

‘The Word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar: and the hand of the LORD was there upon him.’

Ezekiel 1:3.

You are warmly invited to meetings arranged by the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, to be held, God willing, at  
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**Theme for 2017 – The Glory of God – Studies in the Book of Ezekiel**  
**January 27th, 7pm**

Subject: The Vision of the Glory of God (chapter 1)

Speaker: David Park

**February 24th, 7pm**

Subject: The Vision of the Prophet’s Commission (chapters 2-3)

Speaker: Gordon Dane

**March 24th, 7pm**

Subject: The Visions of the Glory Departing (chapter 9-10)

Speaker: Brian Green

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# Watching and Waiting

LIGHT FOR PERILOUS TIMES

SCRIPTURAL

Reformed, Protestant, Puritan, Prophetical, Expository, Doctrinal

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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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## Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony Manifesto

*(With the commencement of a new volume, we take the opportunity to include the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony manifesto which was drawn up at the commencement of the Testimony almost a century ago. It has not been altered in any way during subsequent years. Needless to say, all the original convenors have been taken from us, but we are thankful to the Lord for the heritage He enabled them to leave).*

The convenors of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony Meetings desire to make a clear statement of their position in relation to PROPHETIC TRUTH, in the spirit of love and humility, recognising that we only 'know in part.'

We adhere to the principle of receiving the Word of God, in its literal sense, except where obviously figurative, and in so receiving *Prophetic Truth*, emphasise the fact that this enhances, and does not diminish, experimental enjoyment of the Doctrine of Grace, also so learned.

We, therefore, affectionately lay before you the points on which our testimony is, and will be, united, and invite our readers prayerfully to consider these things, in subjection to the Word of God, and in dependence upon God the Holy Spirit.

1. We receive the doctrine of the FREE AND SOVEREIGN GRACE OF GOD, viz:
  - (a) The Co Eternity and Co Equality of the Three Persons in the One Godhead.
  - (b) The Full Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures.
  - (c) The Incarnation, Sinlessness, Atonement, Resurrection and Ascension of God the Son.
  - (d) The Substitutional Obedience and Death of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - (e) The Election, Redemption, Regeneration, Justification, Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to, Sanctification, and Final Preservation of all the Saints.
  - (f) The Total Depravity of all Mankind, and Entire Perversity from God of the Natural Will.
  - (g) The Eternal Life of the Righteous, and Eternal Punishment of the Wicked.
  
2. The NEAR APPROACH of the RETURN of the LORD is our confident HOPE.
  
3. His RETURN we expect as PRE MILLENNIAL, and following:
  - (a) The Apostasy of Israel and Christendom.
  - (b) The Ten Kingdom Confederacy.
  - (c) The Revival of Babylon and Babylonianism.
  - (d) The Reign of Antichrist.
  - (e) The Great Tribulation.

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4. The PURPOSES of the Lord's Coming we believe to include:
- (a) The Resurrection of all departed Saints, and the Glorification with them of the living Saints.
  - (b) The Destruction of the Antichrist - the Man of Sin - the Lawless One.
  - (c) The Conversion and Restoration of Israel.
  - (d) The Gathering Out of His Kingdom of 'All things that offend.'
  - (e) The Reign over the Earth, and Manifestation of the Kingdom in Righteousness Satan being bound and the Earth's groan hushed.
  - (f) The Judgment of the Great White Throne, at the End of the Millennial Kingdom.
  - (g) The Creation of the New Heavens and New Earth after the Millennium.
5. The SIGNS which we Discern of His Near Approach are:
- (a) The rapidly increasing Apostasy of Christendom, with Lawlessness.
  - (b) Worldwide Testimony of the Gospel, in order to complete the taking out from the Gentiles a People for His Name (Acts 15:14).
  - (c) The Promotion of Federations, Unions, Leagues, and Alliances, both Ecclesiastical, Social, Commercial, Industrial, National, and International APART FROM God, His Christ and His Truth.
  - (d) The Reorganisation of the Roman Empire, leading to the Ten Kingdoms.
  - (e) The Reopening of the East, especially of Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, with the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine as their 'National Home,' in their continued unbelief.
  - (f) The Fall of Absolute Monarchies, and Spread of Constitutional Government. The Rise of Democracy, with Social and Industrial Unrest.
6. SPIRITUAL APPREHENSION of these things, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we deem to be ESSENTIAL to a COMPLETE TESTIMONY OF TRUTH, which will lead to practical separation from worldly principles, policies, and pleasures, and to more loyal devotion to the Lord's service.

