

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOI. XXXIX

NOVEMBER 18, 2001

NO.23

TIME IS AT HAND -2

To be found on a lonely island with no prospect of returning even to the nearest town which is 50 miles away is no pleasant experience. Yet, that was what happened to the aged and only surviving Apostle John in 90 A.D. The little band of disciples who had witnessed the risen and ascended Lord had all made their exit through martyrdom several years before. Matthew was slain in Ethiopia. Stephen was humiliatingly stoned to death. Peter was crucified upside down. Simon and Philip were crucified too. James was beheaded. Mark was dragged in the street until he bled to death. Bartholomew was flayed alive. Paul was beheaded and James the less was thrown down from Temple-top and was beaten to death. Here is only one man whose fate is yet to be decided. Domitian exiled John to the lonely island of Patmos. Cut off from all human sympathy and support it is a miracle how he survived. Despair, disappointment and depression should have gripped him. All the doors were closed. The question, what next? Had no answer.

Then the unbelievable happened. To His forsaken, exiled servant Christ appeared. God had made no mistake. Our times are in His hands (Psa.31: 15). Our tears are in His bottle and in His book (Psa.56:8). Not a single sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's permission (Matt.10:29). God numbers our very hairs (Matt. 10:30). Has He not charged His angels to keep us in all our ways? (Psa. 91: 11). They are ministering spirits to all those who are heirs of salvation (Heb. 1: 14). They are commissioned to bear up our feet in their hands lest our feet dash against a stone. (Psa.91: 12). Have we not trusted a God Who says, "I know your sorrows" (Exo. 3:7)? When we pass through the waters and walk through the fire HE that redeemed us says "I am with thee" (Isa.43: 1,2).

A child of God never escapes the benevolent superintending all -pervading eye of God. The Athenian poets said that in God we live, move and have our being (Acts 17:28). They said it by speculation. We say it by experience. The God Whom we worship is the same who walked with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fire heated seven times over by Nebuchadnezzar's fury. God is alive and active. Sometimes it baffles our best minds as to why God should confine His most needed servants when at freedom they could have contributed more to His cause. With no apostle left behind, will not John be most needed to go around and encourage the local churches? Yes, human reasoning would argue so. Standing 20 centuries away we look back on that exile of John and now appreciate why God in His sovereign wisdom thought it all necessary. Physical unhindered freedom might have enabled John to serve just one generation with his spoken ministry. God saw farther and farther and made him sit in loneliness to see, to perceive and record the wonderful visions, that he may serve all generations. God makes no mistakes. Our privations and persecutions endured in the will of God distil honey to comfort others.

The Revelation which came to John passed through a fourfold sequence of transmission. It originated with God, passed on to Jesus Christ, Who gave it in turn to an angel before the angel gave it to John. As Peter would have us to know "...holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1: 21). In fact, in Revelation chapters two and three, seven times we find the mention "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches". Hence in a special way the triune God has been its sole Author. It was handed over to John for a twofold purpose. Firstly, to give a revelation of the Person of Christ and.- secondly, " to shew ...things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1).

Next to His Son, God's greatest gift to the world is His Word, the HOLY BIBLE. The Book attempts to speak with perfect ease the distant, undated past, the present and the distant future. The world is yet to write or invent such a book with such dimensions. Twenty-seven percent of the Bible is predictive prophecy. The Book of Revelation is more prophetic in nature than any other book in the Bible. Trailing behind is another in the Old Testament- the book of Daniel. We would have all been left to grope in the dark, wallow in baseless speculations had not God unraveled the mysteries for us.

More than all the above considerations the one declaration that arrests our attention is the special blessing that God

has specially bestowed on anyone who would read or hear and keep the sayings of this book. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1: 3). Likewise no other book in the Holy Writ closes with such a warning as what we see below:

"...If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life..." (Rev. 22:18, 19).

Whatever might man think of this book; at least in God's sight this book is of prime importance. He would not tolerate any who would be presumptuous to tamper with its holy contents. Such is the honour God has given to the book of Revelation. Why? The time is at hand. The present dispensation is heading for a climax. Christ is coming for His own. Those who are His, wait expectantly for His arrival. Having washed their robes clean in the blood of the Lamb, they are those who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Rev. 14:3).

