

CHRISTADELPHIAN
Advocate

A monthly magazine in defense of the "Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ" as embraced in The Hope of Israel with a view to "Taking Out A People For Yahweh's Name"



The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy

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Front Cover Picture: Based on the works of Brother Henry Sulley, Brother Andrew Johnson has prepared a set of visualizations and animations of the Kingdom Age Temple in Jerusalem, available for download on the website.

He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.

Jeremiah 23:28

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EDITORIAL

Fire in the Bible

The word “fire” is a familiar word in Scripture. It is a picturesque word, used and understood literally as well as figuratively (when we come across this word we easily discern the manner in which it is used, the language made more emphatic when the figurative sense is employed). Fire is under God’s control, to bring either comfort or calamity according to His Divine purpose. Though some might be inclined to immediately associate the Biblical word “fire” with calamity such as hell-fire, the lake of fire, or the fire and brimstone that reigned down upon Sodom and Gomorrah, the word is strongly associated with God’s glory as well as with His refining and purifying purposes with mankind.



Although commonly observed in its diverse uses throughout Scripture, fire is not a typical subject for an editorial, not being a subject involving opinion, although it may function to inform and/or edify. In searching for Christadelphian articles on the subject, this author found no article focused exclusively on the nature and role of fire in the Bible. *(This editorial serves also as a primer for the planned September editorial.)*

What is fire? Science has not been able to precisely describe it, offering such descriptions as, “Fire is an oxidizing chemical reaction that releases heat and light” (van.physics.illinois.edu), and, as an MIT postdoctoral associate in chemistry opined:

“Classical Western philosophers divided the world into four elements: earth, water, air, and fire... Though we now recognize not four but 118 elements, the ancients were onto something. Their system corresponds more or less to our modern concepts of matter: solids, liquids, and gases. But fire is something else altogether... Simply defined, fire is a chemical reaction in a mixture of incandescent gases, typically luminous with intense heat. But candle flames, wood fires, and propane fires aren’t created equal. What constitutes fire depends on the fuel being

burned... All fires eventually burn themselves out, unlike solids, liquids, and gases, which can exist indefinitely in the same state.” ([Ask An Engineer](#) – engineering.mit.edu)

It is important to note that in Biblical times, other than the heavenly lights in the night sky, “fire” was the source of evening and nighttime light upon the earth. Fire was an important tool as well as a source of heat for mankind. Fire was the means of cooking, sacrifice, disposal of waste, purification of disease, etc. Fire played, and continues to play, a significant role in breaking down and forming / shaping natural materials for mankind’s use. Like everything on earth, fire can be harmful as well as useful. Fire consumes, destroys, and is deadly; while fire and heat have many useful applications.

There are several words in the Bible translated “fire,” the word itself occurring over 500 times in the Authorized Version. The primary word in the Old Testament translated “fire” is Strong’s #784 *es* (also translated “flame,” “lightning”), while in the New Testament it is Strong’s #4442 *pyr* (also translated “flames” and “fiery”). There are a host of other less-occurring Hebrew and Greek words translated “fire” as well as “light,” “offerings / sacrifices by fire,” etc. The word “fire” first appears in the Scriptures in Genesis 19:24, addressing the *brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven* upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Christ mentions fire for the first time in Matthew 5:22 where it is offered in the context of “judgment” against those who mistreat their brethren, putting themselves *in danger of hell fire*. As commonly found in the Bible, the word “fire” is understood literally; though its figurative / theological references are numerous, for the most part relating to a manifestation of God’s being or action.

Fire is referenced in so many diverse situations – Divine revelation, judgment, cleansing, refining, purification, sacrifice – that it is difficult to concisely define all its distinctions and purposes. Due to space considerations, we will restrict this brief review to three primary manifestations: theophany (God manifestation), purification, and judgment.

1) God Manifestation by Fire

God often revealed Himself through fire to His people, as a symbol of His unapproachable holiness. Examples include:

Literal Fire

- In the account of the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 15:17), one reads of *a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces*.

- God's appearance in a *pillar of fire by night* that led the people of Israel out of Egypt and through the Sinai desert (Exodus 13:21-22).
- God's use of fire as an active manifestation of His presence in His sending fire from heaven to consume sacrifices offered up to Him, *there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat* (Leviticus 9:23-24).
- At Taberah in the Sinai desert, when the people complained, *God's anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp* (Numbers 11:1).
- The rebellion of Korah and his followers resulted in them perishing by fire, *And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense* (Numbers 16:35).
- Fire as an instrument of judgment in the destruction of the messengers of Ahaziah who attempted to seize Elijah the prophet, *And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty...* (2 Kings 1:10, 12).
- *The fire of God fallen from heaven that burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them* (Job 1:16).
- Isaiah, referring to God's coming judgments, sees him *come with fire ... to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire* (Isaiah 66:15).



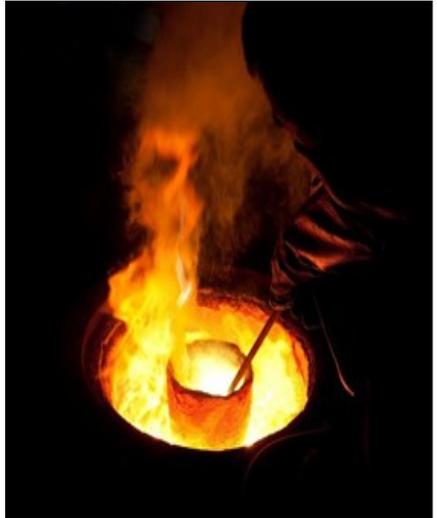
Figurative / Metaphorical Fire

- The psalmist employs fire as a simile for Divine displeasure when he asks, *How long, LORD... shall thy wrath burn like fire?* (Psalm 89:46)
- Jeremiah says, in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, that God *poured out his fury like fire* (Lamentations 2:4).
- Ezekiel uses the term *the fire of my wrath* to speak of God's outpoured judgment on the Ammonites (21:31); and upon his people (22:31).
- John the Baptist predicted that Jesus would baptize *with the Holy Spirit, and with fire* (Matthew 3:11).

