

-GOD HATH SPOKEN-

GOD HATH SPOKEN AT SUNDRY TIMES AND IN DIVERS MANNERS. When we think it over, we must conclude that all that God has spoken is good news, glad tidings, a gospel to those that seek Him or are His. On the other hand, that which is good news to those that seek Him or are His, may be very bad news to those who reject Him or rebel against Him. The gospel condemns.

Millenniums before Moses began to compile the Scriptures, God had written the gospel in the heavens. The stars in their constellations tell forth the great story of redemption.

Jehovah Himself spoke to man from the time man was put in the garden till the prophets. Moses was the first of the prophets.

From the time of Moses God spoke to man by the prophets for many centuries. John the Baptist was the last of the prophets.

Then God spoke to man by His Beloved Son. The Son spoke nothing of Himself, but only what the Father gave Him to speak. This was a glorious opportunity for man to learn the truth of God. The Spirit said, **HEAR YE HIM.** But only a few would listen.

All during the time of Acts, God spoke to man by those who had heard the Son. They were apostles or sent-ones. They were to testify of what they had seen and heard. They were His witnesses.

After Acts, and the rejection and setting aside of Israel from her position and mission, God did His speaking by the **SPIRIT OF TRUTH** thru the apostle Paul.

God has spoken expressly concerning the end times by His servant John in the Revelation. When the time of tribulation comes, this message will be greatly prized by Israel. All of it is for that time.

God has promised that in an age to come, He will speak to man from heaven. Man will again hear His voice.

Here are 8 ways of God speaking to man, each being connected in some way with a glad tidings.

-THE LANGUAGE OF THE STARS-

Appendix 12 in the Companion Bible gives us a good outline of this very fascinating subject. A fuller discussion may be found in **THE GOSPEL IN THE STARS** by Seiss, or **THE WITNESS OF THE STARS** by Bullinger.

In the account of the creation, the stars were set for signs. These signs foretell a **COMING ONE**, a great and mighty Redeemer.

The 12 signs of the Zodiac or the 12 main constellations, which are called stars in the account of Joseph's dream, may be divided into 3 parts or books. The first set speaks of the first coming of the Lord, the second of His work, and the Third of His second coming and glory. The 12 begin with Virgo, (the Virgin) and end with Leo, (the triumphant lion of the tribe of Judah).

Psalm 19 speaks very plainly of these things. It says that the heavens tell the story, and we find that is so. We can outline the Psalm thus;

- A. The Heavens. 1-4.
- B. IN THEM, THE SUN. -4-6.
- A. The Scriptures. 7-10.
- B. IN THEM, THY SERVANT. 11-14.

That the beginning was **VIRGO** and the end **LEO** is substantiated by the ancient Sphynx. It has the head of the Virgin and the body of the Lion. Also the hated Centaur with two natures speaks of Christ with His two natures and the hate He endured.

Hercules with his bruised heel and the serpent with his head near the heel speak of the first prophecy concerning the Redeemer.

To Adam and all his descendants these are signs telling of the One Who was to come and to overcome all His foes. This gospel in the stars would be read by man 2500 years before Moses wrote the beginning of the Scriptures. God has never left man without a gospel and a hope.

But man, who did not like to retain God in his knowledge, has lost much of the truth. He has twisted the stories into myths and fables, and worshipped the signs.

After the fall of man in the garden came the first good news for a sin-bitten sinner. God, speaking to serpent-like Satan concerning the Seed of woman, said, IT SHALL BRUISE THY HEAD. This was said in the presence of man so that he might hear and rejoice.

Because of his disobedience, man could no longer walk in the garden in fellowship with his Creator. He could no longer live where he might eat of the tree of life and live forever in a fallen condition. If man was to become a new creature, perfect in the sight of God, and worthy of a place in the perfect new creation, the old creature must die and be put off. Mere reformation could never make a man holy.

Altho God could not walk with fallen man as before, yet He arranged a meeting place. That place was the presence of the Cherubim at the entrance of the garden. It was there that man could bring his sacrifices and get God's approval. The approval of the sacrifice was an indication that God was satisfied. God voiced His approval of a sacrifice by consuming it with fire from heaven. In like manner God has voiced His approval of the ONE GREAT SACRIFICE by raising Him from the dead.

