

'Thus saith the LORD God.; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be My people, and I will be their God.'

Ezekiel 37:21-23

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Theme for 2022 – 'Where are we in God's Calendar'

January 28th, 7pm

Subject: How are we to Watch for the Lord's Coming?

Speaker: Ivan Foster

(This meeting will be on Zoom only – see links on previous page)

February 25th, 7pm

Subject: Can the Lord Jesus Come at Any Moment?

Speaker: David Park

March 25th, 7pm

Subject: What is Meant by 'The Times of the Gentiles'?

Speaker: Philip Knowles

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Watching and Waiting

LIGHT FOR PERILOUS TIMES

SCRIPTURAL

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The objects are:

1. To teach the nearing approach of our Lord's return. James 5:8
2. To hold forth the Truth and to expose and resist error. Jude 3
3. To note passing events in the light of 'the Scripture of Truth.' 2 Peter 1:19
4. To unfold the Word of God by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Acts 17:11
5. To encourage missionary endeavour, and all service for Truth. Acts 1:8
6. To comfort and strengthen those who seek to stand with the Lord, apart from abounding lawlessness. 2 Timothy 2:19
7. To call for separation from false ecumenism. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

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The Testimony of Ezekiel

By Brian McClung

(This is a summary of a message preached at the Spring Conference of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony on 23rd April, 2021. It can be downloaded from the S.G.A.T. website).

The three great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, each place an emphasis upon a different person of the Godhead: Isaiah makes much of the Person of God the Son, the Obedient Servant of Jehovah. Jeremiah makes much of the Person of God the Father, as the prophet warns, and justifies the fact that God is dealing with His people. Ezekiel makes much of the Person of the Spirit of God. There are at least twenty-five direct references in this Book of Ezekiel to the Spirit of God, from the 'Spirit' entering into Ezekiel (2:2) to the 'Spirit' taking him up and bringing him in vision to the inner court (43:5). In between these two verses there are those many other references to the Spirit of God. Ezekiel was of the priestly tribe. He was taken captive, and in the land of captivity the Lord raised him up as a prophet, and what a mighty prophet he was!

Although this Book may, on the surface, seem to be a difficult Book to understand, there is one theme that runs the whole way through the Book. There is a phrase which appears sixty-three times in this prophecy, and surely this is something to give us an insight to the message and it helps us to understand what is being revealed to us. I am not referring to the three words 'son of man' which appear ninety-three times.

The phrase changes form slightly but it is basically the same. It may be prefixed with 'They,' or 'Ye,' or 'The heathen,' or 'Thou' – but the phrase runs 'shall know that I am the LORD.' Sixty-three times it appears. So that is a phrase for which we need to look out when we read this Book and seek to understand what this prophet is saying to us. That is the message of this Book. Ezekiel's name comes from the verb, 'to strengthen' and the prophecy is designed by God to strengthen the faith of saints as He makes His power and dominion known. This is the design of prophecy. Do we not often pray that the Lord will make Himself known? That He would come among His people and make Himself known and show Himself to be God in this day and age in which we live? Well, here is a book which is all about the Lord making Himself known, not only to the prophet, and not only to Israel, but to the heathen as well.

There are three ways in which the Lord makes Himself known as outlined in this Book of Ezekiel. Jehovah God will make Himself known by:

1. First of all, we take chapters 4-24. (The first three chapters of the prophecy are about the calling of Ezekiel and the charging of him to be a prophet to the people). In this first section, you will find **the Lord chastising Israel** for their departure from the true and living God. Twenty-nine times there is that phrase, in one form or another, 'shall know that I am the LORD.' He shows Himself to be the God of heaven and He

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sees their departure from Him. He will not turn a blind eye to their sin, backsliding, and departure from God. He never does that. He will not do that today either. We live in a day of coldness and carelessness and carnality among many who profess the Lord's name. We should not be surprised if the Lord chastens His people for this turning away from Him, because He has given us the example.

