but they hated him all the more for the visions he was given:

“When his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more” (Gen. 37:4-5).

Again, he was given another revelation, which he also made

known to his brethren, who were not slow to perceive the meaning:

“his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words” (Gen. 37:7-8).

Ironically, one of the dreams to which Joseph’s brethren took exception to portrayed them as being lights – eleven stars (Gen. 37:9). Indeed, at the last they did humble themselves before Joseph as the later chapters of Genesis describes, as Joseph’s dreams became a reality. But Jude alludes to their initial expression of disbelief in describing the false brethren who have crept into the family of Christ:

“likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignitaries ... wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 8, 13).

Notice the allusion here: just as Joseph’s brethren hated him because of the exalted position he would be given over them, even so these false brethren “despise dominion”. Just as Joseph’s brethren were pictured as stars, even so the false brethren are “wandering stars”. And whereas Joseph’s brethren dismissed him as a “dreamer” (Gen. 37:19), in actual fact, it is the false brethren who are

the dreamers, for what they imagine will not come to pass, whereas those who comfort themselves with the visions of the Kingdom shall have their faith rewarded. But, there is a difference here between the false brethren and Joseph's brethren. Joseph's brethren came to repentance: for them there is not "the blackness of darkness for ever", but light and glory when Messiah comes as the Sun of Righteousness, and when the wise shall "shine as the brightness of the firmament" (Dan. 12:3) in the New Day to come. For the false brethren however, they are like shooting stars – a momentary burst of light, yet once that light has diminished as they burn themselves out, nothing but darkness remains.

#### ***A TYPE OF CHRIST***

We find then, that Joseph's brethren, at the beginning, took a hostile stance against him, for the revelations that he received - just as the Jews did against Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, one of the Master's parables strongly echoes Joseph's circumstance:

"his citizens hated him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14).

Even so, the Jews hated their Messiah, to the extent of conspiring with the Gentile powers in an effort to secure his destruction (Acts 4:27).

#### ***KING DAVID***

Another example of one who suffered hatred by his people, was David. He was promised the kingdom, following the failure of Saul to exercise wisdom in his rule. Saul therefore sought to slay David, seeing him as a threat to his position, rather than a saviour to Israel. So Jonathan rebuked his father in speaking of David:

"he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and Yahweh wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"

Notice the similarity here, with the words of John 15:25, cited earlier. They hated Messiah "without a cause," just as Saul hated David "without a cause". David had wrought a great victory for Israel in defeating the mightiest man of the enemy – but instead of honouring David for his work of faith, Saul, (the tallest man amongst the Israelites, who should have been able to go against the Philistine as his counterpart) instead sought to kill him.

Interestingly, it was whilst David was fleeing from Saul, that men sought to leave the city to seek after him. Hiding in the cave of Adullam, we read that "when his brethren and all his father's house

heard it, they went down thither to him” (1 Sam. 22:1). His brethren, like Joseph’s, had begun with scorning David’s pretensions to go against Goliath (1Sam 17:28), but having seen the salvation he wrought for Israel, they went outside the city to join him in his time of shame and flight. But it was not only David’s literal brethren that came to join him: all those who were dissatisfied with their lot under Saul’s ruinous reign:

“And every one that was *in distress*, and every one that was *in debt*, and every one that was *discontented*, gathered themselves unto him; and he *became a captain* over them ...” (1 Sam. 22:2).

Forsaking the comforts of city life to share a cave with a rejected king, these, according to Paul, were those “of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, *and in dens and caves of the earth*” (Heb. 11:38).

We, as they, are discontented with our lot as we dwell among the kingdoms of men. We, as they, look to a future day when our Captain shall save us from the enemy, and lead us into a glorious day of righteousness. But we, as they, have to join ourselves to our Captain going “without the camp, *bearing his reproach*” (Heb. 13:13). Though we may be despised amongst men, we recognise that as they hated him, so they will inevitably hate us, if we allow our light to shine before them, holding forth the Word of Life. Being considered “the foolish things of the world” and “base things of the world,” God hath chosen us to confound the mighty, for the word of salvation is not with the mighty men of this life, but rather in the mouths of babes and sucklings has God perfected praise. Let us therefore bear the yoke cheerfully, knowing that we do it for Christ’s sake, and that our labour can never be vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

*Christopher Maddocks*

*The kingdom of the heavens preached is still, parabolically, a net cast into the sea, and gathering all sorts of fish, good, bad, and indifferent. When the net is full, it is landed on to shore, and its contents are sorted by the master. All the good fish are gathered into vessels for his use, but the bad are cast away. This arrangement cannot be altered. The good and bad fish will continue to swim in the same waters until the end comes, and that end, it is to be hoped, is very near; for it is by no means pleasant or comfortable to swim in waters full of sharks and serpents of the sea.*

*Bro John Thomas, 1866*

## Predestination

One of the unfortunate features of this subject, is that a Bible word is commonly used to describe a non-Bible doctrine. The Apostasy hijacked the term, and gave it a new meaning—which differs from what the Bible plainly teaches. Consider these words which outline Calvin’s doctrine of “Predestination”:

“the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. *Not all are created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.*”

The concept is that our entire lives follow an irrevocable destiny, appointed beforehand by God. That whether or not we inherit life or death as the final outcome is something concerning which the individual has no influence or choice.

Bro John Ullman writes concerning this:

“Some claim that our entire lives have been pre-ordained, or pre-planned by God, and that therefore we inevitably work out our lives according to a destiny we cannot avoid. This teaching is false. Yahweh certainly “knows” the “end from the beginning” because of His limitless power. See Isaiah 46:10. But God’s foreknowledge is quite different to the proposition embodied in predestination. **See 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Deuteronomy 30:19; Ezekiel 33:11; Acts 10:34; 2 Peter 3:9**”

*(John Ullman, The First Principles of the One True Faith*

Again, we read in *The Christadelphian Treasury*:

"CALVINISM is the doctrine that we are predestined by God to be saved, or to be damned, in spite of our own efforts or conduct. It is both unscriptural and immoral. There is, however, a Bible doctrine of Predestination, or Election. It is based upon the fact of God's foreknowledge, which Calvinism ignores (Rom. 8:29, 30)"

The biggest stumbling block to those who espouse this doctrine, is the fact that the Bible teaches free-will, and that how we exercise that will is going to determine our ultimate end.