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## Absalom - A Type of The Antichrist

By Stephen A Toms

*(This is a summary of a message given at a Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony meeting held in London on Friday, 23rd April, 2016. The message was recorded and CDs and cassette tapes are available; or it may be downloaded from our website).*

Our subject is Absalom as a type of the antichrist and he is a very interesting character. There are quite a few chapters about him in the Bible. He was David's third son. 2

Samuel 3:2-3 tells us that David's firstborn was Amnon, his second was Chiliab, and his third was Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur. That is interesting as the story of Absalom commences with Amnon, although there is a sense in which the whole episode started with David's sin against Bathsheba. It was then that God stated that He would 'raise up evil ... out of thine own house' and this most certainly happened.

We read the account in 2 Samuel 13 of Amnon being attracted to Tamar, who was the sister of Absalom, and who is said to be fair (verse 1). Amnon committed wickedness with Tamar and this led to Absalom hating his eldest brother. The hatred caused Absalom to devise a scheme whereby Amnon would be murdered; and the cruel act was carried out. So David's first son was murdered at the command of Absalom.

The second son of David was Chiliab, but we do not read anything else about him in Scripture. Some commentators have suggested that he died in early life, and if this was so, Absalom would have been the next in line for the throne. He would have been the eldest living son.

We saw that Absalom was the son of Maachah and she was the daughter of Talmi the king of Geshur. Mr B W Newton points out in his excellent book, 'David, the King of Israel' that the only time we read of David going to Geshur is in 1 Samuel 27:8. That was a time when David seemed unable to trust in the Lord, he was so weary of Saul's animosity. In verse 1, it tells us that David said 'I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.' It was, of course, very difficult for David but he had been anointed by God (through Samuel) to be the king of Israel so that had to come to pass. It was not possible for Saul to kill him but he could not see that.

God does try the faith of His people and David experienced that. It may not be easy for us to believe that God will keep His Word but He always does – and precisely.

David's fear led him to go to Achish. It was at this time, that he invaded the Geshurites and it seems very probable that he then met Maachah. It would seem that Maachah was very beautiful but that would not have been sufficient reason for marriage and God's law prohibited David from entering into such a union. Yet he took her and this resulted in their having both Absalom and Tamar.

When we come to chapter 13, Absalom had grown to be a man. Following the murder of Amnon, he fled and verse 37 tells us that it was to Talmi, king of Geshur, his mother's old home, and he stayed there for three years.

Absalom had committed a terrible crime but David seems to have been soft with his children, as, perhaps, fathers tend to be. Amnon was dead so that David appeared to be thinking of Absalom, and he mourned his son's being away. Joab realised the situation and he schemed a way for David to receive his son back to Jerusalem. However, the return did not bring about the meeting of father and son. 'Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face' (14:28).

As a result, Absalom sent for Joab, but he ignored the call. This happened twice and then he told his servants to set Joab's field on fire. It brought about a response but it was a dangerous thing to do as fire soon spreads and gets out of hand so that who could

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tell where the action would lead? Absalom obviously thought that he was the one to be king and he could not wait till his father died naturally, so he was continually scheming for himself.

It seems that in his scheming he desired the nation to look upon him as a suitable person to be king so that would be the reason for his wanting to meet his father and get his acceptance.