Connected with this section of chastising Israel is the departure of the glory of the Lord from the Temple and from Jerusalem itself. The Lord is making Himself known. He will not dwell among those who turn aside from Him and follow after the things of the world. In chapter 10:4,8 and in 11:23 you read about the glory of the Lord departing from the Temple; then going out to the mountain; then leaving the mountain altogether, leaving Jerusalem. Israel were a people bereft of the Lord's presence. That ancient people who had the Lord's presence – the Shekinah glory was among them, the tabernacle, the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire as they came out of Egypt, across the Red Sea and on to Canaan – came to the time when they lost the visible presence of the Lord; and that is shown to Ezekiel in a vision as the Lord made Himself known as a God who does chastise – and His presence is lost.

2. Then there is the second section in chapters 25-32 – the **judging of the Seven Gentile Nations** for never recognising the Lord as God and for their ill treatment of Israel. Eighteen times you will find that little phrase in those chapters – that the Lord will make Himself known. Like a Judge, He has made a circle of the nations pronouncing God's judgment. Seven nations are named – Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistines, Tyre, Zidon and Egypt. Here the glory of the Lord is acting in defence of Israel, for He has never forgotten His people. Though He is displeased with them He still loves them. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. He will deal with those nations (who have never recognized Him) for their ill-treatment of Israel.

3. Then we come to the third section where we find the Lord **restoring Israel back into covenant blessing and fellowship** (chapters 33-48). Sixteen times that phrase appears in this third section, although it does not appear after chapter 39. Though Israel had forgotten the Lord, He has not forgotten them. The interesting thing is that this section speaks of the return of the glory of the Lord. Ezekiel 43:4 says, 'And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.' So Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord returning.

Sometimes, people may find the Book of Ezekiel hard to understand, but it is important to look for the three-fold division of the book and not miss out the overall picture. What is the book teaching? I suggest that if you keep in mind the fact that the Lord is making Himself known in these three ways, it will help you. He is God and beside Him there is none other. Look out for that little phrase which appears sixty-three times – 'They,' 'ye,' 'the heathen,' and 'thou' (even the prophet), 'shalt know that I am the LORD.' The Lord will declare Himself to be Jehovah. So there are these three sections of the Book, but I want to major upon the closing chapters of the Book of Ezekiel in the time left.

I. The Sequence of Events Outlined

We cannot deal with everything in these chapters (33-48). How could we? There is such a lot contained in them. An overview is important to understand what the message of the latter part of this Book is about. We can focus in on particular details and apply the truth in various ways; but remember application is not interpretation. We should not confuse the two, nor conflate the two. They are separate. This is the mistake that many make with portions of Scripture and particularly with those parts that talk about the second coming. They merely take application out of these chapters and never interpret them properly. There are many ways that you can apply a Scripture, a verse, a portion, a chapter, or a book but the Word of God only has one particular meaning, not a whole lot of contradictory meanings. Scriptures mean one thing and it is ours to seek, with the help of the Lord, the correct interpretation of the Scripture. So, it is important that we understand what is being said and not merely take some application. Sadly, it is particularly so with Ezekiel that many people just apply the Scripture. We are now seeking to understand what is taught in the Word of God. We are going to work through a few points to help us memorise the sequence of events, and we start at chapter 33. In these chapters, we have:

1. The Lord's justification of what He has and will yet do with His ancient people (chapter 33).

2. The denouncing of the false shepherds (chapter 34:1-19) and promising that He personally will be a Shepherd to Israel. 'Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day' (verses 11-12). That Shepherd will be the Beloved Son. 'I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even My servant David; He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it' (verses 23-24). So the Lord will be among them when He comes into the world a second time.

3. This personal return of the Beloved Son to shepherd Israel will result in three things:

(a) **A National Restoration to the LORD and to the Land** (see chapter 36). The words of this chapter are often used to define what Regeneration is. Verse 26 says, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.' The Lord is going to bring about a work of regeneration, a restoring this nation unto Himself. There is going to be this work of grace that is wrought in hearts – I will take away the stony heart and give a heart of flesh.