- *Cloven tongues like as of fire* rested upon the apostles who were gathered together, with the result that *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit* (Acts 2:3-4).
- Fire is associated with the judgment of *hell fire* (Matthew 5:22; 18:9; Mark 9:47); *fire unquenchable* (Luke 3:17); *eternal fire* (Jude 7).
- The *one like unto the Son of man* in Christ's revelation to John, whose *eyes were as a flame of fire* (Revelation 1:13-14).
- God Himself is described by Moses and the Apostle Paul as a *consuming fire* (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29).

(2) Testing / Purification by Fire

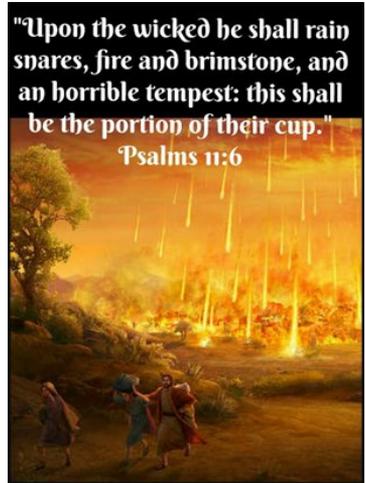
- *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is* (1 Corinthians 3:13).
- *And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God* (Zechariah 13:9).
- *Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction* (Isaiah 48:10).
- *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 1:7).
- *But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire...* (Malachi 3:2).
- *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you...* (1 Peter 4:12).



(3) Judgment by Fire

Judgment by fire is unlike the “fire of God manifestation” and the “fire of testing / purification.” God is *jealous for His Holy Name* (Ezekiel 39:25); and as David, the *man after God’s own heart* (Acts 13:22) declared, *the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether* (Psalms 19:9).

- *Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven* (Genesis 19:24).
- *Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD* (Leviticus 10:1-2).
- *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned* (John 15:6).
- *For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries* (Hebrews 10:26-27).
- The final destiny of the enemies of God is “the lake of fire,” *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire* (Revelation 20:14-15).



In Summary: Though fire is but one of hundreds of common concepts we know and experience daily, it occupies very specific and special roles within the plan, purpose, and revelation of God for this earth and mankind upon it. Though Jesus’ second coming is associated with fiery destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; 2 Peter 3:7), it is the saints’ *trial by fire* (1 Peter 1:7) that prepares them to prevail through healing, cleansing, and purification. May this short review be of some use to help focus our appreciation for fire in the Scriptures as purposed and revealed by our Heavenly Father.

Editor

FEATURE ARTICLE

Father, Into Thy Hands I Commend My Spirit

(Luke 23:46)

We come now to the last of the seven utterances from the lips of the suffering servant. We ask, was it just coincidence that there were seven recorded, not more, not less? We think not, as we know that seven is the number of perfection and completeness. How appropriate then to find this number of final sayings from the mouth of the one who lived a life of perfect obedience, recorded in Scripture for succeeding generations to read and to be strengthened thereby. Yet, surely these few expressions do not comprise all of his last words, just as we are told Jesus did many other things during his ministry that were not written, nor could the world contain the books that should be written if they were (John 21:25). For example, we believe that he may well have recited Psalm 22 in its entirety in those last moments of his life – for he too drew much needed strength from it as did those who loved him dearly as they witnessed his horrible death.

Such thoughts and feelings of pain were replaced with praise and gladness, knowing Yahweh had accomplished through him the great redemptive work that was to save a stricken race from eternal death and utter ruin...

As our Messiah hung on the stake in those last few minutes before his death, we can imagine how the thick darkness had gradually silenced the mocking crowd. The wailing, jeers, and curses had died away and Jesus could now fully concentrate on the task at hand – his final and complete victory over the flesh. This final conquest had begun in the Garden of Gethsemane, *being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood...* (Luke 22:44). And now, despite the terrible jolts of pain surging through his body, there was time for his mind to accomplish its final triumph before his last breath.

Christ had no doubt about his next waking moment, with full assurance that Yahweh's power would raise him from the dead. And so, **his final words spoken immediately before his death exemplify his complete and utter trust in his Father in heaven.** They are found only in Luke's Gospel record in chapter 23, verse 46: simple but profound words – *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* How appropriate that Christ died with his Father's name on his lips.

Hanging there in utter darkness, the finest spiritual mind ever had been fully focused on the pages of Scripture that he had memorized as a young lad. What strength they had given him to endure until the end. These last words of Christ, uttered in the last moment of his life as he drew his last breath, were, once again, from the Psalms. In fact, all of his final four utterances were quotations from the Psalms: in this case from the 31st Psalm. This psalm beautifully expresses the feelings of one who put his complete trust in Yahweh and how he would be delivered in His righteousness (vs.1). *For thou art my rock and my fortress, therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me* (vs. 3)...*into thine hand I commit my spirit* (vs. 5). And, it must surely be assumed that on the third day, the rest of the fifth verse was on our Savior's lips when his life was restored in the quietness of the tomb – *thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.*

Christ's first utterance as he hung from the stake was a prayer for forgiveness of his murderers, and now his last words were a prayer committing himself to the Father. At the last moment of mortality, he presents his life's work of complete obedience to Yahweh as a sacrifice on the altar, which he himself provided. Indeed, the perfect Lamb of God was both the altar (cp. Hebrews 13:10) and the sacrifice.