Consider these words of Messiah's Apostle:

“I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, ***I myself should be a castaway***” (1 Cor. 9:27)

According to the Apostle Paul then, it is possible to set the way of life before other men, and yet still fail to attain to it oneself. However, if Calvinism is true, then there would be no doubt: Paul would not be able to speak of the possibility of being “a castaway,” for by the very nature of things, it would be impossible, with his “destiny” being irrevocable.

Again, the same principles are expressed elsewhere:

“let us also fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His Rest, any of you should ***seem to come short of it***” (Heb. 4:1)

Notice: it is possible to “come short” - and whether or not we fear God, and believe His Promise determines whether we shall “come short” or not. The Apostle's exhortation is meaningless if we have no means of influencing our ultimate standing before God. Any doctrine that robs men of the free-will to serve Yahweh, or otherwise cannot be true, for it would of necessity mean that we would not be judged “according to our deeds” (Rom. 2:6), but rather according to certain unalterable principles that we can have no control over. It would mean that Yahweh will use a criteria for judgment concerning which men have no personal accountability or responsibility - which would be inherently unjust.

However, as well as considering the wrong doctrine that has the term “predestination” applied to it, we need to understand the truth concerning the matter, as it is written in the Word of God. The word occurs in two passages of Scripture, as follows:

“we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, ***he also did predestinate*** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom ***he did predestinate***, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:28-30)

“... ***having predestinated us*** unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will ... in whom we have obtained an inheritance, ***being predestinated according to the purpose*** of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will ...” (Eph. 1:5,11).

In these places, the Greek for “*predestinate*” is the word “*proorizo*”, which is derived from *pro* = “before” and *horizo*, “to mark out” or bound (from which we have the word “horizon”. Literally therefore, the Greek signifies “*to mark out before,*” and speaks of how through the Father’s foreknowledge, (that is, based upon His knowledge of what we will do and become before the things become reality). Knowing in advance which path we will choose to take, He made certain determinations based upon his knowledge of our exercise of that choice. In other words, He has determined, or ***marked out*** in advance those who will be in the Kingdom to come. Here is the point: there is a difference between Yahweh knowing that certain things will come to pass, and Him actually causing them to come to pass by interfering with Free Will, and thereby altering the character and destiny of all men according to His Pleasure.

Men may commit acts of sin which are unrepented of—Yahweh knew that this individual would sin, without causing him to do it. But as we saw above, his reward or otherwise will be “according to his deeds,” and not according to how God made him. Yahweh knew from the very beginning that he would be rejected at Messiah’s Judgment seat. Contrariwise, He also knows who constitute the righteous, as it is written: “The Lord knoweth them that are his” (2 Tim. 2:19), and upon the basis of their faith being manifest in faithful works, they will be given an entrance to the Kingdom. In both cases, the individual’s free-will determines their ultimate “destiny,” but because the Father knows in advance what men will become, it can be said that upon the basis of that foreknowledge, he determined, or marked out before— even before Creation who will be accepted, and who will be rejected.

This idea comes through in other places of Scripture. Ephesians chapter 1 (see above) describes the divine selection, or choosing of God:

“according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us ...” (Eph. 1:4-5).

Notice here, how the “predestination” is directly linked to the Father’s foreknowledge. Upon the basis of His Foreknowledge, he chose the faithful from the foundation of the world, according to the good pleasure of His Will. And “according as he hath chosen us” in advance, so it might be said that we have been “marked out before,” to be in our Father’s kingdom.

This language is used repeatedly in the Scriptures. See for instance Jno. 17:24, where Christ was loved of his Father from before the foundation of the world. Again, 1 Pet. 1:20, Christ was “foreordained ***from before the***

*foundation of the world*". And again, Rev. 13:8, 17:8 speaks of the faithful having been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.

From these testimonies, it is abundantly clear that Yahweh, in knowing the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10), has determined upon the basis of His foreknowledge what will be in relation to His Purpose. That is the Bible doctrine of Predestination. Calvinism, on the other hand, in its denial of the exercise of free choice, actually removes responsibility and therefore accountability for wrongs done. It would teach that God made him that way, to do that thing, that he might be condemned. And by the same token, there could be no commendation for works of faith - for he did not do them by his own free will, but because God made him that way, to do that thing, that he might be commended. So it is, that the basis of judgment is not the exercise of individual free choice, as manifest in faithful or unfaithful works: free will is entirely overridden and has no bearing upon the eventual outcome - a situation that is inherently unjust.

### ***ANOTHER SIDE TO CONSIDER***

But like many circumstances, there is another side to the case. Whilst free-will is always present, there is a "purpose of God according to election" (Rom. 9:11). Or as expressed another way, "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). Or another way still, "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..." (Eph. 2:10).

Some have difficulty in reconciling such passages as these with the principle of free will. It is testified by the Master himself that no man can come to him, lest they be drawn by the Father (Jno. 6:44) - but all in harmony with free will. The Father will not draw those who do not want to be drawn. Individuals can, and do disobey the commandment to repent (Acts 17:30). In this sense the calling of the Gospel is an invitation as well as a commandment. It is a commandment to be obeyed, coupled with the invitation to become part of a new family with Messiah at the head, and which will be glorified in days to come.

God will "work in" us "both to will and to do" His Pleasure—but again, He does not do so with those who are abandoned to disobedience, and have no interest in the things of the Spirit. The work of the Father is there - an arm of Salvation extended to man, lifting him out of the mire of humanity to be a people reflective of the Divine impress. We are truly his workmanship if we take hold of that arm, allowing us to be lifted from the dunghill to be considered the Sons of God, elevated in the Heavens in Christ Jesus. The entire work, even from before its initiation, is of Yahweh in every respect. But we can choose whether or not to allow Him

to work with us, as a potter does the clay, creating a vessel to honour, and forming particular characteristics that please Him. Let us make the right choice.