(b) **A Potent Instrument** (see chapter 37). This is the chapter about the valley of dry bones. It is often preached upon with reference to revival. It applies to Israel as a nation. It is not about the church; it is about the nation of Israel. Verse 11 specifically mentions the house of Israel. Verse 10 reads, 'So I prophesied as He commanded me,

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and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.' They are an exceeding great army, not to wage war but to be a force for God and for good in the earth. In ancient time Israel was God's instrument of judgment in the earth and in future days they will be an instrument again but in a totally different way. They will be a missionary nation. They are going to take the truth to the nations. They are going to be a witness for the truth and they are going to stand up an exceeding great army because the Lord will come and so work among them.

(c) **The destruction of all Israel's enemies past and future.** This takes in old enemies, (see chapter 35) and the Lord dealing with the Edomites or Mount Seir. It also covers new enemies who will be stirred to arise (chapters 38 and 39) dealing with the chief prince called Gog and the land of Magog. O what a time that will be!

4. The erection of the new sanctuary/temple that is described in chapters 40-43. This includes the return of the glory of the Lord (see Ezekiel 43:4), which is connected to the construction of that temple, that millennial temple. We have already mentioned that verse in chapter 33 which speaks of the glory returning.

5. There is the Prince that shall enter into the city and the temple (see chapter 44). This Prince is mentioned over a dozen times in the remaining chapters of Ezekiel. Who is he?

6. The division of the city of Jerusalem and the land among the tribes (chapters 45-48). Israel as a nation is to be in the land for a period of time. There will be no enemies left this time as they have been defeated. The people of Israel are going to be in the land and it is going to be divided between the tribes.

7. The Life-giving waters flowing out from Jerusalem (chapter 47). This will tie in with the comments made earlier concerning the physical change that will take place. It is an illustration of the change that the Lord will bring about when He comes all culminating with Jerusalem being given the new name 'Jehovah Shammah'.

So there is a sequence of events outlined in these chapters and it is important to keep them in mind.

II. The Timing of These Events

Has all this ever come to pass? If not, when will it come to pass?

All these events are centred around the coming again of Jesus Christ to the earth. The Lord is not the author of confusion and there is no confusion for us if we accept the plain teaching of Scripture.

This whole section of the Book of Ezekiel, which has the purpose of the Lord making Himself known, commences with the return of Jesus Christ.

Ezekiel 34:11-31 is a key portion in this regard.

1. The Lord declares His purpose for His ancient people (verses 11-16). That intention is a double return for Israel. They will be brought into their own land, (verses 11-14). They will return to the Lord. 'I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are

scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.' They are now a scattered nation though there are some of them in the land of Israel. When the Lord comes back He is going to gather them and bring them to their own land on the mountains of Israel. That is where their fold shall be. What a wonderful time that will be! This section is talking about the Lord's coming. He is coming to the land of Israel. He is going to be a shepherd. He is going to gather them. He will bring them to the land of Israel but He is also going to bring them back to Himself (34:30-31; 36:24-28). Many take this as a picture of regeneration but they miss out verses 25 and 28. That is why I said it is important to understand the interpretation of the portion.

2. The Lord declares His purpose for the Messiah (verses 23-31). There are some key verses here of which to take note – verses 23-25: 'And I will set up one shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even My servant David; He shall feed them, and He shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace.'

The picture presented to us is Israel restored to their own land with Messiah as their Shepherd King. The Glory of the Lord in person will return to the land.

3. The Lord declares what kind of restoration this will be of the people (see chapter 36). It is to be one which involves a change of heart. It will involve a work of divine grace in their hearts (see verses 24-28). There will be a holy land and a holy people in that land.

The remaining chapters should be understood as taking place at the time of Christ's return or subsequent to that return. There is a logical sequence of events. The raising up of Israel to be an exceeding great army happens after Christ's return. The destruction of Israel's enemies happens after Christ's return. The activity of the Prince happens after Christ's return. The erection of the Temple happens after Christ's return and the division of the land happens after Christ's return.