After crying out one last time *with a loud voice*, Jesus' head slumps onto his chest, with no more strength to raise it any longer. He collapses in absolute submission and surrender to his Father: *having said thus, he gave up the [spirit]*. Matthew records that he *yielded up* (27:50), with "yielding" implying the same idea as "commending" from his reciting of Psalm 31:15. His pain and torment were lost as he found himself being carried away by the beauty of those last words that broke from his lips. His own suffering and any possible thoughts of self-pity were obscured by a total concentration on inspired Scripture. Such thoughts and feelings of pain were replaced with praise and gladness, knowing Yahweh had accomplished through him the great redemptive work that was to save a stricken race from eternal death and utter ruin, in particular for those who would become His.

Christ ends his life with the words of a hymn of praise on his lips. As he *gave up the spirit* and breathed his last breath, our Messiah knew that it would not be long before his short sleep would be over and he would receive the breath of life again as he was

Surely, we should have this same trust in our Father that Jesus and his disciples had – knowing that in whatever circumstance we are in, no matter how weak we are in spirit, we can put our trust in Yahweh to help us through.

resurrected through the power of his Father. Not only would his breath be restored, but on the very day of his resurrection, he would “breathe” on his disciples as he exclaimed, *Receive ye the Holy Spirit* (John 20:22). The Holy Spirit that he had received would be passed on to them that they might use it in their mission of preaching the “good news” to all nations and peoples.

We know that his disciples shared the same dedication and commitment that their Master had to his Father in doing His will. They obeyed his commandments and spread his gospel message as instructed. They made it their lifelong work and they too were guided by Yahweh’s Word, trusting in His righteousness. **It is not surprising then that we find similar expressions to our Lord’s last words used by two of Christ’s disciples:**

1. Stephen as he was being stoned – *calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit* (Acts 7:59).
2. Peter said of his fellow servants – *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls* (i.e. breath or spirit of life) *to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator* (1 Peter 4:19).

What a beautiful exhortation for us as well in these last words of Christ in terms of where we should turn for strength! If we are distressed or in physical pain, where do our minds turn? Do we turn inward to focus on ourselves? Do we make it worse by only thinking about how bad off we are; what problems we have; what pain we are in? Or do we turn our thoughts to Yahweh and His Word for strength and to displace our inward thoughts as Christ did? Clearly, this is what we should be doing. It is not easy to refocus our minds in this direction, but we must gain the strength and discipline to serve our Father as we should. And it will always help our mental outlook if we can meditate on Scripture, especially uplifting passages as found in many of the Psalms.

Surely, we should have this same trust in our Father that Jesus and his disciples had – knowing that in whatever circumstance we are in, no matter how weak we are in spirit, we can put our trust in Yahweh to help us through. Indeed, we should have the same faith as Jesus to the extent possible; we should have that faith, that full assurance of hope: a hope that naturally comes from faithful service to our Father. We then ask ourselves, are we committed into His hands as was Jesus?

As we conclude our study of “the sayings of Jesus from the cross,” we do so with great humility and thankfulness. We are humbled as we contemplate how these sayings truly demonstrate the complete selflessness of our Lord; how he maintained his total focus on Yahweh’s will being done, and the eternal salvation of others while enduring the painful death that he suffered. We are most assuredly thankful for his sacrifice, but also

that his Father chose to have these last utterances recorded for our edification, that we might better understand and appreciate the mind and spirit of our Master and how it sustained him during this, his last and greatest trial. It was a mind and spirit of total commitment and dedication, even beyond our comprehension.

We do know that the mind of Christ, which we are to model, was developed through a complete and lifelong absorption in and of the Word. This fact was exemplified in every expression that was uttered during his life, and especially in his last words as he hung on the stake. *Glory to God in the highest* was given throughout the years of his short life, and indeed supremely so at its end. Let us so manifest Yahweh's glory through our words as well as our actions.

Ken Wood, Richmond, VA

Q & A

Readers are asked to submit questions to be answered as well as comments on previously published answers in this section. Questions and comments may be sent to: Brother Ken Wood at question@christadelphianadvocate.org



COVID-19 Virus: A Punishment from God? (Part 2) Reader Response

Original Question: I really believe, as most of us do, that the COVID-19 pandemic is a sign of the times and of the nearness of our Lord's return. I also see it as a punishment from God, but I've heard others say that it is not. What are your thoughts on its intended impact on the world and on us as true believers?

Section Editor Note: The same reader who posed the question which became the subject of the Q&A for the June 2020 issue of the *Advocate* has responded to the answer provided with abundant evidence that Yahweh has used natural means many times to carry out His punishments as judgment against disobedience and wickedness. We believe his list (below) validates the likelihood that the current plague is no different, for surely the state of the world today is "as in the days of Noah," *But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were*

before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage... And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matthew 24:37-39).

Reader Response to the June 2020 Q&A:

I wish to share with you a few of the Biblical instances wherein the Creator of heaven and earth has used His Divine intervention to bring about punishments upon both individuals and nations in the past. Likewise, there are similar judgments that are promised in the latter days (Deuteronomy 7:15; Luke 21:11; Matthew 24:7-8). I am in no way being adamant in my findings on this subject, just willing to share some of my thoughts. There are many more examples which could be used, but for now, please take these into consideration:

Partial List of Yahweh's Punishments for Man's Iniquity Utilizing Natural Means

- 1) Curses brought upon Adam and Eve for their disobedience (Genesis 3:16-19).
- 2) Flood during Noah's day as punishment upon the entire world for their sinful ways (Genesis 6:5-7, 11-13; 7:11,17-23).
- 3) Great plagues came upon Pharaoh and his house after the incident with Sarah (Genesis 12:17).
- 4) Fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah as punishment for their grievous sins (Genesis 19:24-29).
- 5) Various plagues against the Egyptians (Exodus chapters 7-12).
- 6) Drowning of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea (Exodus 14:26-31).
- 7) Leprosy coming upon Miriam after she and Aaron spoke out against Moses (Numbers 12).
- 8) Earth swallowing up Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and fire consuming 250 others for their rebellion against Yahweh (Numbers 16:1-33).
- 9) Plague sent upon the congregation of Israel after the rebellion (Numbers 16:44-50).
- 10) Evil diseases of Egypt to come upon all that hate Israel; and upon the children of Israel if they did not observe all the words of the Law (Deuteronomy 7:15; 28:58-62).