Chapter 15 describes how he sought to win the hearts of the people. He rose early. He went to the gate. He supported the people who came to him without listening to both sides, which indicated that he would not make a fair judge. He kissed the people on their hand. He blamed the king for not dealing with cases, and he said 'Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice.'

When Absalom had met his father the king had kissed him and thus showed his love for his wayward son; but there was no kiss for David. The son did not appear to have a reciprocal love. If David had become lax, Absalom ought to have tried to remedy the situation rather than accuse him of doing nothing.

Subsequently, Absalom approached the king and told him that he had made a vow whilst in Geshur that he would serve Jehovah. That probably was a lie but that is what he said in order to be seen as having the blessing of David. David said to him 'Go in peace' (15:9).

Then, in his scheming, he sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, endeavouring to win favour, so that when he claimed the crown, he would have support. It says in verse 11 that he took two hundred men from Jerusalem and they 'went in their simplicity' – they did not know what he was doing. They seemed to assume that he was loyal to his father! So, in verse 12 we read that 'the people increased continually with Absalom.'

He then proclaimed himself king, which caused David to flee from the city. David was a capable fighter but he must have had some reason for not engaging in combat, whether he did not desire to fight against his son or whether he did not wish a battle in the City of Jerusalem.

It was a concern to David that Ahithophel sided with Absalom. He was a very wise and clever man. It is said that when he spoke it was as if he 'enquired at the oracle of God' (16:23). So, David was driven to prayer crying, 'O Jehovah, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness' (15:31). God answered his prayer.

The advice Ahithophel finally gave was that he should take men and smite David, and then Absalom could become king. However, this could never happen because God had said that Solomon was to be king. God had purposed that the throne should not go to the eldest – to Amnon, or to Chiliab, or to Absalom, and incidentally, it was not to go to Adonijah (the fourth son), who later proclaimed himself king. God had said in 1 Chronicles 22:9 that Solomon was to be the successor – and that was said before Solomon was born!

Hushai, who was a true friend of David, was willing to do all he could to help the king.

Hushai was also a very wise man and he gave counsel but, in any case, 'Jehovah had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel' (17:14)

Absalom took the counsel of Hushai and went himself to the battle which ended in his being slain.

In thinking of Absalom as a type of the antichrist there are just five thoughts that I would like to mention.

### **He was a Man of Deception**

His deceitfulness is clearly seen in his deceiving those two hundred men (15:11). He was a flatterer which is shown in the way he told every one who came to him that their matters were good and right (15:3).

It is certain that the antichrist will be like that. In Daniel 11:21 we read, 'He shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.' In the psalms it says, 'The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawnswords' (55:21). When Absalom spoke to the people, he inferred that they would have what they wanted – a kind of socialism. Daniel tells us 'He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province ... he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches' (11:24).

### **He was a Man of Hate and Ruthlessness**

'Absalom hated Amnon' (13:22). That was his brother yet that hatred was in his heart. The outcome of this is revealed in verses 28-29. A noticeable thing about this man is that whatever he did there was no sign of repentance. All that time between this ruthless murder and his coming before David he showed no sorrow for his cruelty. His ruthlessness extended to his treatment of Joab when he set fire to his field. Also, his action against his own father was cruel in spite of all David's continued kindness.

The antichrist will certainly be like that. In Daniel 7 the kingdoms of this world are represented as wild beasts, the kind of creatures that would tear anybody to pieces. Then in Daniel 8:23-24 we read, 'In the latter time of their kingdom (*the end of the age*), when the transgressors are come to the full (*the world is getting worse, not better*), a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy (*he will be ruthless*) wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.'

### **He was Admired and Received by the People**

People liked Absalom. He was admired by them. He did everything he could to bring that about. He was good-looking and very attractive (14:25-26). Those verses say that 'there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty.' Tamar is described as 'a fair sister' (13:1). Similarly, Absalom's daughter, also named Tamar, was 'a woman of fair countenance; (14:27). That is why I suggested the mother, Maachah, was probably beautiful.