How important it is to understand this. I do not know how anyone can expect to understand the Book of Ezekiel unless they see these things are connected with, and are subsequent to, the coming of the Lord. It is no wonder that some people find the Book of Ezekiel to be hard and they lose their way in it. They do not understand what the prophecy is saying because they fail to see that the coming of the Lord is spoken of, and it is only when we see that, we understand what the Book is all about. Then there are some people that do not want to acknowledge that the Book is about the coming of the Lord; that it is not the end of the world but it is the end of the age. The end of the age is not the end of the world. There is a difference. There is coming the end of this age

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in which we are at present. This age will come to pass when Jesus Christ appears a second time, but that is not the end of the world. There are events that will take place after the coming of Jesus Christ and it is important that we are aware of these events. That is the only way we can understand the Book of Ezekiel. We should understand from chapters 34 and 36 that the Lord is going to gather His people and they will be a holy people and there is going to be a holy land and then all these things will fall into place subsequent to that.

III. Problems Highlighted With These Events

There are problems which are raised and some may raise them sincerely while others like to think that they have good reason to reject the teaching of what will happen subsequent to the coming of the Lord.

Two problems are often highlighted, especially by those who reject the literal nature of these events.

First, the present topography of the land of Israel does not allow the division of the land, the water running out of the Temple and city to be as it is described in these chapters. The argument that follows from this is that these chapters must all then be figurative and allegorical and cannot be taken literally.

It is true that at present the lay-out of the land does not allow for the events as described in these closing chapters of Ezekiel and therefore the argument is that we have to understand these passages figuratively and allegorically and not literally, and apply them to the Gospel going out, etc. However, we ought to see what the Bible has to say about the physical earth at the time of the coming of the Lord. If they understood that, there would not be a problem.

We answer that the physical area around Jerusalem is going to undergo a tremendous physical change that will make these things possible.

If you turn to Zechariah 14:4, you can see what will happen when Christ returns. ‘His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.’ So there is going to be this massive change.

(i) The Mount of Olives is going to cleave in half and a great rift valley will be opened up. Half of that mountain is going to move to the north and half to the south. A valley running east to west will open up,

Does that not facilitate the waters running out to the Dead Sea? There is going to be a tremendous change so that you cannot now look at the land of Israel and say that these things cannot happen so the chapters cannot be taken literally.

(ii) To compensate for this there will be a massive uplifting of the whole area north and south of Jerusalem. ‘All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel

unto the king's winepresses' (Zechariah 14:10). The land shall be turned into a plain. It is going to be lifted up and inhabited.

There are other portions of Scripture. See Isaiah 2:2: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.'

These changes will adequately explain the different topography of Ezekiel's vision.

Second, the nature of worship in the Millennial Temple. Particularly, will animal sacrifices be reinstated in a rebuilt temple at Jerusalem? For many, this is the clinching argument as to why they reject any literal fulfillment of these chapters. They are aghast at the thought of it, and so they say it is totally impossible and it has to be understood figuratively.

We answer by adopting the principle of Scripture interpreting Scripture. Are there other references to these times after the coming of Christ? Let us look at Zechariah 14:16, 'It shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.' Does that not involve the keeping of the feast of tabernacles? How do you understand the keeping of this feast? How was the feast of tabernacles kept in Israel? It is clearly after the coming of the Lord because that is mentioned in verse 4.

Does the observation of the feast of tabernacles include sacrifices? What would hinder the Lord instituting a feast, not as a type pointing forwards but as a commemoration pointing backwards? Any reinstatement of a type or a shadow would indeed be a denial of the work of Christ; but what Christ institutes in the millennial age can be different and for a different purpose. Time will tell!

Zechariah 14 is full of teaching. Apart from the cleaving of the Mount of Olives, we have verse 9, 'The LORD shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and His Name one.' Remembering that the Book of Ezekiel emphasizes that the Lord will make Himself known, He will make Himself known as the one Lord and the one God.