*Christopher Maddocks*

---

## **Worthy is the Lamb**

In Revelation chapters four and five we are presented with a symbolic vision of the Lord Jesus Christ being acknowledged and honoured by both the angels and the saints before our Heavenly Father.

This incredible vision depicts the victory of the Master not only over his own flesh, but also with regards to having now brought many sons unto glory. For he, being the captain of their salvation, suffered to achieve this tremendous victory - and we are here today to remember the price that has been paid to bring this vision to reality.

Now although this vision is highly symbolic, undoubtedly the praise that the Master receives when he comes to establish his Father's kingdom will be very real. Let us not make the mistake of dismissing the power and reality of this future event, just because it is given as a symbolic vision.

We are presented then with both the Master and his saints depicted by various symbols used to explain how their redemption was accomplished. This vision is significantly given at the beginning of the unrolling of gentile history in

what we could term the ecclesial age.

Thus the vision presented here was to be a source of comfort, strength and courage to the brethren and sisters of that day, in the very fact that our Lord and Master had overcome. Now all power in heaven and earth was now given unto him to execute the Father's will in the unveiling of his plan unto its fulfilment in the glorious age to come. For as we read on into Revelation and tomorrow's reading in chapter six we see the unsealing of the scroll's various seals and their effects upon the then Roman world. Indeed the age of the seals is far behind us and now nearly 2,000 year's later brethren and sisters for we are in the period of the final two vials.

Deep within the period of the sixth vial, undoubtedly approaching epoch of our beloved Lord's return brethren and sisters we too need to take comfort, strength and courage from this incredible vision as those early first century brethren did.

The vision brethren is meant to **comfort** us in that firstly we know the end from the beginning the

resurrection of our Lord assured the victory, when our Heavenly Father raised him to his right hand. Secondly we see here in verse eleven the number of the saints redeemed from all ages and it is not a small limited and selective number.

*“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands”* (verse 11)

*“Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,”* a number taken from Daniel chapter seven speaking of an incalculable number. Do we not read elsewhere *“fear not, little flock; for it is our Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom”*.

Now please do not misunderstand me brethren and sisters I am not saying that every saint will be accepted at judgement seat not at all. Rather I am saying this incalculable number is given so that we do not make the mistake of excluding ourselves on the pretext that there is only so many spaces available and only the very best will gain a place.

Let us be honest brethren and sisters not one of us is worthy. Yet every one of us has been called and every one of us is therefore more than capable in the Father’s mercy of attaining the kingdom. Yet due to our nature we tend to play down our own suitability and play up every

one else’s. It is what flesh does, yet this vision is here to encourage each and every one of us to believe in the current work of our Lord in him bringing those many sons to glory, even us here today.

Let us take further **comfort** in that the picture given of these saints finally in the presence of their Lord is one of great rejoicing for as we see in verse nine they are all singing. Interestingly, none of the songs referenced in the Apocalypse are solos!

*“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth”* (verses 9-10)

These saints are jubilant no longer compassed about by every infirmity of the flesh whether physical or mental. Now rather they are arrayed in white - which we read elsewhere is the righteousness of the saints, our Lord’s bride. More than this, we are also informed in verse four of chapter four that they have received the golden *stephanos* or victory wreath, both of these symbols speaking of the saints having overcome the flesh in the blood of the lamb and gained the victory through their tried faith.

Now this jubilation is not just because they each have individually

gained age lasting life. Their individual and collective joy is because the purpose of our Heavenly Father has been advanced in Christ Jesus. Namely they now have a leadership role in the next phase of this outworking purpose in their duties as kings and priests.

Thus the motivation for their jubilation is not selfish, although they will be glad they have been redeemed, rather it is jubilation in the accomplishment and continuing work of the Father's purpose in the one they sing of, namely our Lord Jesus Christ.

Their joy looks back to that which has already been accomplished in Christ and forward to that which they will shortly take part in fulfilling the rest of that purpose centred in the one we are here to remember. Indeed this is even true of what we are here to accomplish once more and yet once less in the partaking of these emblems' brethren and sisters before our Lord shortly returns.

Now there is something truly wonderful in this vision that is not readily apparent, but by a careful reading of the passage. In chapter four we have the saints pictured praising God. Then in chapter five this praise is expanded to include the angels in verse eleven, as we have already seen. Then finally in verse thirteen we have the whole of creation joining in this great hymn of praise.

*“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such*

*as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (verse 13)*

What we have here is an outworking circle, like a ripple effect in a pond. Until the whole creation, which presently “*groaneth and travaileth in pain together until*” this point too is liberated from the shackles of sin and rejoices in Christ's glorious rule.

The vision then we are examining then brethren and sisters does not just take us to the beginning of the millennium, but it points forward to beyond that day, when finally our Heavenly Father is all and in all.

Yet it is true to say at the commencement of the millennium, as the earth and the nations are relieved of the bondage of sin and of their various forms of false worship they will collectively rejoice. The psalms speak of this time. See, for instance, Psalm 96:1, 7, 11 – 12.

Undoubtedly Israel guided by the saints will play a leading role, as is clear in these Psalms in teaching the nations the truth.

Returning to the scene here in Revelation 4 & 5, can you imagine yourself brethren and sisters being caught up in this great rejoicing throng gathered around the great golden ivory throne singing praise to our Father with immortal voices. No longer either afraid to hear your own

voice in song or being too embarrassed to let others hear our voices in song. All that self-consciousness gone.

What will it be like to hear “*ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands*” voices singing praises to the glory of God crying “*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*”. This cry comes from Isaiah’s prophecy and in the sixth chapter we read attached to it “*the whole earth is full of his glory*”, clearly pointing forward to the ultimate fulfilment at the end of the millennium.

Now I do not know about you brethren and sisters, but once a good number of years ago now I was at a gathering in the company of over 1,000 brethren and sisters singing and then the atmosphere and the sound was tremendously uplifting and inspiring. What will it be like in this day for which we all long?