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The description of Absalom's dealings with people (15:1-12) makes it easy to see why people were attracted to him. We read 'Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel' (verse 6).

This is all a picture of the antichrist. We have already seen that Daniel 8:24 says, 'His power shall be mighty ... and he ... shall prosper.' In Revelation 13, the antichrist is described as 'the beast.' Some criticise us for our taking the Bible literally and mock us, accusing us of thinking this refers to an actual beast. But, of course, we take the Bible literally as it tells us he is a man. His character is that of a beast. It says, 'The world wondered after the beast' (verse 3); 'They worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast?' (verse 4); 'All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life' (verse 8). Incidentally the Roman pontiff has never been worshipped like that!

### He was Anti-David and Exalted Himself

The way in which Absalom spoke to the people when he met them in the gate indicates quite clearly that he sought to destroy David's reputation (15:3). His action subsequently deprived David of being in Jerusalem, the very place that God had chosen for worship; and he was happy to do this!

Again, this is like the antichrist. Daniel tells us 'He shall magnify himself in his heart ... he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes' (8:25). So, in opposing David and seeking his own elevation, Absalom was truly a type of the antichrist. In Isaiah 14:14 we have antichrist's words, 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.' Daniel tells us, 'The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done' (11:36). It is refreshing to see that all that to which antichrist will aspire is according to the determinate will of God. Then there is that well-known verse (2 Thessalonians 2:4) which speaks of the son of perdition, 'Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.' Incidentally, we never read in the Bible that the temple of God is in Rome.

### He was Finally Destroyed

In spite of David's instruction not to harm his son, Joab 'took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him' (18:14-15). All the flattery and all the support Absalom had gained all came to nothing. Absalom was slain. He never became king.

Likewise, antichrist will ultimately fail. 'He shall be broken without hand' (Daniel 8:25). 'He shall come to his end, and none shall help him' (Daniel 11:45). 'Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming' (2 Thessalonians 2:8). 'The beast

was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone' (Revelation 19:20). Verse 15 had spoken of the Lord treading the winepress thus indicating His acts of judgment. The treader of the winepress crushes the grapes - not Himself, as some suggest. When we read about this in Isaiah as well as here it refers to the solemn act of Jehovah's dealing with the wicked.

In closing, I would like to read a paragraph from Mr Newton's book, 'Babylon and Egypt.' 'The period of the weakness of truth, is, as might be expected, the hour of Satan's triumph. It was when David was feeble and the vigour of his government relaxed, that Absalom pretended to be the father of peace, and stole away the hearts of Israel, by promising greater and better things than David's throne had given. Nor is it otherwise now. Christianity has waxed feeble; iniquity has abounded; love waxed cold. The opportunity is afforded for other systems adverse to Christ and to His truth, to steal away the hearts of men, and to promise blessings which Christianity (they say) has failed to give. But Absalom prospered only for a season. The covenant with the throne of David was ordered in all things and sure. It was able to endure the storm. So shall it be finally with Christ's people and with His truth. It is as enduring as Himself, Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His Name endureth throughout all generations. How honourable then and how blessed the place of association with Christ's truth whilst yet suffering in the earth! How surely will they who keep the word of Christ's patience, rejoice when that hour of temptation which is coming 'upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the earth' shall have passed, and the sovereignty of the world become at last the sovereignty of their God, and of His Christ.'

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## An Eternal Abode

By F S Parnham

*(Mr Parnham wrote, for distribution amongst believers, regular Bible messages which were published under the title 'Occasional Papers.' This was No. 13).*

Life 'under the sun' is, at best, but a transitory thing. There is little in it that is really sure or permanent unless it be the repetition of those phenomena which mark its course and make it akin to the process whereby 'all the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again' (Ecclesiastes 1:7). Even the human frame, that fragile habitation which the apostle Paul likens to a tent or tabernacle, though fearfully and wonderfully made, cannot long resist the

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general wear and tear of earthly existence and subsequent dissolution.