When we come down to verse 16, we read of those who are left of the nations that have come against Jerusalem. They are coming up from 'year to year.' The end of the age is not the end of the world. There is going to be time after the coming of the Lord and here in verse 16, it talks about year after year. This is not for a few days, or a few weeks, or even a few months, but it is year after year that this is going to happen. They are going to worship the Lord and they are going to keep the feast of tabernacles. So, the point I am making is that Ezekiel is not unique. Consequently, if you reject Ezekiel and say these chapters cannot be literal, then what are you going to do with Zechariah 14? Are you going to reject that as well? Will you say none of it is literal – and that the Lord is not even going to stand on the Mount of Olives? – if you spiritualise away the feast of tabernacles.

Zechariah and Ezekiel are speaking about the same thing that is going to happen after the coming of the Lord, in a new age when the Lord will introduce a feast, not as a type

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pointing forward but one that will look back. Just as in the New Testament – the Mosaic Law ceased and there was the introduction of the Lord’s Supper, so there will be something entirely different in the millennial age. Can the Lord not do as He pleases?

Other Problems to deal with in these chapters. What was promised to the Jews here? It had to have some relevance to them and it cannot just be a matter of words being spiritualised. There has to be something here promised to the Jews that is actually tangible and worth noticing. People get hung up about the sacrifices but what about the fact there is no ark, that great picture of Jesus Christ. Is that not worthy of consideration? With all the minute detail and the intricate things, why is there no mention of the ark of the covenant?

Why is there no veil mentioned in Ezekiel’s Temple? There is no mention made of any candlestick or lampstand; nor any day of atonement mentioned. Why is there no High Priest mentioned in Ezekiel’s Temple?

They are, of course, all representative of Christ. These things are not needed because Christ will be there in person. That is how this Book, in chapter 48, finishes - Jehovah Shammah, the LORD is there. That is why there is no ark, veil, candlestick, lampstand, day of atonement, high priest; the LORD will be there in that City.

Why are Steps up to the Altar permitted in Ezekiel’s Temple but expressly forbidden in Exodus 20:26? ‘Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.’

The location of this Temple is outside the city. It is the portion or oblation allotted to the sacred purposes (see Ezekiel 48:10).

All these points that we have noted here are worth considering. There is something unique about this temple. It is to be built in the millennial age, after Christ’s return. I trust that, as we consider these things, they will challenge our hearts. The Lord will show Himself; of that there is no doubt, and what a glorious time that will be when He comes in power and great glory. We have only skimmed over the surface because there is so much content in these chapters.

Habakkuk

By John Hunt Lynn

(These notes, compiled by the first chairman of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, were taken from Watching and Waiting, April, 1930).

Habakkuk means **Embraced**. The burden which ‘the prophet DID SEE.’ He surveyed: the sins of his people, the wickedness and final overthrow of her enemies, and her ultimate blessing. The book may be analysed in nine sections. The prophet is identified with his people – see pronouns in section 1.

Section 1 (1:1-4) covers the history indicated in the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matthew 21:33-44). Verse 4 corresponds with Matthew 21:38, 'But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.' 'The law is frustrated (rendered 'ceased' in Psalm 77:2) ... for the wicked one doth compass about (compare Psalm 22:16) THE RIGHTEOUS ONE ... wrong judgment proceedeth' – The Righteous One rejected.

Section 2 (1:5) covers the period of Acts 3:21, 'Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began;' and Isaiah 61:2, 'To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn,' First clause - Ministry of Grace throughout the period. Acts 13:40-41, 'Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work in which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you' shows the world's answer thereto, and her doom.

Section 3 (1:6-11) fills the evil part of Daniel's 70th week. The pronouns throughout this section are in the **singular** number, and indicate the course of the Chaldean king – vile person of Daniel's prediction – who shall 'possess the dwelling places not his. He is terrible and dreadful; his judgment and his dignity are from himself ... He scoffeth at kings ... smileth at every stronghold ... passeth onward and filleth up guilt; imputing this his might to his god,' or, 'whose might is his god.' See Daniel 11:37-39 where 'his god' is fully explained. See also Revelation 13:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4.

Section 4 (1:12) shows the confidence of the **embraced** prophet in his hiding place; and the perception that Divinely given vision effects.