Abel brot a sacrifice to the meeting place and was approved. Cain brot a sacrifice to the same meeting place and heaven was silent. Anger and murder followed. But even worse was the fact that CAIN WENT OUT FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. The anger and the murder could have been freely forgiven at once, but the rejection of God and His good news never could be forgiven, either in this age or the age to come.

As man multiplied on the face of the earth, many began to follow in the way of Cain. This rebellion opened the way for the work of demons (sons of God) and soon they had so corrupted the human race that Noah and his family was all that was left that was perfect in his generations, or with an uncontaminated pedigree. As always, the masses had rejected the gospel.

-THE GOSPEL TO ABRAHAM-
THE SCRIPTURE, FORESEEING THAT GOD WOULD JUSTIFY THE HEATHEN THRU FAITH, PREACHED BEFORE THE GOSPEL UNTO ABRAHAM, SAYING, IN THEE SHALL ALL NATIONS BE BLEST. Gal. 3:8.

After the flood, Noah erected an altar and resumed the true worship of Jehovah. But it was not long till rebellion set in again. This time it was headed by Nimrod, the son of Cush, the son of Ham. Nimrod founded the city of Babylon and was the builder of the great tower of Babel. He was the founder of a great false religious system which lives yet today. The doctrines and rites of Babylon predominate in all religions thruout the world today, including the bulk of Christendom. No less a rebel was Canaan, the father of the Canaanites, who in their rebellion and wickedness had intercourse with demons and another race of supermen and giants resulted, as was before the flood.

Since men did not like to retain God in their knowledge and were not thankful, God gave up the nations about 2,000 B C. The account of this giving up is to be found in Rom. 1. God no longer gave any revelations to these nations nor did He strive with them by His Spirit.

At about this time, God went down to the city of Ur of the Chaldees and called a 50 year old man, a man who was to head a new nation which was to be a priestly nation, one that would make known to the rest of the nations the God whom they had forgotten. This man was Abraham, an idolater. This man Abraham believed God and became the father of a multitude, not only of natural children, but of spiritual children as well.

A new principle began to work. Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Abraham's faith was more than a mental assent to truth. He acted on what he believed. That is the proof of real faith. On that ground he was tested and approved when he offered his son Isaac.

GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS: BUT IN EVERY NATION HE THAT FEARETH HIM, AND WORKETH RIGHTEOUSNESS, IS ACCEPTED WITH HIM. Acts 10:34,35.

-THE GOSPEL IN EGYPT-

One night in Egypt, Jehovah let the destroyer go abroad. But Jehovah Himself also went abroad and wherever He found a house with the blood at the door, He paused or hovered over that house and did not suffer the destroyer to enter.

The good news that had been given to the Israelites was that if they sprinkled the blood of the lamb on the door posts and lintel and stayed inside, God would not allow the destroyer to enter and smite the firstborn. We have no record that any of the Israelites failed to obey the command. But in every household of the Egyptians there was sorrow and mourning that night. They did not have the blood. It is not likely that they would have believed and acted even if they did know about it.

There is no substitute for the blood. A good pedigree would not be sufficient. Any feeling or emotion about the matter could not take the place of the blood. Jehovah had said, **WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I WILL PASS OVER YOU.** To try to do away with or substitute something for the blood is just as dangerous today as it was then. It is quite likely that most folks felt secure that night, secure in the belief that the blood on the door was sufficient. There may have been some who were not so confident. They may have had fear. They may have had no real peace. But in any case, it was not what they felt or believed about it, but the fact that the blood was there was sufficient. If it was there, Jehovah saw it.

Again at the Red Sea, they were to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. He redeemed them by His strong arm.

Later in the wilderness, there were many that sinned. Because of sin fiery serpents came into the camp. Many were bitten and death was the result. The brazen serpent was put on the pole and put where it could be seen. All that a sinner had to do was to look and live. Tho they may have been redeemed from Egypt, they had to learn that there must be a constant looking to the Redeemer.