Youth buds and blossoms to manhood with expanding vitality. Nevertheless, the time soon comes when the decaying tissues of the body are renewed with diminishing vigour and effectiveness as the shadows lengthen towards the evening of man's little day. 'All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again' (Ecclesiastes 3:20). It is a constant coming and going; we arrive only to depart.

How mercifully and gloriously this gloomy prospect is changed when divine grace freely operates by faith! To every repentant sinner 'the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord' (Romans 6:23), such being the unmerited bestowal of that which is age-enduring and unchangeable, because it is of God and partakes of His nature (2 Peter 1:4). It involves a spiritual revolution within the sphere of God's new creation where old things have passed away never to return and all things have become new with the fullness of eternal blessing (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Spiritually considered we are no longer 'under the sun.' We are transported to 'the heavenlies' (Ephesians 2:6), and even if we have known Christ hitherto 'after the flesh' yet now henceforth know we Him no more according to the fashion of men (2 Corinthians 5:16). From this crucial hour onwards our 'life is hid with Christ in God' (Colossians 3:3).

After the darkness there comes the light, when the shadows flee away; after the storms of life there is a great calm, while for the utterly worn and weary God has prepared an abiding rest. Isaiah's message to Israel (32:18) is not without its distinctive and prophetic import for us today as we contemplate our future with the quiet assurance of faith. It forms a delightful parallel to what the Lord Jesus revealed to His sorrowful followers, prior to His crucifixion, in order to comfort them in their distress and to reconcile them to the thought of His impending departure: 'In My Father's house are many mansions (*abodes*); if it were no so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you' (John 14:2).

It is a good thing to listen to this sacred voice from the past and to let its accents of tenderness fall afresh upon our dull and sometimes heedless ears. Mark well the personal solicitude of the Lord's promise: I am going to prepare a place for you. All that is needful for the reception of His redeemed ones is to be made ready under His watchful eye. Nothing is to be spared to ensure the comfort, the safety and the well-being of those for whom He died, so that in the place of His loving preparations, purchased for them by the sacrifice of Himself, they shall sit down under His shadow with great delight (Song of Solomon 2:3). And what of the habitation itself? In the King's palace there is accommodation for a great multitude; therefore, saith the Lord, 'In My Father's house are many **abodes**' (so the Greek, from a verb indicating permanency), contrasted with the frail and flimsy tents of former days. So the Royal apartments are opened wide to afford the Lord's people such hospitality and shelter as befits the love of God and the dignity of their acquired sonship.

Though conscious of their utter unworthiness to occupy even the lowliest position in heaven, yet, as beggars lifted up in mercy from the dunghill, God will set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of His glory (1 Samuel 2:8). Thus basking in the sunshine of His benign presence ‘they shall see His face; and His Name shall be in their foreheads’ (Revelation 22:4), for faith will merge into sight and hope into reality, when the words of our Lord’s beatitude find their true and abiding fulfilment in heaven: ‘Blessed are the pure in heart: for they **shall see God**’ (Matthew 5:8).

Hear, then, the voice of the prophet, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden or discouraged by the hardness of the way; ‘The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting places’ (Isaiah 32:17-18). The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it and **He cannot lie**.

## The Only Effectual Cure

By Douglas D Jones

*(In our last issue – Volume 28, No. 20 – we reported the recent home-call of Mr Jones. Old copies of our magazine contain some of the messages preached by him over the years at our Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony meetings, but the following is the substance of a sermon preached at Trinity Baptist Church, Gloucester about 40 years ago).*

We read about him in the Bible in 2 Kings 5. His name was Naaman, army commander of the Syrian king, thought much of by his master, and a national hero on account of his victories. Some people might have been quite envious of such a man, that is, if they had not known of something which cast an ugly shadow over everything else in his life. The trouble was that he was a leper. Leprosy is a loathsome disease, far more widespread in Bible times than it is today, although still found abundantly in some countries. Modern medical science has done much to alleviate the dreadful suffering it brings and sometimes cures are effected. In those days, however, there was no known human cure.