Section 5 (1:13-17) declares the Lord is of purer eyes than to rest His gaze on evil, or 'look objectively' on iniquity; but He sees and notes the action of the plunderers, and is silent during their fearsome work against Israel until the purpose of His will therein is accomplished. This section records the enemy's joy, and his sacrifices to the evil forces of his triumph.

Section 6 (2:1-3) records the prophet's occupancy of the Watch Tower, the answer to his inquiries, and direction that he was to write so plainly on tables that a reader may run with its message – proclaiming first that the prophetic vision (1;1) should cover appointed times, and terminate thus, namely: 'Though HE tarry, wait for HIM, for HE will surely come and will not delay' (or come late). See Hebrew 10:37. Blessed punctuality!

Section 7 (2:4-8) narrates the Chaldean's pride, power and ambition (See Section 3). The parable against him is taken up in 2:6, and the peril from eastern hordes is referred to in verses 7 and 8, with spoiling of his hosts. Compare Daniel 11:36-45, noting especially verse 44.

Section 8 (2:9-20) denounces four woes against the vile person. The first against his covetousness and self-exaltation (verse 9); the second against the evil character of his

work (verses 12-13); the third regarding his debauching of his associates (verse 15); the fourth in relation to idolatry (verses 18-19). This section fitly concludes, 'BUT Jehovah is in His Holy Temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him' (verse 20).

Section 9 (3:1-19) contains Habakkuk's prayer and its answer, relating future Divine operations 'for the Salvation of Thy people;' the effect upon the prophet (verse 16); and the magnificent exultancy in Jehovah of His EMBRACED ONE (verses 17-19).

The Gospel of the Grace of God

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By Dr Cecil Yates Biss

(Continued from page 62).

In the foregoing paragraphs the endeavour has been made to show that all right apprehensions of the Gospel, and the terms in which it should be declared, depend of necessity upon a right conception of human evil and hostility to God; and that, therefore, the need exists for God to approach the sinner and take the initiative in the work of reconciliation. The doctrine of Election is the gracious revelation of the fact that God, in unsought mercy, has done this. The next step must be to consider the nature of the provision that He has made for the salvation of His people through the Atoning Work of His Beloved Son. Without an adequate understanding of, and the ability to explain clearly the nature of this work, it would be impossible for the Gospel to be rightly declared; for if the guilty are to be brought near to God, they must be taught to apprehend what are the provisions that He, in grace, has made for their forgiveness and acceptance. The nature of the Atonement must, therefore, now be considered; and the effort made to ascertain from Scripture the aspect in which the Sacrificial Work of the Lord Jesus was presented by the apostles in their proclamation to men of the Gospel of God.

The explanation of the nature and extent of the Atonement, it need hardly be pointed out, is not in itself the preaching of the Gospel; but, as has already been said with regard to the truth of election, no preaching of the Gospel can be Scriptural, or sufficient, which fails to define, or at least to imply, both these truths; and still less if it be discordant from them. The enquiry, then, may now briefly pursue the consideration of these two points.

The nature of the Atoning Work of the Lord Jesus is probably better described by the word PROPITIATION, than any other single term which is employed in the New Testament. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 4:10). The object of this remark is to

emphasise the fact that the Atonement cannot be rightly viewed apart from its sacrificial character. Much ingenuity has been displayed in framing theories which would divest the word Atonement of all meaning except that of Reconciliation, and nullify its sacrificial character altogether. For example, we are told that the word Atonement only means 'At-one-ment,' and that this compound word (if indeed thus to break it up into its component parts be permissible) simply expresses the bringing of God and man into a state of reconciliation through the Gospel, but has no reference whatever to the divine provision of a righteous basis for this reunion. But they who speak thus seem to forget that what we have to deal with is not an English word of more or less conventional meaning, but Hebrew and Greek words selected by the Inspiring Spirit of God in His giving forth, through His servants, the text of the Scriptures to explain the Divine meaning in regard to this stupendous transaction. The Scripture indeed uses the word RECONCILIATION, and it is fully admitted that in Romans 5:11, the word 'Atonement' should be replaced by the word 'Reconciliation' (which has been relegated to the margin), for, indeed, it is not *Atonement* (i.e. *Propitiation*), but *Reconciliation* which is there intended; but yet, it must be noted, Reconciliation and Propitiation are not synonymous terms. Propitiation signifies the work wrought to appease the Governmental claims of the Holiness of God outraged by sin, and Reconciliation the effect and outcome of that work: Propitiation, therefore, is the **cause**, and Reconciliation the **result** flowing from that cause. Such is the teaching of Romans 5, the train of the argument being as follows: - 'Having been justified by faith' in Jesus our Lord, 'who was delivered on account of our offences and raised again on account of our justification,' we have peace (i.e. are at peace – Governmental peace) with God; and the ground of that peace is that we have 'received the reconciliation' (Romans 5:11) provided for us by His Propitiatory Work, the nature of which is explained in much detail in the rest of the chapter.