11) Hailstones came down upon the five kings and the army of the Amorites (Joshua 10:11)

It's quite interesting how the Almighty seems to use "natural means" (what the world would call "naturally occurring") to bring about His will, including all the plagues that came upon Egypt with the exception of the last one. We assume that a strong wind was used in the parting of the Red Sea; a thunderstorm brought the massive hailstones that destroyed the five kings and the armies of the Amorites; and an earthquake caused the earth to open up and swallow Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Regardless of exactly how these punishments and plagues were accomplished, we know that they were "powered" by Yahweh's will and directed by His Holy Spirit. **We as believers recognize it as Divine intervention, but the world sees it as "nature."** We are thankful that we see through the eyes of faith while others only see through the natural eye.

My preferred passage regarding the future punishment upon the earth and its inhabitants for their iniquity (during which time His people will be protected) is Isaiah 26:20-21 ESV: *Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by. For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain.*

Myles Kaufman, Finger Lakes Ecclesia, NY

God's Love

"Into all our lives, in many simple, familiar, and homely ways, God infuses the element of joy from the surprises of life which unexpectedly brighten our days and fill our eyes with light. He drops this and that added sweetness into His children's cup and makes it run over. The success we were not counting on, the blessing we were not trying after, the strain of music in the midst of drudgery, the beautiful morning picture or the sunset glory thrown in as we pass to and from our daily business, the unsought word of encouragement or expressions of sympathy, the sentence that meant for us more than the writer or speaker thought – these and a hundred others that everyone's experience can supply, are instances of what I mean. You may call it accident or chance; it often is; but always, always call it God's love, for that is always in it. These are the overflowing riches of His grace, these are His free gifts." Samuel Longfellow (*Monday's Motivation*, 5-18-20)

Samuel Longfellow (1819-1892) was an American clergyman and hymn writer, younger brother to the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

PROPHECY

John's Glorious Visitor

The apostle John received a glorious visitor while in exile on the isle of Patmos. In the first chapter of Revelation the visitor is described by John in the following manner:

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks [one] like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. (1:13)

His head and [his] hairs [were] white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes [were] as a flame of fire; (1:14)

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. (1:15)

And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance [was] as the sun shineth in his strength. (1:16)



Who was this visitor? Verse 1 of chapter 1 states the “Revelation of Jesus Christ” was “sent and signified by his [Jesus’] angel.” A similar declaration is made in the last chapter of Revelation. Now, is this individual “like unto the Son of man” an angel, or part of the revelation, or both? In a functional sense, this individual is an angel or messenger because he delivers a message to John to share with the seven ecclesias addressed in Revelation. Brother Roberts concluded that this individual was an angel.¹ Brother Thomas offered an argument identifying this “one like unto the Son of man” as a representation of the multitudinous Christ.²

Other declarations in Revelation seem to identify this “man” as Jesus, because John describes him as “like unto the Son of man,” a description that Jesus often used in the days of his flesh in reference to himself. Add to that the following descriptions:

I [am] he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (1:18)

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet [are] like fine brass; (2:18)

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (3:5)

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (3:21)

The verses above declare how the one “like unto the Son of Man” identified himself to be the Lord Jesus Christ by virtue of his resurrection and relationship to the Father. However, there are reasons to believe that though this individual represented the Lord Jesus Christ, he was only that – a representation. Yes, this individual had the form of a man, but his other attributes are certainly unlike any man we have ever seen (e.g., eyes like fire; sword coming out of his mouth). Note that John, who had seen Jesus both before and after his resurrection, does not explicitly identify him as Jesus. But then John does not offer any opinion or commentary on what he saw, except for the few words at the beginning and end of the book of Revelation. Might we consider this similitude of a man and his message like the LORD appearing to Moses in the burning bush?

And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here [am] I. (Exodus 3:4)

Moreover he said, I [am] the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exodus 3:6)

Exodus 3:2-6 tells us that the LORD / the “God of Moses’ fathers” that called unto him out of the midst of the bush, was actually an *angel of the LORD* who was given a message and authority to speak as the LORD Himself. Perhaps then, John’s visitor is the Lord’s angel given a message and authority to speak as though the Messiah himself was speaking.

If this was the Lord’s angel, consider another interesting aspect regarding angels in the book of Revelation. Of all the angels referenced, not all are described. John gave us a description of this one, but other angels he encounters in his vision receive no description other than what they are saying or doing. Why would that be? One reason might be because each descriptive aspect of this angel is woven into the messages given to the various ecclesias.

Another consideration is the physical effect this encounter had on the apostle John.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: (1:17)

John has another physical encounter with an angel in chapter 10; and once again the angel is described. This angel, the so-styled “rainbow” angel, gives John a “little book” and instructs him to eat it. John has a physical experience of sweetness in his mouth and bitterness in his belly. Is it because both the “glorious visitor” and the “rainbow angel” had a physical effect on John that he provided us with their description? Perhaps, but that does not always hold true as we shall see with Daniel.

Daniel also had encounters with heavenly beings that we might compare and contrast. Comparisons between the Apocalypse and the book of Daniel have been noticed by Bible students since perhaps the first century. The beasts of each book can be compared and contrasted, and so can the visitors to Daniel and John. Daniel gives the following account of one of these encounters during the reign of Cyrus:

Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins [were] girded with fine gold of Uphaz: (10:5)

His body also [was] like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. (10:6)

Though this individual’s description is much like John’s visitor, there are differences. Daniel’s visitor is said to be a “man” rather than “like unto the Son of man” (though if this is the same being as in 10:16, he is described as “like the similitude of the sons of men”). It is his loins that are girded with gold, and not his breast. He does not have stars in his right hand or a sword proceeding from his mouth, but otherwise the description is very similar to that given by John. Are these two beings the same being or two similar beings? If they are the same being, then they can’t be the actual Lord Jesus Christ because Jesus was yet unborn in Daniel’s lifetime.