Under the law of God given to Moses for the nation Israel, a leper had to be isolated from other company, not, it seems, necessarily from risk of infection, but because of the loathsomeness of the disease. In some of the Gentile nations, however, this was not the practice. It appears, then, that Naaman continued his duties, but he must have known that he was a doomed man. Ultimately the leprosy would take such a hold on him that

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he would be too repulsive to look at and he would eventually die from its effects.

What do honours, wealth and position mean to a man when he knows that his days are numbered?

We live at a time when Man is making a great name for himself. This is the age of human achievement, yet it is clear that there is something seriously wrong with humanity. On all sides we see turmoil, confusion, strife, warring, suffering and unhappiness. What is wrong? It is that Man has been afflicted by something inherent within him which can be likened to the deadly disease of which we have been speaking. It is sin. Man is a sinner in the sight of his Creator. He has a natural and continual tendency to rebel against the God of the universe, rejecting the fact that the earth is the Lord's – not his – and that the world and all that it contains belongs to God. It is because men are not right with Him that they are not right with one another. What is more, as such, Mankind is under the judgment of God. Just as a Jewish leper was cut off from the fellowship of others, because of the vileness of his disease, so the sinner, by nature, is unfitted for fellowship with the holy and pure God Who created him. Sin is abhorrent to God, and it brings separation from Him.

There is a kind of leprosy known as the anaesthetic type, because patches of the affected skin lose all sensation. A person may at first be quite unaware as to what is wrong, since there is an insensibility to injury. For example, a burn on the affected area does not hurt. One of the characteristics of sin is that there are multitudes of people utterly oblivious of the seriousness of their condition in the sight of God and that they are facing an eternity separated from Him, being quite unfitted for His presence. How appropriate then, is leprosy as a picture of sin, that with which every one of us is born, yet the implications of which we may be quite ignorant. Naaman's leprosy, however, was such that he was well aware of it. The fact must have cast a terrible cloud over his whole life. So he might have gone on to the end of his days had not something happened which we see clearly as the over-ruling of a merciful God Whose love is not confined to one nation.

The Syrians had gone out in bands on one of their raiding expeditions into the territory of Israel and had taken captive a little girl. A most terrifying experience it must have been for her, too, wrested from her family who would have been left in deep sorrow. It came about that she was given the task of waiting on Naaman's wife. She might easily have evidenced bitterness and resentment at her lot and acted in a very sullen manner, but it seems that even in one so young there burned a vital faith in the One True God Whom she had come to know in her native land. She learned of her master's condition, of the terrible disease which had taken hold of him and for which he knew no cure. And

the love of God in that little girl's heart brought the reaction which caused her to say to her mistress, 'I wish my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria, for he would cure him of his leprosy.' She was referring to Elisha.

Did he make a practice in his own nation of healing lepers? No, as Jesus said many years later, the prophet had never done such a thing in Israel. But that little maid, knowing that Elisha was God's prophet and a miracle worker, believed wholeheartedly that he could be used of God to heal her heathen master of this dread disease. She not only believed it, but she was ready to say so, too, whatever the reaction of her mistress might be to her claim. What she said obviously made an impression, for Naaman's wife told him about it, and he in turn went to the king to inform him, whereupon the king of Syria sent off Naaman to the king of Israel with gifts of silver and gold and costly clothes. The accompanying communication read, 'With this letter I have sent Naaman my servant to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy.'

The Syrian king was thinking in terms of a heathen monarch's authority. He expected the king of Israel to order Elisha the prophet to cure Naaman. When he read the letter, this did not occur to the king of Israel. He saw the whole thing as a trick to spark off fresh warfare between the two nations. He was very perturbed. 'Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends to me to cure a man of his leprosy?' he said. 'Just consider and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me.' There were many things he might have done as a king, but he was powerless in this field.