The aspect, then, in which the work of the Cross is declared in such Gospel preaching as rightly sets forth 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified,' is that of SACRIFICIAL PROPITIATION rendered to God by His Son on behalf of the people whom He hath redeemed, whereby a righteous ground is provided for their release from all penalties of the broken Law, and their acceptance according to all the rewardableness which the Law declares to pertain to one who has fulfilled its requirements, according to the words 'This do and thou shalt live.' For the work wrought by our Redeemer has the double bearing in its relation to us, that if our demerit has been laid to His charge so that He suffered the penalties assigned to it by the judgment of God, His meritoriousness is reciprocally set to our account, and we are accepted and dealt with in blessing according to the award due to His perfect fulfilment of all the Law's behests. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.' 'He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.'

The attribution of sin's demerit and punishableness to the Redeemer, and the attribution

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of the meritoriousness and rewardableness of His obedience to His people, are truths so essentially related, that to hold one and reject the other is impossible: they are reciprocal – neither presents a complete idea without the other. Christ was ‘made sin’ that we might be ‘made righteousness;’ and these phrases are perfectly parallel in significance. To say that He was ‘made sin’ otherwise than by sin being **imputed** to Him – that is laid to His account so that He suffered its penalty, would be blasphemy, for in that case sin must have become a moral stain, an innate defilement of One of whom it was unvaryingly true that ‘in Him was no sin:’ and in like manner the believer is ‘made righteousness’ by righteousness being **imputed** to him – that is set to his account as though it were his own while as yet he is personally unrighteous, and not by its being introduced into his nature, nor connected with him by any alteration of his personal character in the sight of God. That an alteration of his moral character does afterward take place, in virtue of the work of regeneration wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God and the sanctifying influences of His indwelling made manifest in the man’s thoughts and ways, is indeed true; but this, though a **connected** truth, is a **distinct** truth from that of the believer’s justification. It is, indeed, a **consequence** of his being brought into right legal relations with God, i.e. being justified, but, for this very reason, it cannot be represented as the **cause** of justification. Grievously have these most blessed distinctions been observed in many directions, and by none more by than that modern teaching which adopts as the ensign of its doctrinal system the phrase ‘Justification in the Risen Christ.’ If, however, anything be allowed to interfere with a right and clear apprehension of this double character of the great work of Propitiation – the putting-away of sin and the bringing in of righteousness, the cancelling of penalty and the granting of a title to reward, in view of the Holy Substitute’s Finished Work – the true nature of the Atonement, as the righteous ground for the acceptance of the sinner before God, can never be set forth in the preaching of the Gospel.

(To be continued)

The Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Bible

By Dr G Barboli

(This article has been kindly submitted by our friend, Mr Donald James of Maidenhead. He has mentioned that the author was a former Jesuit priest and this passage is taken from lectures given in Edinburgh in 1910, after he was converted to Christ and delivered from Romanism).