When Daniel encounters this being, he like John, falls to the earth as a dead man.

And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. (10:15)

And, behold, [one] like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. (10:16)

For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. (10:17)

Daniel describes his first encounter with the angel Gabriel in chapter 8 during the reign of Belshazzar. Though no description of Gabriel is given, the physical effect on Daniel is:

And it came to pass, when I, [even] I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. (8:15)

And I heard a man's voice between [the banks of] Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this [man] to understand the vision. (8:16)

So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end [shall be] the vision. (8:17)

Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. (8:18)

One might conclude that Daniel's "glorious visitor" in chapter 10 is the angel Gabriel of chapter 8, in that their presence had the same physical impact on Daniel. Visits by Gabriel to Daniel are recorded in chapters 8 and 9. In chapter 8, Gabriel is introduced to Daniel by a voice asking Gabriel to make Daniel understand the vision regarding the 2300 days. In chapter 9,

Daniel recognizes Gabriel as the one he had seen earlier in the vision. If Gabriel and the "glorious visitor" to Daniel in chapters 10-12 are the same, it seems strange that Daniel does not identify him as Gabriel since he recognizes Gabriel by sight. For that reason I believe the "glorious visitor" is not the angel Gabriel. However, the lack of a name in chapters 10-12 for the "glorious visitor," and the lack of a description for Gabriel in chapters 8 and 9, don't stand as proof that they are separate beings.

Unlike Gabriel or other messengers sent by God to reveal prophecies to be fulfilled at some future date, the glorious visitors to John and to Daniel speak of the final fulfillment of God's promises to the fathers.

Further, the "death effect" described in both chapters 8 and 10 raises a question. Are we to assume the "glorious visitor" and Gabriel are the same being based on the effect their presence had on

Daniel, or was the effect on Daniel a function of the message and not the messenger? That is, the messages to both Daniel and John indicate latter-day prophecies. They will die and be resurrected before the prophecies they

receive are fulfilled. Is the vision regarding the 2300 days fulfilled? Some followers of prophecy think so. However, if what happened to Daniel indicates fulfillment after his death and resurrection, perhaps it is yet to be fulfilled. Might this be the reason for the “death effect” upon them? Why might we come to this conclusion?

Consider that Gabriel also appears to Daniel in chapter 9 when Daniel’s prayers are concerning the end of the 70 years prophecy. Gabriel delivers the 70 weeks prophecy, a prophecy that confirms the end of the 70 year sojourn in Babylon and the beginning of a time period beginning in Daniel’s day and ending with Messiah’s first advent. It is true that complete fulfillment of the 70 weeks prophecy comes after the death of Daniel, but it is not a latterday prophecy and so his death will occur but not his resurrection. Therefore this encounter with Gabriel did not place him totally lifeless with his face to the ground and then raised up. Compare Gabriel’s appearance to Zacharias and Mary in Luke chapter 1. Gabriel’s appearance was frightening but did not place them face down on the ground because the message to each (the birth of John the Baptist and the birth of Jesus) was fulfilled through them within their lifetimes. Thus the “death effect” upon the hearer of the message appears to reflect a latter-day prophecy fulfillment indicating the death and resurrection of the hearer.

John’s glorious visitor appears in chapter 1 and continues throughout the book of Revelation. Daniel’s glorious visitor is introduced in chapter 10 and continues through chapters 11, and 12. The glorious visitors to John and to Daniel speak of latter-day prophecies and final fulfillment of God’s promises to the fathers. They speak of the end of days, the events that will culminate in the resurrection and the establishment of God’s kingdom under rulership of the Messiah and his saints – the multitudinous Christ. These glorious beings are associated with the glory to come. We may not know who these visitors are exactly, but we know what they represent. Their message is the hope of Daniel and John and all the faithful that have come before us.

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:20)

Jay Johnson, Roselle, IL

¹Roberts, R. (1969). *Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse*, pp. 6-7

²Thomas, J. (1959). *Eureka: An Exposition of the Apocalypse* (5 volume set), Vol.1, pp. 140-142

EXPOSITION

Reconciling Religion and Reason: The Problem of Doubt

As we consider the reasoning behind our faith, it is important to touch on the subject of doubt. Uncertainties and doubts should not be ignored. Both the Bible record and our own lives demonstrate that doubt can drive and define the course of one's spiritual life.

In Scripture, for example, we know that Eve doubted the word of God when *she took of the fruit* (Genesis 3:1-6). Pharaoh doubted that it was the God of the Hebrews behind the plagues (Exodus 7:22). David doubted that he would survive Saul's efforts to kill him (1 Samuel 27:1). Many in Jerusalem doubted the word of the Lord from Jeremiah (Jeremiah 44:18-19). The Pharisees doubted that Jesus was the Messiah (Mark 11:28; John 16:3). Peter's doubt caused him to sink when he was walking on the water (Matthew 14:30). The disciples on the road to Emmaus initially doubted their understanding that Jesus was the Christ (Luke 24:19-32).



Doubt acts as a force shaping one's faith for good or ill. As a category, we might define doubt as "suspension of assent between two or more competing viewpoints. Depending on the cause, doubt can either work as an essential element of faith that helps us to direct and refine our views on the Gospel message and our walk in the Lord, or it may serve to frighten and paralyze us into a state of cowardice, hypocrisy, or apathy. How should we, as individuals who experience doubt, or as a community that may be troubled by doubt, determine the nature and severity of these issues?

As an object lesson, we might consider the difference between the doubts expressed by the Pharisees and Jewish rulers, versus those expressed by the apostles. The Pharisees doubted Jesus because the testimony he gave was to them a challenge and a point of personal embarrassment. For this group, doubt arose from the need for self-justification, a need that became so powerful that it drove them to violate their own expressed morality, to actively sow discord among the people, and finally, to kill the innocent (Matthew 12:14; 27:1; John 11:45-57).