If truth be told brethren and sisters we struggle with visions like this because they are in many ways beyond our comprehension of what it will feel like to with one voice, as is clear from the Greek in **verse 11** to praise our God so. Yet we are exhorted to try and do this even now brethren and sisters in anticipation of this future event.

### ***Romans 15: 5-7***

*“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward*

*another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may **with one mind and one mouth glorify God**, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God”.*

Such should be our desire even now brethren and sisters for in this vision we see the Lord Jesus Christ’s redeemed bride united not just uniform in worship.

We see also in this vision that the worship of the saints was not just confined to “*offering the sacrifice of praise to God continually, with the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name*”. For in addition to the prayers of the saints it speaks in verse ten of chapter four of the saints prostrating themselves before God and casting their crowns at his feet in a sign of submission, homage and obeisance.

*“The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne” (Chapter 4:10)*

Indeed a further twice in chapter five at verses 8 & 14 do we find the saints so prostrate before the Lord Jesus Christ, as the manifestation of his Father in the earth. What is really interesting about these physical acts of worship that are totally foreign to our current experience brethren and sisters.

Now please note this that each time they prostrate themselves it is as the result of a truth expounded?

Indeed the expressions of joy in song that we have already in part considered is also part of this physical and emotional response to the truth. Conversely we see the same thing at the opposite end of the scale being manifested by the Apostle John in verse four, where we read John “*wept much*”. He wept because there was no one to unseal the scroll that scroll that was bound up in Daniel’s day.

In many ways John’s response here is symbolic of our current situation in that this vision has not yet come to pass in the earth. What we are seeing here then is a physical and emotional response to the truth evident in these acts of worship.

This reinforces the fact that our life in the truth is not just to be an intellectual activity, although it is truly an important part of our life in the truth, because the word of God is the key. So we indeed do need our intellect to worship and serve our Heavenly Father acceptably.

Yet at the same time we have highlighted for us a problem here with regards to our worship in that it has been said, “*the journey from the human head to heart with regards to worship is the longest journey ever travelled in this life*”. The truth needs a physical and emotional response brethren and sisters, our whole being is required.

So in chapter four they prostrate themselves as a result of proclaiming those words in verse eight “*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*”. The truth of the holiness of our God brethren and sisters should drive us to such a realisation of our position before him, as flesh and blood creatures of the dust.

Then in verse eight of chapter five we find the bride once more prostrating themselves before their Lord, as a result of him being worthy to take the book. “*And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb*”.

Finally in verse fourteen, as a result of the praise of the whole creation and their own collective pronouncement of “*Amen*” at the end of that praise endorsing it, the saints again joyfully prostrate themselves in submission, homage and obeisance.

From these three applications depicting how the saints will worship in the age to come we learn that part of our worship in giving honour to our Heavenly Father is to be with our whole being. Not just with either the heart or the mind. That being the case brethren and sisters we need to learn to actively practice such worship now. And not just go through the motions, which in honesty we are prone to do. Because in many ways even this simple ritual of weekly partaking of the emblems can and does become mundane due to the weakness of the flesh.

Again if truth were told brethren and sisters, usually the only time we will prostrate ourselves in this way is as the result of our sin and our desire to confess and resume fellowship with our God. Yet here each of these incidents, are joyful events. Let us learn to prostrate ourselves in response to Yahweh's blessings as well as his mercies brethren and sisters. Indeed let us learn to truly rejoice in Yahweh our God brethren and sisters.

Interestingly these three occasions of submission, homage and obeisance also teach us something else with regards to our salvation in Christ. Firstly it all comes from our Heavenly Father; He initiated it, provided for it and brought it into being. Secondly He worked out his plan through our Lord Jesus Christ our beloved Master, again separate from us. So that finally our only suitable response is to worship him with thanksgiving and honour for what He has achieved in Christ.

Let us realise brethren and sisters that we bring nothing to the table, except **our response** in a thoughtful and heartfelt life of active worship, service and sacrificial work. (**All three aspects are part of and complete our worship**).

*In Romans Chapter 12 and at verse 1 we read:*

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,*

*which is your reasonable service” (or worship).*

Worship is actually one of our Heavenly Father's gifts to us, so that we might learn to place worth where it truly belongs and to deepen our love for our God. Our Heavenly Father brethren and sisters does not need our worship for He does not lack anything in himself nor is He enhanced by it. Rather it is a means of developing and enhancing us both individually and collectively as we learn to practice worship through praise, service and sacrifice.

Yet nonetheless he commands us and implores us to worship him, because in such actions as depicted here in this wonderful vision we are truly fulfilled and satisfied. We may ask the question then - *does our Heavenly Father get anything at all from all our worship?*

The answer is if that worship is based upon truth and sincere then yes, He chooses to derive pleasure from it. Yet let us be warned brethren and sisters Israel were constantly castigated for what was lacking in their worship. *Can it be said of you and I brethren and sisters that we each have the balance right with regards to our worship?*

With these thoughts in mind we return then in verse nine to find these redeemed saints acknowledging these truths, where we read. *“Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and*

*hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”.*

The focus of the saint’s worship is on the **worthiness** of the Master. In fact our word “*worship*” is actually a contraction from the old English word “*worthship*”, meaning “*to love, to admire & adore*” in other words to be worthy in ones eyes. This is borne out in the Greek for the word “*worthy*” here means “*to have weight*”. The idea is that of having **standing/ impact/importance** with the one who regards the other as truly worthy.

*Can it be said of you and I brethren and sisters that we each are giving the Lord Jesus Christ and indeed our Heavenly Father the right weight in our lives?*

### **Colossians Chapter one, vs 12 – 19**

Even now brethren and sisters in this simple act of remembrance our beloved Master has the **pre-eminence**, as we “*show the Lord’s death till he come*”. **Please note** that this word “*pre-eminence*” is a present active participle, meaning it is to be a principle of our daily lives to place the Lord Jesus Christ **first** in our lives. Let us note the thought of the Eternal Spirit here is in the present tense, so that even now are we to live this way, as new creatures, because in the following verses we are given two reasons for this need. Firstly in verse nineteen we read “*for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell*”.