The inspiration of Scripture includes the whole and every part of it. Timid Christians, timid in faith, timid in Christian courage, when confronted by loquacious hyper-critics,

do not dare to maintain the inspiration of the whole and every part of Scripture. They grant that perhaps the historical books are not inspired. They concede that perhaps this or that passage, which is unpalatable to Wellhausen, Baur, or Renan, was not written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Bible itself knows no such limitation. It simply asserts the completeness of its inspiration in these words, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.' Indeed, Christians who make such concessions to infidelity are not merely timid, but, pardon me for saying so, they are very deficient in understanding. For, are not the historical books in some respects the most important in the Bible? Are they not the basis of the doctrine? Does not the doctrine of original sin need for its starting point the record of the Fall? Could we satisfactorily understand justification if we had been kept in the dark as to the story of God's dealings with Abraham? And what of the priesthood of Christ? What could be made of Paul's letter to the Hebrews, if the Book of Leviticus were rejected? Deny the inspiration of the Old Testament, and what will happen to the New? It is the fashion now in certain circles of society to extol by word of mouth the New Testament, while giving the cold shoulder to the Old! I pity those foolish, superficial, science-fearing Christians. Their knowledge of Christianity is almost nil, and their love to Christ approaches the freezing point! They should know that in the Old Testament the New is foretold, and in the New the Old is fulfilled; that they finish and complete one another; that they are intimately connected one with the other. Those who accept the New and reject the Old Testament are, to say the least, injudicious, superficial and very foolish. They remind me of that stupid wood-cutter, who, while sitting on the thick branch of a tree, severed that branch from the trunk, thus giving himself a bad fall, and a broken leg! Those faint-hearted Christians, by rejecting the inspiration of the Old Testament, cut themselves off from 'the consolation of the Scriptures,' and expose themselves to a most certain loss of their faith.

(Perhaps those to whom this article refers could be better described as 'professing Christians' – Ed.)

S.G.A.T. Meetings: Arrangements have been made, God willing, for meetings of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony to be held in 2022, and the theme for the year is '**Where are we in God's Calendar?'** We trust that friends will be interested in this theme, and we would like to see others come to our meetings, which we expect to hold on the fourth Friday of each month except August and December. The Spring Conference is in April and the Autumn Conference in September, when we have afternoon meetings at 4.p.m. in addition to the usual evening meetings. All evening

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meetings are at 7.p.m. Details of the meetings for this Quarter are given on the back page but so that you can insert the dates for the remainder of the meetings in your diary and arrange to be present, we give particulars which are as follows, subject to the will of the Lord:

April 22 (Aft).....What are God's Future Plans for Israel? *Ian Shaw*
 (Even).Will the Temple be Rebuilt in Jerusalem? *Ian Shaw*
 May 27.....Is there to be a Revival of the Roman Empire? *John Douglas*
 June 24.....When will the Antichrist Arise? *Paul Toms*
 July 22Will the Church go through the Great Tribulation? *TBA*
 September 23 (Aft)..When will the Seven Plagues be poured upon the Earth? . . *TBA*
 (Even)...When will the City of Babylon be Rebuilt? . . *Martin Humphrey*
 October 28Will there be a Battle of Armageddon? *David McMillan*
 November 25When will there be Peace in Jerusalem? *Richard Monteith*

If Government restrictions continue due to the virus, so that the meetings cannot be held in London, the services can be heard on line at the same time as announced (i.e. British time, either GMT or BST) by using one of the following links:

<http://sermonaudio.com/sgat>

<http://facebook.com/sgat>

<http://youtube.com/channel/UC8fFgLBzrc8GuSzcmOC5vmA?>

Recorded Messages: During 2021, the different subjects and speakers were –

The Testimony of Abraham (*Ivan Foster*);

The Testimony of Samuel (*Paul Toms*);

The Testimony of Gad (*Philip Knowles*);

The Testimony of Elisha (*Brian McClung*);

The Testimony of Ezekiel (*Brian McClung*);

The Testimony of Hosea (*John Douglas*);

The Testimony of Amos (*Gordon Dane*);

The Testimony of Habakkuk (*Ian Shaw*);

The Testimony of Zephaniah (*Stephen A Toms*);

The Testimony of Haggai (*Martin Humphrey*);

The Testimony of Zechariah (*David McMillan*);

The Testimony of Malachi (*Richard Monteith*).

The messages can be downloaded from the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony website. They can also be heard on www.sermonaudio.com on our page which is, *The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony*.