Christ's disciples' doubt developed differently. His disciples were sometimes confused or uncertain about what some of Christ's teachings meant, and they acted in ways that exposed their doubt. For instance, when Christ was crucified they were utterly cast into confusion. It is clear that

Regardless of how long it might take to address a particular doubt, we should recognize that having unanswered questions is not a sufficient reason to put our religious lives on hold...

Christ realized that it was not enough to merely appear to them after his resurrection; he realized that their faith was also contingent on understanding how the expressed meaning of Scripture was realized in his life, his sacrifice, and his resurrection, so he took the time to *expound unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself* (Luke 24:27).

Given these two scenarios, perhaps one way to consider doubts that arise in our own lives is to ask, “Is this doubt significant to our understanding or our walk in the Truth?” Doubt isn’t always to be highly regarded, but it is important to realize that uncertainty can motivate us to search and confirm the matter for ourselves.

As Christadelphians, we should appreciate the value of doubt in this context. Like the pioneer brethren before us, we have rejected secular views as well as Christian orthodoxy because we cannot accept their assertions at face value. However, just because we have doubts does not mean that we will never need to disagree, review, refine, or clarify anything. Occasional periods of doubt/questioning over any number of issues will naturally arise.

In regard to the Truth, conflicting interpretations should be expected because at no time in our lives will we ever have a totally comprehensive understanding of Scripture. Our understanding will always be imperfect because we typically have different questions as well as answers that we are seeking to address across the spectrum of life experiences. Since spiritual uncertainties will continue to unfold over time, and as more facts, data, and understanding come to light, it is important to clarify – for the sake of truth and honesty – whether concepts or opinions that we have held in the past are still valid. In this manner, the ebb and flow of identifying doubts and resolutions is an important and intensely personal work. Sometimes we may find worthwhile solutions that satisfy and ease our concerns, but not always. Generally speaking, we may find that our solutions could fall into categories such as:

- **Solution found in the negative** – proposed solution to a point of uncertainty determined to be incorrect.
- **Solution found in the positive** – proposed solution to a point of uncertainty determined to be correct.

- **Solution is fractured** – proposed solution reveals some verity of the matter under review, but fails to comprehensively address the uncertainty.
- **Solution is plausible** – proposed solution to a point of uncertainty appears to be a sufficient alternative, though not necessarily correct or complete; requiring further study.
- **Solution is unnecessary** – the original doubt or question under review was misapprehended, baseless, or otherwise determined insignificant.
- **Solution is incomplete** – a solution could not be reached because vital data about the original doubt, claim, or information was not available.

We may or may not wish to be forthright about our doubts, but if we do express them, we should be careful to use language that suggests honest inquiry.

As we search for answers to whatever doubts we might have, we should be aware that answers might not come immediately. Regardless of how long it might take to address a particular doubt, we should recognize that having unanswered questions is not a sufficient reason to put our religious lives on hold. We can remain convinced of a mountain's existence even if its height is in dispute! While we seek for resolution to our doubts, we should be careful not to neglect the certainties that we do have at our disposal!

It bears repeating that we are part of a broader, interdependent community, and this requires considerate behavior on our part. We should be cognizant that other eyes may be upon us in our meetings and Bible classes: eyes that may look to us as examples of either courage or indecision in the face of uncertainty. We may or may not wish to be forthright about our doubts, but if we do express them, we should be careful to use language that suggests honest inquiry.

Some who express doubts about various Bible principles may be accused of faithlessness by those that do not share in that same uncertainty. Occasionally, doubt is sometimes angrily regarded as a selfish, veiled attack on believers and an opportunity to sow discord and confusion. Posturing against doubt in this way may seem justified, but it is spiritually dangerous to ascribe motive or intent to those who have not expressed them. Belittling or intimidating other brothers or sisters with whom we might disagree is egregiously off the mark. This behavior is not consistent with “laying aside all malice, loving the brotherhood, or in lowliness of mind esteeming

brethren as better than ourselves” (1 Peter 2:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; Philippians 2:3).

Like a detective driven to solve a mystery, the search for Truth involves doubts, hunches, argument, research, and clarification. It is a process by which we filter and distill our information. We do this not because we don't wish for an emotional connection, but because we do want one – one that is resonant, meaningful and reliable – one that we can happily share with others of faith.

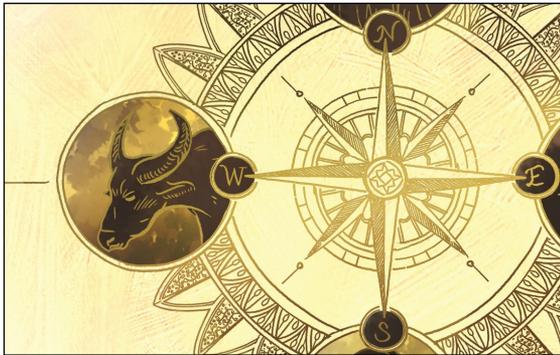
Finding such a Truth is a great treasure, but it comes at the personal cost of time and struggle. God grant us that we will be fit to the struggle when doubts arise, that we might find the courage to act in good faith, seeking only after the Truth. Let us be humble both when we are wrong and when we are right, that we might *keep the faith* for ourselves and others, and *finish our course* with strength in the hope of the *crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give [us] at that day* (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

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EXPOSITION

The Significance of Cardinal Directions in Scripture Part 4: West

We have reached the final of the four cardinal directions that we have been considering in this series. **The West is the culmination, not only of the general subject of the cardinal directions in Scripture, but because of**



what it represents. As mentioned at the conclusion of “Part 3 – East,” it had become evident that the general meaning associated with the West is the habitation of God, as was Bethel, where ancients went to worship God (Genesis 35:7; Judges 20:18; 1 Samuel 10:3).