My friend, are you in this august company? Without holiness no man shall meet the Lord. (Heb.12:14). At the foot of the cross God justifies every sinner who cries "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). Have you cried and has Christ become your righteousness and redemption? (1 Cor. 1 :30). Time is running out. He is coming. The time is at hand.

(To be contd.)

P.S.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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2-11-2001

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

May His Name, even the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords be glorified, His heart satisfied and His people edified, as we endeavour to follow Him. May we be led in paths He hath prepared for us, in the two months ahead of us, before the year closes. May He keep us from falling, as we keep the word of His patience holding fast that which we have in Christ, our Saviour, to the uttermost (Rev.19: 16; Eph. 2:10; Rev. 3:10,11).

Let us thank the Lord for the enabling grace and sufficiency granted to His saints and servants in the various special gatherings and mini Convocations, held in various parts of the land –a ministry to the upbuilding of His Church and the extension of His Kingdom. In the church at Jehovah- Jireh, St. Thomas Mount, Chennai, the Youth Camp from 23rd to 28th October was well attended. Young people drawn from nearly twenty assemblies of the South, besides others participated. The midday gatherings exceeded five hundred, inspite of the inclement weather. Bro.Paul Sudhakar profitably took the Bible studies on the theme taken from 1 Tim.3:15, emphasising the various facets of the Church of the living God and the House of God. Bros. John Stewart and B. Timothy shared the ministry during the last two days. About twenty decided for the Lord while about twelve responded to the call for full time service for Him. We need to pray much that the Lord may preserve and accomplish His word as we read in Isaiah 55:11 and for His servant Bro. Glen and the responsible brothers functioning together with him.

The Convocation held at Shalem, Bellampalli was indeed a time of blessing, for the edification of saints and salvation of souls, as nearly two hundred decided for the Lord. Inspite of the bus strike, a crowd of nearly three thousand continued from 24th to 28th October. Bros. G. T. Benjamin and J.C. Rao began the ministry of the Word and Bro. Paul Sudhakar continued the same based on the theme " The church of the living God". (1 Tim. 3:15). On the 29th they had a profitable time of prayer and ministry with full time servants and responsible brethren from assemblies of the coal belt area, nearly a dozen. Let us pray that the Word of His grace ministered in the liberty of

the Spirit, may build up the saints, to enjoy their inheritance with all saints (Acts 20:32). Also remember God's servant Bro. Moses and fellow - servants in that area.

The Lord blessed the ministry of Bro. Werner Tietze and Bro. Eddy Williams in the Convocation held at Berachah, Gangtok, Sikkim. More than 2000 attended the gatherings and many made a new commitment to the Lord to be faithful to the House of God. Continue to pray for Bro. Lingdong and co-workers at Berachah, Gangtok.

We continue our thoughts from the Book of Daniel, to learn what we can from Daniel's life and witness, which would equip us and encourage us to press forward in our high calling. We had mentioned that "purity of spirit" is fundamental. It is also possible and profitable. Daniel's experience proved this (Dan.1: 9, 14, 16). He must have been tempted to doubt as we often do -to reason that in this world of insincerity and compromise it is not always possible to keep true to one's highest ideals. His livelihood, his opportunities of usefulness and his standing with those in authority seemed to demand some sort of lowering of the standard. Others were doing it and were being blessed, so why not he? Such arguments are familiar in every age, to us as much as to him. Daniel however was not led astray by them, but made his simple, dignified request, and the Lord did not let him down. The impossible happened.

That the purity of spirit is also profitable seems to be the important lesson of this chapter - not only that one can be true to God even in Babylon, but that it pays to be so. No one need pity Daniel, for his way of utterness proved to be a way of great blessing. He was "fairer ...and fatter" (v.15) -"ten times better" than the rest (v.20). There is nothing negative against devotion to the Lord, though at times, to onlookers it may seem so. At the moment Daniel may appear to be a man of abstinence, but in the long run he could stand comparison with the best of them.

It may be helpful to repeat that this kind of decided committal is essential for those who wish to know what the will of God is. Many people are not in a position to judge what that will is, because they reserve to themselves the right to withhold obedience, if the outcome is unacceptable – either to them or to others whose opinion they value. God has never promised to show us anything on these terms. He does not give His guidance" on approval". The simple fact is that the Lord's children cannot know His will in certain cases because they are not prepared to give Him a prior undertaking, that they are determined to obey the light when it is given. May the Lord by His Holy Spirit in us make this purity of spirit possible and profitable for us all, inspite of the falling away of many from maintaining such a high standard.