Secondly if we are each to be and collectively reconciled by his blood that we might be presented in that day “*holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight*” (verse 22). Failure to put the Master first in our lives manifests that we are yet carnal in our thinking and actions.

**Note carefully** brethren and sisters, the Master’s worthiness is as a direct result of what our Heavenly Father achieved through his life, death and resurrection. Worthiness comes then from what has been done. Indeed this very principle is the basis of our own forthcoming judgement, is it not.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians Chapter 5 and at verse 10 we read:

*“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”.*

Returning to Revelation chapter five and in verses nine and ten we are given four reasons (*number of God manifestation*) for the Masters worthiness.

1. He “*was slain*” is an obvious reference to the atoning work of Christ we shall shortly remember. This looks back at the **past** historic event.
2. He has, “*hast redeemed (or purchased) us to God,*” which

speaks of the efficacy of Christ's atoning work and describes both its ***past, present*** and ***ongoing*** effect. **Note** brethren and sisters that the use of the aorist tense here for the word "*redeemed*" points not only to our redemption as an accomplished fact. But also that there is therefore a present effect every time we actively apply our faith in Christ.

3. He has "*made us unto our God a kingdom of priests*" points to the future work of the saints, which is a reality at this point in the vision.
4. And "*we shall reign*" - the Greek employs a ***future*** indicative of a promised future fact.

This incredible vision brethren and sisters should **embolden and encourage** us to place our faith in our Heavenly Father's provision in Christ Jesus our Lord. The vision was given to assure all believers down from the first century to our present generation "*that he, which, hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*".

Thus the vision should indeed **inspire** us brethren and sisters to "*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*". In this quotation concerning stretching towards the prize of our high calling we learn a fascinating point. Endorsed here by the scriptures and backed up by years of psychological research that "*it is not the past, but the future that*

*conditions you*". Because **what you commit yourself too determines what you are and become**. The Eternal spirit through the Apostle Paul here is encouraging us to reach for the prize and here in Revelation five this vision of the future is given to inspire us to have a future orientation.

## **2nd Corinthians Chapter four and verse 18:**

*"While we look not at the things, which are seen, but at the things, which are not seen: for the things, which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal".*

Now please humour me brethren and sisters close your eyes and see the scene, picture each aspect in your mind. Run your eye of faith over the great multitude of the saints and angels given here. Praising in unison the Father through the Son, as I read to you verses eleven and twelve.

*"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (verses 11-12).*

Now comes an important question highly relevant to this idea of the vision providing for us future orientation. When you pictured in your mind the scene portrayed here did you see yourself personally and the brethren and sisters you are assembled with today in among this great throng of the redeemed?

We have to be able to see ourselves present in the kingdom brethren and sisters, because such clarity of vision is a great aid to providing the will and desire to press forward faithfully in Christ. It is not presumption on our part to see into the future in this manner. Rather **it is an act of faith on our part**, recognising that, yes we must still be found acceptable at the return of our beloved Master. The scripture provides us with these visions so that we might be up built and lifted up above the temporal.

Consider the Master the one we are to shortly remember in the emblems of bread and wine upon the table. What do we read concerning him in Hebrews *“who for the joy that was set before him endured the stake, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”*?

Now that phrase *“set before him”* means that the joy envisaged was *“placed before his eyes, it was set in front of him and it was appointed to him”*. Fascinatingly in the Greek this word *“before”* is in the present tense and is in the **middle voice** indicating to us a deliberate **personal choice**. And finally this setting of joy before

Christ was a participle, in other words a **daily principle** our Master lived by. Now wonder we are exhorted there in Hebrews to keep our eyes constantly fixed upon our Lord Jesus Christ *“who is the author and finisher of our faith”*.

The Master himself envisaged the kingdom in all its aspects with the redeemed his bride. How else was he able to so overcome that we too might be brought unto glory. Surely none of us are going to charge him with presumption are we brethren and sisters?

Now wonderfully that word *“before”* we have just examined in relation to Christ is only used twice more in this form in the Greek and both passages are also in Hebrews and are highly instructive to us in this context.

### **Hebrews Chapter 12 and verse 1**

*“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is **set before us**”*.

We find then the same exhortation we have been pursuing to lay aside the past and our sin and revel in this future orientation of the kingdom. This vision in Revelation chapter five providing us with just such a great cloud of witnesses we are to surrounded ourselves with. **Please note** brethren and sisters that it requires a personal choice on our

part to set the vision before us. Indeed the word “*compassed*” here is in exactly the same form in the Greek, as the word “*before*”, indicating to us that we must make the same daily choice to be personally surrounded by these witnesses.

*The question comes to us all brethren and sisters are we willing to make that choice and so surround ourselves with these things of eternity?*

The final passage in which we have this idea of having something “*set before us*” is **Hebrews Chapter six and verses 17 – 20:**

*“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope **set before us**: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec”.*

Now as we finally come to break bread and to drink wine in memory of our Lord until he comes to make this wonderful vision a reality in our

lives. We see in the bread brethren and sisters our forerunner the Master the word made flesh. This bread which speaks to us of the power of the word of life to enlighten our minds and set before us and fill our thinking with that joy of these visions of the age to come. That we might be comforted encouraged and inspired to see their fulfilment.

Likewise in the wine we see the Master the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Who was slain to redeem us to the Father for the purpose of being his willing servants in the day of our beloved Master’s power?

Thus in the wine we see not only the price that was paid, but more importantly the choices that he made and his faithful worship of his Father in a life of praise, service and sacrifice, even to the laying down of his life. What of us brethren and sisters are we equally willing to make these same personal choices and to give our lives in worship, service and as living sacrifices for one another. So that we might one with one voice worship the Father throughout the ages of eternity, as depicted here in this tremendous vision?

We could finish brethren and sisters with no better words than the final words, recorded in this wonderful vision:

*“Saying with a loud voice, **Worthy is the Lamb** that was slain to receive power, and*

*riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto*

*him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever".*  
(Verses 12-14).