Each of the four cardinal directions has a scriptural meaning and association. **The West was represented by the face of the ox** in Ezekiel's

vision of the *four living creatures* (1:1-10). Throughout the Scriptures, we note that God directs our attention to specific things such as gold, silver, the land of Israel, the cardinal directions, etc. In each case, a practical association can be offered to explain those references. In the case of Israel and Jerusalem (perhaps more specifically Mount Zion), it has been suggested that it is due to its geographical location. In our review of the East we mentioned a possible natural reason why East and West hold the meaning that they do, based upon the movement of the sun from east to west, beginning and ending within one day. We discovered that many practical lessons can be drawn from that journey across the sky, which offer a practical model of the spiritual. Building upon that natural phenomenon, the West is the destination of our walk in the Truth, traveling from the East and ending in the presence of God in the West.

As we have considered in the previous cardinal direction articles, we take note of the floor plan of the Tabernacle as well as the layout of the encampment of Israel in the wilderness. In the layout of the Tabernacle,

we find in the west portion of the Holy Place the veil that separated the Holy from the Most Holy. It was the final destination of one who entered the Holy Place from the eastern wall entrance. Beyond the veil was the Most Holy Place, where on the far west end was



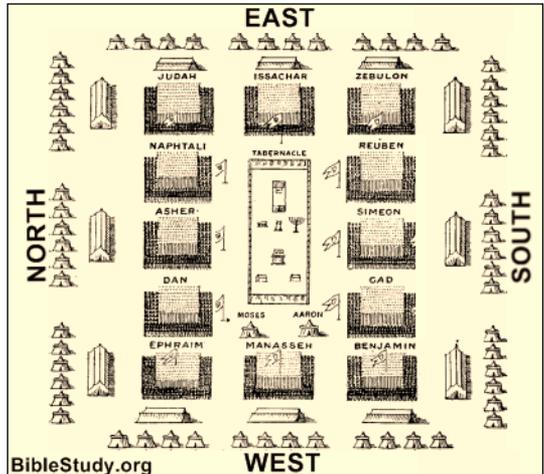
the Ark of the Covenant with the overshadowing cherubim fashioned from one piece of gold (which also served as the lid of the ark). It was from between the cherubim that the Shekinah glory emanated, and the voice of God was heard in communion with Moses and Aaron. The tabernacle was the place where God could be approached (Exodus 40:31-34; Leviticus 16:2; 1 Kings 8:10-11).

The tribes that were camped on the west side of the tabernacle were Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. The symbol for those three tribes was the ox – the primary beast of labor to pull heavy loads. The ox is patient, sure-footed, tireless, strong, and of a calm disposition. Unlike a horse or a donkey, the ox is patient and deliberate. What an apt symbol for a servant of God (the Gospel portrays Jesus as a servant – Philippians 2:5-7). Only those servants who are patient and tireless in their labors will be fit to dwell in the house of God in the West (2 Timothy 2:24).

Another feature of the ox is that it is a cloven-footed ruminant, that is, it chews its cud. These are characteristics of a “clean” animal (Strong’s #2889 *tahor* – “*clean, pure, flawless, free from impurity – moral or ceremonial purity*”), unlike the horse which was unclean. It is no surprise that God chose these qualities of cloven-hoof and cud-chewing to represent cleanliness. In them we recognize qualities that God’s servants should possess. The cloven-foot is designed for sure-footedness; while cud-chewing is typical of a ruminant having a multi-compartmented gut through which food must pass to be totally digested so the nutrients can be efficiently drawn from it. Chewing cud breaks down the structure of the grasses the ox eats, preparing it for passage from one compartment to the next. Animals with this digestive pattern are called ruminants, and it is no wonder that people frequently refer to serious contemplation or meditation as “ruminating.”

Our Father seeks servants who are spiritually sure-footed, a quality necessary to walk the straight and narrow path expected of them, that we might not slip or stumble from the way. We are to chew the cud of God’s Word as opposed to swallowing it quickly when much of the value in it might go undigested. God’s Word must pass through the digestive system of our mind and our heart for us to extract and retain the nourishment in it.

Going back to the three tribes on the western side of the encampment, we note that they share a common bond in addition to the sign of the ox. These three tribes – Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh – were all descendants of Rachel (Benjamin was her son, and Ephraim and Manasseh – were all descendants of Rachel (Benjamin was her son, and Ephraim and Manasseh, being sons of Joseph, were her grandsons). They could rightly be considered “Rachel” tribes. There’s a lesson to be found in this relationship.



We recall that Jacob agreed to labor seven years to gain Rachel as his wife, as Rachel was his “chosen:” *And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter* (Genesis 29:18). But Laban pulled a fast one on Jacob, for when his seven years were completed, Laban gave him Leah instead. Laban offered the excuse that custom

prohibited giving the younger daughter in marriage before the older daughter. (Laban was acting selfishly because he recognized that he greatly benefited from Jacob's labor, and concocted a plan whereby he could continue that profit.) An agreement was reached in which Rachel was also given to Jacob on the condition that Jacob would labor an additional seven years.

Though there is much to the story of Leah and Rachel as Jacob's wives, we wish to focus on one point relevant to our subject. Rachel's name means "ewe," which we know is a female sheep. The sheep is another ruminant possessing a cloven hoof: a clean animal. The sheep is portrayed in Scripture as the meekest of animals with a strong instinct to follow a leader. Jesus described his disciples as sheep and himself as their shepherd, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me* (John 10:27). It is fitting therefore that the qualities of the sheep, combined with the qualities of the ox, provide a picture of the expected character of Christ's followers.

Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel meaning "who prevails with God," had a preference as to the woman he desired. The ecclesia is often portrayed as the bride (the chaste woman) of Christ, as we symbolically note in the *Song of Solomon*. The saints are the offspring of the chosen woman (chosen by the Lord). In proportion to the world's population they are modest in number, yet those who dwell in the spiritual "West" will become the bride of Christ. There are other analogies that could be drawn from a study of Leah and Rachel, but this analogy seems fitting to the facts of the natural arrangement.