-AT HAND-

REPENT YE, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. So spoke John the Baptist at the Jordan river.

John was a forerunner of the King. He was to make way for the Lord. He was to make the paths straight and roads smooth. This was a figure of speech. It meant that if there was a kingdom, the people would have to repent. **REPENT** means **TO TURN BACK.** They must turn back to God. One who has not been to God can not turn back to Him. Therefore Gentiles could not repent.

John had a baptism. It was from God. It was a special revelation and mission for John. It had not been known before. Those who repented and were baptized in water were prepared for a later baptism. One was coming who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost (i.e. the power) and fire. At the time they were baptized by John they confessed their sins.

The baptism of John was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. This was a special power given to John. Israel could never recognize and accept their Messiah until their sins were taken away or remitted.

But the good news was that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. If the kingdom was at hand, then the King must be near. But when John did introduce Him, he did not introduce Him as King, but as **THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD.** Not a King, but a Lamb!

Because of the unbelief of the people, John was not able to do a complete work. This was no doubt a great disappointment to him. At one time he said, **THERE STANDETH ONE AMONG YOU, WHOM YE KNOW NOT.** If they had repented and been baptized for the remission of sins, then they could have recognized Him. Sin ever blinds people to the Christ. Where there is sin, His presence cannot be felt. Where there is unbelief, He cannot work.

The only reason that John came and baptized with water was that he might make Christ manifest to Israel (John 1:31). John had no calling to preach to Gentiles or to baptize Gentiles.

-THE SON'S GOSPEL-

FROM THAT TIME JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH, AND TO SAY, REPENT: FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. Matt. 4:17.

JESUS CAME INTO GALILEE, PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND SAYING, THE TIME IS FILLED, AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND: REPENT YE, AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL.

The theme of the Lord's preaching was the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven was a rule which should come down from heaven to earth. The Lord of heaven was to be the Ruler. He was to take the throne of His father David. He was to rule over the 12 tribes of Israel and the nations of the earth. Jerusalem was to be the great world centre of government and spiritual authority.

There were some obstacles to the immediate setting up of this kingdom. In the first place Israel would have to accept the terms of the New Covenant, since the old one had been broken. The New Covenant would first have to be ratified by the blood of the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world. In other words, if Israel accepts their Messiah, they must accept a suffering Messiah as well as One Who should come in power and great glory.

These requirements would be a great stumbling block to a people who had set up an elaborate system of religion and had their own ideas of what the Millennium should be. It is pretty hard to change the preconceived notions of a proud people such as were the Israelites, and especially the ruling group, the Pharisees.

There was one instance where the Lord departed from His usual theme. In speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well, He preached, not the kingdom, but the gospel of eternal life. He called it the GIFT OF GOD and also LIVING WATER. Since the doors of the kingdom were never opened to Gentiles till Acts 10, The Lord could give her no good news concerning the kingdom.

The same was true of the dying malefactor. All he could get was life in the new heavens and earth.

-THE APOSTLES' GOSPEL-

Our Lord declared that He had been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He said to the apostles that He sent them even as He had been sent. Their message during Acts was the reoffer of the kingdom. This was in accord with the forgiveness of the nation which was obtained by the dying Savior.

At the beginning Peter was the spokesman. At Pentecost he addressed his audience as YE MEN OF JUDEA, AND ALL THAT DWELL AT JERUSALEM, YE MEN OF ISRAEL, MEN AND BRETHREN, and ends with LET ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL KNOW. There were no Gentiles there.

Peter preached in the temple in Acts 3. He addressed the people as YE MEN OF ISRAEL. In chapter 4 he spoke to the RULERS OF THE PEOPLE AND ELDERS OF ISRAEL.

The charge against Stephen was that he was changing the laws of Moses. Gentiles would not make such a charge.

When the Lord was rejected in Judea during His ministry, He went and stayed two days in Samaria. John 4. Likewise when Stephen was stoned in Judea, Philip went into Samaria and preached.