He did at least recognise the fact, which is more than can be said for many rulers and leaders in modern times in relation to the pitiful state of mankind. How long they have asserted their own ability to bring about a golden age of peace and prosperity among the peoples of the world. They have their summit conferences and their great schemes. We have seen the coming into being and decease of the League of Nations and the equal failure of the United Nations Organisation to bring about the conditions it set out to achieve at its formation in 1945. Its headquarters occupies an 18 acre site on Manhattan Island, New York, and millions of dollars are spent yearly with what result? While it is true that considerable material help has been given to those in undeveloped countries, it has to be asked, 'Have we seen the peace and security among the nations which it pledged itself to achieve? Is the world really a better place in which to live? Are people any happier and more contented?' The answer to such questions can only be, 'No!' The solution to the problem does not lie in the wielding of royal sceptres or in statesmen, politicians, scientists and philosophers. Nor is it to be found in lifeless religious system.

Naaman was sent to the wrong person and many sin sick souls are being sent to the wrong people today. However, in his case, he was eventually directed to the prophet of God of whom the little maid had spoken. It must have been quite an impressive sight as the Syrian commander arrived at the door of Elisha's house with his horses and

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chariot. But what do you think? The prophet did not even come out to greet him, let alone show him the anticipated respect for such an important person. Elisha just sent a messenger telling him, 'Go and wash in Jordan seven times and your flesh will be restored, and you shall be clean.'

It was such a simple course which Elisha instructed Naaman to take, but it did not suit him one little bit. He had his own preconceived ideas as to the nature of this cure and the one prescribed was most humiliating. In fact, he was furious, and went away complaining bitterly that he thought Elisha would have waved his hand over the place and cured him. How his pride had been hurt. Did not this Israelite prophet realise who he was? He had not even bothered to come to the door of his house! Instead of an expected display of supernatural power, he had been told to go and wash in the River Jordan seven times. Jordan! That muddy river! Why, there were the Abana and Pharpar rivers which transformed the wilderness around Damascus in his own country. Were they not better than all the waters of Israel? Oh, he was angry. How dare this man tell him, the great Naaman, to do such a thing.

How typical was his reaction to many who are told of God's remedy for their sin. When they hear that they have to come to Him just as they are, as guilty, lost sinners, with nothing to plead of personal merit or achievement, but that they have to repent of their sins and cast themselves on the mercy of God, trusting in the atoning work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ wrought upon the cross of Calvary, then pride is wounded deeply. The natural man despises such a course, because it humbles him to the dust and he does not like being humbled.

Among Naaman's servants were those who saw the folly of his reaction and were prepared to reason with him. 'My father' they said, 'if the prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather when he says to you, wash and be clean?' They knew that, brave soldier that he was, Naaman would not have flinched from some great task to effect his cure, but Elisha had not told him to do this. In fact he had been told to do something very simple, but here he was rejecting it because his pride had been hurt. As they appealed to him, so the great warrior realised what a foolish, arrogant man he had been. He proceeded to the River Jordan and dipped himself seven times according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like that of a little child and he was clean. Then he returned to Elisha with all his attendants and came and stood before him, saying, 'Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.'

Do I speak to someone who has been unwilling to acknowledge their condition as a guilty sinner in the sight of God? Has there been a refusal to come in true humility to Him in repentance and faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? I tell you, if you come to God on His terms, you will know the cleansing power of His precious Blood, and the

peace of God which passes all understanding will be your portion as you become reconciled to Him. Like Naaman, you will be able to say, 'Now I know' with a conviction born of experience.

Oh, the joy of being able to say, 'I know in Whom I have trusted.' A due appreciation of what happened at Calvary can only result in the same happening to us. As Isaac Watts puts it in his well-known hymn, 'When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.'