In our previous review of the East, we concluded that it is the direction from which we approach God. To journey from the east to the west causes us to turn our backs on our failures, setting our faces firmly westward journeying toward the setting sun. When the day is done and the journey is complete, we will find ourselves at the house of God. The sun will set on the seventh one-thousand year-day, and the saints will have no more need of sunlight as the "light" of God will be sufficient for them. The Scriptures allude to an eighth day when God will be all in all, a future of which we now have no insight into other than that which is written, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him* (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Mike Washeck, Powhatan, VA

ECCLESIAL NEWS

News items must be received no later than six weeks prior to the intended issue. Ecclesial news may be sent to Sister Kathy Washeck at kwasheck@hotmail.com. Ecclesial news is also posted on a password-protected section of The Christadelphian Advocate's website. The current password is ecclesia. The website is www.christadelphianadvocate.org.



ST. LOUIS, MO – It is with great joy that we announce that **Traeton Hawkins** has come out of Adam and into the saving name of Jesus Christ. He was immersed by his father, Brother Mike Hawkins, on Sunday May 23, 2020 after a good confession of his faith. The baptism was witnessed by his parents, brother, sister, grandparents, and members of the St. Louis ecclesia. We pray that our Heavenly Father will bless and guide Brother Traeton in his walk in the Lord.

Sharon Washeck

AS THE DAY APPROACHES

Readers are invited to send items of interest for this section directly to the Editor at editor@christadelphianadvocate.org



“The memorials of the Deity are almost entirely absent in all Gentile pleasure gatherings, which manifest a shameful disregard of Him who is the Author of their being... In the future, all this will be changed, and the essential feature of the whole fabric will be honor and glory to the Creator. All things will be done and said with a new enterprise and motive... They will all be conscious of their privileges, and the goodness of Him at whose table they are fed. In fact, then will be realized the song of the angels, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.’”

(Henry Sulley, The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy, Chapter 5, Section II, 7)

US in Moral Free Fall as Everyone Does What is Right in Their Own Eyes:

In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25)

The consequences of rejecting God's truth are undeniable. We know what we believe dictates how we behave. Today, we are seeing moral breakdown permeating the culture around us, and it is playing out with devastating consequences. This was the conclusion of the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University who conducted a poll in association with the Barna Group. The poll revealed 58 percent of respondents said they look to themselves or other people when making moral decisions. Less than one third said that they look to the Bible. The Center surveyed 2,000 adults at random in January on the telephone or online, long before the impact of the Coronavirus and rioting across the country.

A total of 58 percent of U.S. adults agreed that "identifying moral truth is up to each individual; there are no moral absolutes that apply to everyone all



the time." Sadly, 48 percent of adults who identified as born-again Christians agreed with the statement. The Cultural Research Center also found that the type of church the person attends often corresponded with their answer. "The adults most likely to rely upon a religious resource – usually the Bible – were those aligned with an Evangelical or Pentecostal church. Evangelical church attendees (72%), Pentecostal church attendees (70%) and born-again Christians (69%) were among the most likely to say

God is the basis of truth. People associated with mainline Protestant congregations and Catholics were most likely to rely upon themselves for moral wisdom (34%). Political conservatives were also most likely to rely upon the Bible (40%), while moderates (17%) and liberals (11%) were least likely, instead relying on their own feelings, beliefs, and knowledge for moral direction."

Perhaps most troubling, the findings regarding the moral views of the youngest generation indicate this downward moral trajectory is likely to continue. Americans age 18 to 29 are least likely – only 15% – to turn to the Bible for moral guidance and instead look to themselves or to their family.

Dr. George Barna said that he was not surprised at the results of the survey as he has observed America's departure from its moorings for decades. "The percentage of adults with a biblical worldview has been sliced in half since 1995. As Americans embrace the consequences of unrestrained moral choices, we will see further rejections of traditional marriage, conventional child-rearing practices and objectives, millions more abortions, excessive substance abuse, and wider acceptance of suicide, polygamy, sexual perversion, and religious persecution."

Chronologic Prophecy Introductory Statement

Chronologic prophecy must, in the very nature of the case, be designed for the benefit of later and not of earlier generations. The prophets themselves did not always understand their own chronological predictions. When the time was near, the period short, and the language in which it was expressed simple and literal, they of course did so; but when the events were distant, the period long, and the prophecy expressed in symbolic language, we are told by the Apostle Peter that so far from understanding, they “inquired and searched diligently ... what, or *what manner of time* the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify,” and that it was revealed to them “that not unto *themselves*, but unto *us* they did minister.” **Hence it is evident that the treasures of chronologic prophecy were committed to earlier ages for the benefit of later ones, and especially of the latest.** As the end draws near the mysterious predictions are gradually explained by their own progressive fulfillments, and the light grows stronger and cleaner to the close.



The statement that not even “the wise shall understand” chronologic prophecy till “the time of the end,” accounts for all the misunderstanding of earlier ages, and all the partial comprehension of later times, and is an encouragement to the study of it in *these* days, for that we live in “the time of the end” is plain with a moment’s reflection. What does the expression in Daniel “the time of the end” mean? Clearly the time of *the end of the events revealed to Daniel*. His prophecies foretold the events of twenty-five centuries, the existence of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires, and represent these as occupying the entire interval between the prophet’s own days and the day of the resurrection of the dead and the establishment of the glorious and everlasting Kingdom of God on earth. They predict that the last or Roman dominion would exist in two distinct and successive stages, contrasted in many respects, but alike in some, and especially in that they are both phases of the rule of Rome. The first, a stage in which that great city is the fountain of authority and government to an *undivided empire*; and the second, in which it is so, in a different way, to a *tenfold commonwealth* of kingdoms.

H. Grattan Guinness, Light for the Last days, Chapter 1,

“The Daniel Parallel,” pp. 4-5