*Wayne Marshall*

---

## **THE FIRSTBORN**

When the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, We read in Exodus 13:2:

“Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine” (1).

The reason for this is given in verse 3:

“And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand Yahweh brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten” (2).

The significance of these words is shown in Genesis 49:3:

“Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power”.

The firstborn was the beginning of their strength. By strength of hand Yahweh had brought them out of Egypt, therefore they were to sanctify the beginning of their strength to Yahweh. We have to remember that the Almighty had just slain the firstborn of Egypt, the culmination of the ten plagues, to deliver them from bondage.

But how were they to sanctify their firstborn to Yahweh? This is explained in Numbers 3: 41:

“And thou shalt take the Levites for me (I am Yahweh) instead

of all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel”.

From this we see that the Levites were taken instead of the firstborn. If we read verses 39-51, we shall see that the Levites numbered 22,000, whereas the firstborn numbered 22,273. To redeem the 273 which were over and above the number of the Levites, Moses was commanded to take 5 shekels apiece, which amounted to 1365 shekels and was commanded to give them to Aaron and his sons. Significantly, each of these numbers are multiples of 7.  $273 = 39 \times 7$  and  $1365 = 195 \times 7$ . Now, we hope to show that the firstborn stood for the whole nation.

The word firstborn is the Hebrew *bekowr* (1060) and means *firstborn, hence chief*. *Bekorah* (1062) is derived from this word, and it means *birthright*. In fact *bekorah* is the feminine of *bekowr*. It could be significant that it is feminine because the birthright applies to the ecclesia. Esau had the birthright which he sold to Jacob, which we read of in Genesis 25:31-34:

“And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. . . thus Esau despised his birthright”.

Esau the firstborn proved unworthy of this title therefore the birthright went to Jacob. The same word *bekorah* is used in Genesis 27:36:

“And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? For he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing”.

This verse shows that there is a link between the birthright and the promises to Abraham (“my blessing”). It is used again in 1 Chronicles 5:1-2:

“Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph’s”).

Here we see that Reuben proved unworthy of the birthright, so it went to the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. Of these two sons, Jacob conferred the right of the firstborn upon the younger, Ephraim, when he

blessed them which we read of in Genesis 48:14, and 18-19. It was Joshua of the tribe of Ephraim who led the children of Israel into the promised land and moreover initially the tabernacle was pitched in Shiloh which was in the tribe of Ephraim. But let us not forget the words in 1 Chronicles 5:2, "For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler". The Lord Jesus Christ was to descend from the tribe of Judah. The change from Ephraim to Judah is shown in Psalm 78: 60-70:

"So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh (in Ephraim), the tent which he placed among men. . . . But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. . . He chose David also his servant".

"Firstborn" is used in Deuteronomy 21:15- 17. Here, this is the natural application of the title, but the Scriptures we have considered have shown that the right of the firstborn is dependant on worthiness. The Almighty has the prerogative to determine who is the firstborn on the basis of worthiness of character. It is noteworthy that the word was used right back in Genesis 4:4-5, where we read:

"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Yahweh had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and his offering he had not respect".

So from the beginning there was significance in the firstborn, memorialized in the fact that Abel brought of the *firstlings* of the flock, which is the word *bekorah*, also rendered *firstborn*. Cain was the firstborn. He could have ruled over his brother, but proved unworthy and was rejected, so the right of the firstborn went to Abel who Cain murdered. But Abel's blood cried out from the ground. This of course clearly pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ who was put to death by the Jews, but his blood "speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb.12:24).

We shall now begin to consider the typical significance of the firstborn, but firstly let us note that the firstborn stood for the whole nation of Israel as we see from Exodus 4:22-23:

"And thou shalt say unto Pharoah, Thus saith Yahweh, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn".

The firstborn of Egypt were slain to redeem Israel, Yahweh's firstborn. As Isaac was miraculously conceived, so Israel as a nation was miraculously conceived, so they were Yahweh's firstborn.

But the Passover lamb also represented the firstborn. Why? Because by the slaying of the Passover lamb and the eating of it, the children of Israel were saved when the angel of death passed over Egypt, as we see from Exodus 12, the chapter which precedes the chapter on the firstborn. In this chapter instructions are given regarding the slaying of the Passover lamb and then we read in verses 12-14:

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and I will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Yahweh. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt”.

Because Israel slew and ate of the Passover lamb their firstborn were saved when the angel of death passed over and slew the firstborn of Egypt. Therefore the Passover lamb represented the firstborn of Israel which they were to sanctify to Yahweh.

Now let us consider the words of Psalm 89 which speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, the seed of David. Let us read verses 24-28:

“But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my El, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him”.

The title of firstborn has been applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. This we see also from Colossians 1:15-19:

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. . . (v.18) And he is the head of the body, the ecclesia: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell”,

and Romans 8:29:

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren”.

If Israel was described as Yahweh's firstborn, how can this title also be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ? It was because Israel proved herself unworthy of that status, to the extent that the very people who were described as Yahweh's firstborn, crucified the Son of God, just as Cain who was the firstborn, but proved unworthy of that status murdered his brother Abel, on whom that title should have been bestowed because he had proved worthy. However let us note the words "firstborn *among many brethren*". We shall now consider this.

The title of firstborn is dependant on worthiness and this is shown in Romans 9:6-9:

"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, *They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.* For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son".

These words are showing that not every descendant of Abraham is a child of God and therefore not a true Israelite, even though they may be of Israel. They have to be a child of promise as Isaac was. Who are the children of promise? These are defined in Galatians 3:29:

"And if *ye be Christ's*, then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs according to the promise*".

The Apostle continues in Romans 9:10, which confirms that which we have already spoken of concerning Jacob and Essau:

"And not only this, but when Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Essau have I hated. . . (v.16) So then it is not of him that willeth, not of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy".

But we have also been called to these things brethren and sisters as we see from 23-26:

"And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

We, brethren and sisters have been called to be part of the ecclesia of the firstborn as we see from Hebrews 12: 22-25:

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and ecclesia of the firstborn (E.D. “firstborns”), which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect (i.e. those worthy ones of Hebrews 11), And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, (i.e. Moses) much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven””.