But the exception to the rule of the 12 preaching to Israel only was in Acts 10. There Peter opened for the first time the doors of the kingdom to Gentiles. It is the only instance we have of any of the 12 preaching to Gentiles. This was after the conversion of Paul who was to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

The preaching of the 12 was accompanied by signs. Also as in the case of John the Baptist and the Lord, Baptism in water was a requirement for entrance into the kingdom. It was connected with repentance.

Nowhere in Acts do we find the 12 fulfilling the great commission which was to them and to Israel as a nation. Rejection by the majority narrowed the number of believers down to a few, the remnant. Therefore Israel is still awaiting the day when they will go out on the great commission among the nations. But the nation must first repent.

-THE GOSPEL AFTER ACTS-

Unlike the 12, Paul was chosen by the ascended Lord. Unlike the 12, Paul was sent to the Gentiles.

Paul had a special dispensation from God to complete the Word for us Gentiles. To him was given the revelation of the dispensation of the Mystery. Paul revealed for the first time in history that man, of the earth and earthly, could be so transformed and glorified that he might enjoy blessings in the heavens instead of earth. No people before had any higher hope than to be here on the earth in resurrection. No people before had ever been free from the requirements of sacraments and rituals. Truly this is a dispensation of the grace of God, both to Jew and Gentile.

It was also given to Paul to make known the fullest revelation of the mystery of Christ. Never before had He been known as the Head of a church which was His body.

The hope held out to the apostles and spiritual Israel was to have a part in the kingdom here on earth and be an example and a display of the wisdom of God to the nations. But the church of the one body is to display the manifold wisdom of God in heavenly places to principalities and powers there.

The saints of the Acts period lie in their graves awaiting the coming of the Lord to earth when they will be resurrected and caught up into the air to meet the Lord and accompany Him as He descends.

The members of the body have an earlier resurrection by which they will enter the heavenlies before the coming of the Lord. There they will be manifested with Him in His glory before principalities and powers. In that place they will enjoy all spiritual blessings which they have taken by faith.

Nowhere in all Scripture do we find such glories as are ours who by faith have laid hold of this marvelous truth which God has revealed to us by His servant Paul.

What a wonderful gospel and hope we have today to tell to the nations (Gentiles) and to the Jews as well! Let us love and look for the manifestation in glory.

-WHO STEALS THE BRIDE?-

5 In the first place, just who is the BRIDE? There are some who say that Israel is the BRIDE, and some claim that the church is the BRIDE. Many do not know the difference between Israel and the church. So we have much confusion at the very start of our study.

Often when we read of Jehovah and His people Israel, we find the expressions HUSBAND and WIFE used to explain their relationship. In Jer. 31:32 Jehovah says, ALTHO I WAS AN HUSBAND UNTO THEM. Again in Jer. 3:20 there is an account of how Israel has dealt treacherously with Jehovah, even as a wife that has departed from her husband. In Ezek. 16, faithless Israel is pictured as an adulterous wife. In Isa. 54 we read that the wife will be forsaken for a moment, a small moment and then restored.

But the crowning point of this picture is in Hosea 2:16-20. There restored Israel will again call Jehovah ISHI (husband) and He will BETROTH HER IN LOVINGKINDNESS. In this betrothal she will be known as the BRIDE.

The people, the land, and the holy city are so closely related that all 3 are called the BRIDE. In the NT we find the picture completed. John preaches in order to manifest Christ to Israel. He calls Christ the BRIDEGROOM and himself the friend of the BRIDEGROOM. The friend is the one who gives away the BRIDE or presents her.

There is also to be a marriage supper of the LAMB some day. We have no difficulty in identifying the Lord Jesus Christ as the LAMB. Israel is to be His BRIDE.

Now if the Lord Jesus Christ is the JEHOVAH-GOD of the OT, this will present no difficulty at all. We understand that Christ is God manifest in flesh, according to the Scriptures.

But if Christ is not the JEHOVAH of the OT, then we have a great problem on our hands. If Christ is a created being, then He is a wicked usurper who is trying to steal Jehovah's BRIDE. Who do you think would pose as God and exalt himself above God to steal the BRIDE?

-THE EDITOR'S DESK-

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