Thank the Lord for the ministry fulfilled by Bro. Werner Tietze at Gangtok, Kalimpong and Darjeeling. Do pray for him and Bro. Carlson as they would be ministering at Hebron till the 8th November and thence at the church at Jehovah - Shammah, Chennai, from 9th to 14th November God willing, and later leave for Germany on 15th by Lufthansa Air Lines.

Please pray for Bro. Joseph Stanley, God's servant at C.C.C. now in Vijayawada, undergoing treatment after suffering from a heart attack. Also pray for full recovery of Bro. P. James (Jimmy) at Hebron as he has undergone surgery for fracture of the left leg bones.

Bro. Edwin Parmar a minister of God and fellow-labourer in the Lord's vineyard was called to Glory on the 21st October at Baroda. Please pray for the comfort of his wife and daughter.

Praying that our commitment to the Lord be deep and decisive, to enjoy the purity of spirit in a much higher degree than we have known, awaiting the Lord's appearing,

I remain yours in His grace,
K. PHILLIP

1 John 3: 2,3; Job 22 :22,23,30; Rev. 22 .1,4,5

MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU -2
BAKHT SINGH

Prophet Isaiah had prophesied in minute detail about the birth, life, suffering, death, resurrection and the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Among many names given to the Lord Jesus in Isaiah 9:6, one is the Prince of Peace. It means, only in Him, by Him and through Him, people can find true peace. Then we find that the same

message was brought to the earth at His birth in Bethlehem. That message was brought from heaven by a multitude of heavenly host. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14). These words are sung by many Christians at Christmas. They go out for carol singing, singing the same songs the whole night. But they sing for the sake of cake, coffee or tea. They are not after real peace. They are concerned much more about cakes and other things.

Now let us see how necessary it is to make sure that we have found true peace. "Peace be unto you" (John 20:19-21), was the first message our Lord Jesus gave to His disciples after His resurrection. These disciples were filled with fear, and they were hiding themselves with doors and windows closed. All of a sudden, the Lord Jesus Christ came inside, and the first words He spoke were "Peace be unto you". What He had said in John 14, was now being repeated. Now those disciples had seen many miracles for three and a half years. Also they had heard His sermons. For His sake, they forsook all and followed Him. They were good people. They were familiar with the words of the Lord Jesus. But that day they did not have real peace. So our Lord said, "Peace be unto you." In other words, He told them, "I had to suffer for your sake so that peace might come into you". You may be familiar with the whole Bible and perhaps you have seen some miracles being performed here and there in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, either through you or others around you. But tell me, have you found true peace? Can you say truthfully and sincerely that real peace has come into you?

We find Paul the apostle repeating the words grace and peace in every epistle in the beginning itself. "... Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom.1: 7). Also please see 1 Cor.1: 3, 2 Cor.1: 2, Gal.1: 3, Eph.1: 2, Phil. 1: 2, Col. 1: 2, 1 Thess. 1: 1,2 Thess. 1: 2, 1 Tim. 1: 2, 2 Tim. 1: 2, Titus 1: 4. This shows that the grace of God, and the peace of God must go together. The more grace you have, the more peace you will enjoy. The more peace you have, the more grace you will enjoy. You cannot have God's grace without having true peace. That is why you must make sure that you have found true peace. Many are deceived by worldly peace. Our Lord said, "...my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27).

Further, we read in Rom. 16:20, And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. We do not defeat Satan by Bible knowledge or long prayers or by seeing dreams or miracles. Scripture says that the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet. That is why the devil tries to disturb our peace. He has many devices to disturb our peace, because it is only then he can come inside. Kindly make sure that you have found true peace, otherwise remember you are going to be defeated by the devil by some trick or device.

Again in Rom. 14:17 we read, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost". Your share in God's Kingdom also depends upon your peace.

In the same way, we read in Isa. 32:17,"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever". If you want to become more righteous or holy, then you must have more peace. Just by good works you are not going to become righteous or good. Even though outwardly you may look good, inwardly the throne of Satan is in your heart.

Further in Rom.15: 13 we read, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost". God's power can work fully in you when you find true peace. If you have not found true peace, you cannot pray properly. If you have not found true peace, you cannot defeat Satan easily. It is only by inward peace that you can hear the voice of God.

(To be contd.)

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