In this same chapter we see in verses 15-17 how Esau despised his birthright i.e his place as the firstborn:

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears”.

How important it is that we learn from Esau's failure. He put present advantage before the promises to Abraham, before his birthright. In contrast, Jacob wanted the promises. He showed that tenacity of purpose from his birth, when he held on to his brother's heel in the womb and so held on to the promises throughout his life. If we would inherit the birthright, how important it is that we put the kingdom before present advantage as the Master taught us in Matthew 6:31-34:

“Therefore take no thought (be not anxious), saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought (be not anxious) for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”,

and 19:27-30:

“Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life”.

As Israel by strength of hand were delivered out of Egypt when the angel of death slew all the firstborn of Egypt, so Yahweh's firstborn Son, the true Passover lamb has been crucified to deliver us from the bondage of sin and death, therefore as part of the ecclesia of the firstborn we should give the beginning of our strength to Yahweh.

Moreover at the Passover, Israel had to be in a state of readiness to leave Egypt. They had to eat it with their loins girded, their feet shod and with their staff in their hand. So with us brethren and sisters, the Master could return at any time and we need to be in a state of readiness for his coming.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Hebrews 12:1-3).

---

### ***Footnotes:***

These words were applied to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ as we see from Luke 2:22-23\*. It is noteworthy that the sanctification of the firstborn was linked with the fulfilment of the requirements of the law for the birth of a son in Leviticus 12. Leviticus 12 focuses on the Lord Jesus Christ. The word man child is the Hebrew *zakar* which means *remembered child*. This word is actually rendered *remember* and moreover significantly is rendered *memorial* where it is applied to the memorial name of Yahweh in Exodus 3:15\*. In the requirements of the birth of the man child in Leviticus 12 the woman was to be unclean for 33 days pointing forward to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ of 33 years.

Leaven represented malice and wickedness, the things of Egypt. They were

to leave these things behind, therefore, the feast of unleavened bread which followed the Passover represented to the children of Israel that from now onwards they must leave the things of Egypt behind. So with us the leaven of the world should not be found in our house. We must leave these things behind in our walk to the kingdom. A very heart searching thought!

Carlo Barberesi

---

## Secretary's Notes

- As announced in the last issue, *An Exposition of Joel* has now been completed, and is available from the Secretary at the cost of £3.00 plus p&p. Comprising 92 A4 pages of verse-by-verse analysis, and relevant studies, the book can also be downloaded free of charge from our internet website here:

[www.christadelphian.uk.com/downloads.html](http://www.christadelphian.uk.com/downloads.html)

- There have been a few 'hiccups' with the distribution of weekly Sunday Exhortations due to the collusion of various inconveniences, but which have now been resolved. To receive Sunday Exhortations by e-mail, just send an e-mail to: [chris@christadelphian.uk.com](mailto:chris@christadelphian.uk.com)
- We are working on the reproduction of a book on The Tabernacle by Bre C Tooth, and G Holton. Further information will be made known as the project progresses.
- It has been suggested that some of the series that we have published in *The Christadelphian Waymark* should be reprinted in booklet format, i.e. *Colossians—an Exhortation for Unity in Love*, *The BASF—It's Importance and Teaching*, and *Tobiah—The Infiltration of an enemy*. We would be happy to oblige as soon as circumstances permit.
- We acknowledge with thanks donations made by various brethren, which have helped our work to continue, and will help facilitate further projects (outlined above).

## **“Seek Ye Yahweh”**

1 Corinthians chapter 1 describes the manner in which the Word was preached and received:

“Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His Presence” (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

The system of salvation extended to Man therefore, involves the elevation of the Father only, making no provision for flesh to glory before Him. “We preach Christ crucified ... unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:23) says the inspired Apostle, and this maxim holds as true today as when it was first written. The Natural man is unable to receive the things of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14) - especially when to do so involves humility and self abasement – and so holds fast to that which is natural to him - the indulgence of the carnal mind upon things that do not profit. Preachers of the Gospel taught by Christ and his apostles have been scorned and derided throughout the ages, for in themselves and their natural position in society, there is no human reason why they should be honoured. But “the foolishness of God [i.e. the cross of Christ considered foolish by men] is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (Rom. 1:25) - and though the treasure is hidden within weak and earthen vessels, when Messiah comes to lead his people into victory against the powers of sin, the light shall be caused to shine across the entire globe, after the fashion of Gideon’s victory over his enemies.

This pattern is something that we find repeated in the prophecy of Amos. The seventh chapter recounts the prophet’s words in answer to Amaziah, the priest of Beth-El, who had told him to “flee thee away” and cease prophesying to Israel:

“I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. And Yahweh took me as I followed the flock, and Yahweh said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel” (Amos 7:14-15).

So it was that in selecting men to deliver words of rebuke and correction to his people, Yahweh chose those who, by the world’s standards were weak and lowly. Amos was not among the rich and prosperous in the

things of this life, neither did he elevate himself to be a prophet – rather he was taken and chosen by the Father, that having no glory in himself to detract from the message, he would be a vessel suitable to hold forth the word of life.

Amos chapter 1 tells us that the prophet's ministry was during the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. And 2 Chronicles chapter 26 characterises this period as being a time of prosperity. Uzziah, we are told: “built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel, for he loved husbandry” (2 Chron. 26:10).

The record continues:

“and he made in Jerusalem engines invented by cunning men, to be upon the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped till he was strong” (2 Ch 26:15).

Carmel was a fruitful place, and the prosperity of the land was shown by the need for vinedressers and husbandmen to tend the land and beasts. Yahweh blessed him greatly, but only whilst he was of a lowly spirit. He was “marvellously helped till he was strong” we are informed, “but when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction; for he transgressed against Yahweh his God, and went into the temple of Yahweh to burn incense upon the altar of incense” (2 Chron. 26:15-16). Had Uzziah remained humble, Yahweh would have continued to elevate him, but as “pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18) even so Uzziah became haughty, and fell from his position of favour. Seeking to become his own High Priest by entering the Temple without Divine Authorisation, he was smitten with leprosy in his forehead, and remained a leper till the day of his death.