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**Israel Tour, 2017:** A tour of Israel (the Land of the Bible) is being arranged by Blue Star Bible Tours to take place 14th – 26th July, 2017. God willing, it will be led by Mr John Douglas who, as our readers will know, is always a very welcome preacher at our SGAT meetings. The comments throughout the tour will be in accordance with our Testimony, and the secretary, having already been on a previous tour with Mr Douglas, can thoroughly recommend going with him. It is always very profitable to see the places mentioned in the Bible, but it would be easy to go with a leader less taught in prophetic truth. Enquiries can be sent to Rev W McDowell (E-mail: wesleymcdowell@btinternet.com). (Tel: 028 7055 8308. Mobile: 078 8880 4804).

**Works by Mr B W Newton (1807-1899):** This is just a reminder that we have recently had reprinted ten volumes of Mr Newton's works, books which have been out of print for many years - all in hardback. Although written so long ago – in the nineteenth century – they are very relevant at the present time. The titles, which every Bible student should have, are as follows:

- (1) Aids to Prophetic Enquiry.
- (2) Babylon and Egypt: Their Future History and Doom.
- (3) Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire.
- (4) Thoughts on the Apocalypse.
- (5) David, King of Israel.
- (6) Lectures on the Romans.
- (7) The Millennium and Israel's Future.
- (8) Narratives from the Old Testament.
- (9) Romans 7 Considered.
- (10) Thoughts on Scriptural Subjects

This is a valuable set and we are suggesting a price of £75 for all ten volumes. This is below cost. Why not buy a set for your minister?

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**S.G.A.T. Meetings:** God willing, the theme of the monthly meetings of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony during 2017 will be ‘Studies in Ezekiel – The Glory of God.’ We trust that friends will be interested in the subjects chosen, and we would like to see others come to our meetings, which are due to be held 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 meetings are at 7.p.m. Details of the meetings arranged for the present quarter are given on the back page, and so that you can insert the dates in your diary and arrange to be present, we would mention that other meetings for the year are due to be as follows:

- April 28 (Aft)....The Vision of the Sins of the Rulers of Jerusalem . . . John Douglas  
(Even)...The Visions of the Parables  
about Jerusalem’s Condition . . . *John Douglas*
- May 26 .....The Visions of the Siege and Judgment of Jerusalem . . . . . *Paul Toms*
- June 23 .....The Visions of the Judgment of the Nations around Israel . *Ivan Foster*
- July 28.....The Visions of the Fall of Egypt . . . . . *Ian Shaw*
- September 22 (Aft).....The Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones . . . . . *Stephen A Toms*  
(Even).....The Vision of Gog and Magog . . . . . *Martin Humphrey*
- October 27.....The Vision of the Millennial Temple . . . . . *Richard Monteith*
- November 24..The Vision of the New Land of Israel . . . . . *David McMillan*

**Recorded Messages:** During 2016, the theme at our meetings has been ‘Foreshadowings of the Antichristl.’ The different subjects and speakers were – Nebuchadnezzar (*Martin Humphrey*); Jeroboam (*Paul Toms*); Sennacherib (*Brian McClung*); Ishmael (*Stephen A Toms*); Absalom (*Stephen A Toms*); Haman (*Ian Shaw*); Pharaoh (*Ivan Foster*); Herod (*Stephen A Toms*); Alexander the Great (*John Douglas*); Antiochus Epiphanes (*John Douglas*); Nimrod (*David McMillan*); Goliath (*Richard Monteith*); The messages can be downloaded from the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony website. For friends wishing to purchase recordings the prices of the cassettes are £1.20 each and CDs £1.50 each. Prices include postage. The messages can also be heard on [www.sermanaudio.com](http://www.sermanaudio.com) on our page which is, *The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony*.

**‘Watching and Waiting,’ Volume 28:** The current issue of Watching and Waiting commences a new volume of our magazine, which means that volume 28 has now been completed. The magazines from 2012 to 2016 have been bound and the volume is available, indexed, from ourselves at £9.