It is interesting to note that in the year of Uzziah's death, the prophet Isaiah saw a vision of the glorified Messiah:

***“In the year that king Uzziah died*** I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple” (Isa. 6:1).

Notice here, the Master is “upon a throne”, which speaks of *kingship*, but his train filled “the temple,” which indicates the centre of *worship*, or religion. So it is that in the Kingdom, Christ shall be a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, a king-priest officiating in the presence of Yahweh in the Most Holy.

However, unlike Uzziah, Christ does not elevate himself to be a priestly king: he is made so by Divine appointment:

*“So Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I forgotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest after the order of Melchisedec”* (Heb. 5:5-6).

Moreover, Christ sought salvation from death, in humility not presumptuously. The sacrifices he offered were not animal offerings, but tears, and a meek and lowly spirit that trembled at the Father’s word: “when he had *offered up* prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared ...” (Heb. 5:7).

Returning to the prophecy of Amos, and particularly that portion which forms part of our daily readings for today, we find a constant exhortation to repent and “seek” Yahweh. “thus saith Yahweh unto the house of Israel, *Seek ye me*, and ye shall live” (Amos 5:4). This theme continues throughout the chapter: see verses 6, 8, 14. The exhortation is therefore, for sinful men to repent and seek Yahweh in spirit and in Truth. Amos’ ministry was particularly to the elevated class in Israel; against “the habitations of the shepherds, and the top of Carmel” which would “wither” (Amos. 1:2). Again, he spoke words against the “palaces” of both Israel and the heathen (1:4, 7, 10, 12, 2:2, 3:9, 11, 15). And chapter 5 describes the people:

“they hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly, forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye have taken from him burdens of wheat ... they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right” (Am. 5:11,12).

The poor and defenceless were oppressed by men of standing and prosperity. Just as we read in 1 Corinthians that the truth-holders tend to be men of weak social standing, even so those who spoke out against the excesses of Israel were “hated” and “abhorred”. Even so it is today, that men of the flesh pour scorn upon men of the spirit.

But those to whom Amos spake, although they denied the power thereof, they did have a “form of godliness”. They made a shew of desiring the long-promised Day of Yahweh to come, when they might be further glorified. But this was not to be so: the Day when it came was to be darkness and judgment, not light and glory to them:

“Woe unto you that desire the day of Yahweh! To what end is it for you? The day of Yahweh is darkness, and not light ... shall not the Day of Yahweh be darkness, and not light? Even be very dark, and no brightness in it” (Am. 5:18, 20).

Malachi spoke of that same day, saying, “who may abide the day of his coming” (Mal. 3:2). Joel spoke of that day, being “*a day of darkness, and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness*” (Joel 2:2). These things ought to provoke us into an inward examination. When Messiah returns, there will be those who seek to be identified with him, and say, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them. I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity” (Mat. 7:22-23). In that day, there shall be great darkness and gnashing of teeth on the part of the rejected (cp. Mat. 22:13). It is quite possible to look towards the coming Day of Yahweh with an entirely wrong heart and spirit. It is no use to seek the kingdom to come if it is not our present desire to live by the principles it will be established upon. For one thing, if we do not delight in the things of the spirit of God, we will not be happy living in conditions where only those things are elevated. But more importantly, if we do not seek the righteousness of the Father in our age – have can we expect it to be imputed to us in the age to come?

Amos chapter 5 nevertheless provides us with a vision of hope. Although the coming Day of Yahweh would be darkness to those who cannot abide the glory of the Light, for the faithful there would be an entrance into a dawning of a new day:

“Seek him that ... turneth the shadow of death into the morning ...” (Am. 5:8).

In Yahweh then, there is hope and salvation. It may well be that during the days of our sojourn in mortal weakness that the path upon which we walk will lead us through times of bitterness and hardship. Times that seem like we are walking in the “shadow of death”. Certainly this was true of David – yet he continued to trust in his God:

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Psa. 23:4).

Again, Israel are depicted to Ezekiel (chapter 37) as dwelling in a valley of death – dry bones resting in hope that they might come together again at the appointed time, and be caused to stand up as a “great army”. In the darkest of whatever circumstances befall us, we can have the confidence

that Yahweh is going to bring a new age of light, health, and wisdom – and that if we desire those things in our hearts, we will be part of that kingdom to come. To the Word and to the Testimony we look for light and hope (Isa. 8:20). As the “children of light” we do not seek our own glory, as did Uzziah. Seeking to be identified with he who was meek and lowly in heart (Mat. 11:29), we do not exalt ourselves, but trust in Yahweh that He will give the reward in due time. Not seeking the material things of this life, we seek first the Kingdom of God, and Yahweh’s righteousness, knowing that all other things we have need of will be provided for us (Mat. 6:33). The examples lie before us in the Scriptural record, but only we can made the decision to follow them.

*Christopher Maddocks*

---

## **God Manifestation:**

God alone can set apart and make holy. An act or thing, then, to be made holy to God, must be according to His appointment; and whatever is done according to divine ordination, God does. “The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for such are the worshippers the Father requires. God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” ( John 4:23 ). To worship is to honour, and to honour God is to do what He requires. Honour emanating from the will of man is “will worship” and therefore unacceptable to God. Spiritual worship according to truth, is the honour He requires. The worship appointed by the Spirit, through the Apostles, is the spiritual worship; and is composed of certain acts set forth in the Scriptures of Truth.

Brother John Thomas  
*The Apostolic Advocate* July, 1836. 190

---

"What have you *done*?" and not "What have you *professed*?" will determine the acceptance of the saints. If their doings are resolvable into mere words that cost nothing but a feeble effort to pronounce them, they can have no part in the Kingdom of God and Age to Come. Thus saith the Lord; therefore let no man be beguiled by vain deceit.

Brother John Thomas  
*Herald of the Kingdom and Age To Come* 1851