

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
Volume 3, Number 1, January 1982

The Mount of Olives
A Prophecy of Noah
A Talent-the Price of a Man
Revelation

The Mount of Olives

This famous mount, standing east of Jerusalem, is referred to often in the Scriptures. It seems to be frequently linked to prophetic events to occur at the Lord's return. It was "as he [Jesus] sat upon the mount of Olives" that the disciples asked of the signs of his presence (Matthew 24:3). It was from Mount Olivet that Jesus evidently ascended out of the apostles' sight, and where the angels promised "this same Jesus ... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11, 12)

Perhaps the most famous reference to it appears in Zechariah 14. There, in dramatic symbology, is described the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, and the subsequent flow of blessing from it. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." (Zechariah 14:4) This passage is treated at length in the chapter "Jehovah's Footstool Made Glorious"-see Volume 4. It describes the establishment of the kingdom in two phases-heavenly, northward, and earthly, southward. When this is accomplished it will allow the blessings of life and truth, pictured by the river flowing from the temple at Jerusalem, to reach the Dead Sea of mankind, awakening them out of the sleep of death and refreshing them with all the benefits of God's grace and nourishment. An interesting detail of Zechariah 14:8 is that the waters from Jerusalem will actually flow to both the Dead Sea and the great Mediterranean Sea. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea [the Dead Sea],

and half of them toward the western sea [the Mediterranean Sea]..." (ASV) Perhaps this pictures the two classes of men under Adamic curse -those who are still breathing (Mediterranean), and those in the grave (Dead Sea). Both will be revived, freshened, blessed by the living waters.

The splitting of the mount of Olives, which we see to be symbolic and not literal (though the symbolisms follow closely the potentials of the geographic layout), happens in connection with God's final deliverance of Israel from her enemies, according to the context of the first three verses. This will come in close association with the raising of the Ancient Worthies, which will directly inaugurate the earthly kingdom, and so differentiate an earthly sphere of God's kingdom from the heavenly one "splitting" the kingdom of God into two aspects.

The name of the mountain chosen to symbolize the Kingdom government-the Mount of *Olives* - well suggests the character of that kingdom as offering the blessings of the holy Spirit (represented by olive oil, the special produce of the olive -see Judges 9:9) for enlightenment, solace and peace to troubled mankind. Remember that the olive leaf in the mouth of the dove was used to signal peace and solace after the flood.

There is another reference to the Mount of Olives which, like Zechariah, points to the blessing of the Kingdom through the Spirit of God. It is found in Ezekiel 11. As a preample to it, Ezekiel is shown visions of the great iniquity of Jerusalem, its idolatrous religious leaders, the "sealing" of the faithful, and the destruction of the rest. (Chapters 8-10) This is a picture for us of the false worship of Christendom, the sealing of the saints, and destruction of the systems of error and the tares they contain.

We know that following the overthrow of Christendom the Kingdom will be established. So following Ezekiel 9 & 10 might there be a reference to the kingdom work? There is. Ezekiel 11:17-20 refer to the blessing of Israel. "I will even gather you from the people ... and I will give you the land of Israel ... I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you ... that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." This happens during the Kingdom. And in connection with this, we read in verse 23, "And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city." This appears to end that particular vision of Ezekiel. (See verse 24.)

What mountain is that described as "on the east side of the city"? Zechariah answers "... the mount of Olives ... is before Jerusalem on the east." (14:4) So Ezekiel 11:23 also refers to the Lord's spirit resting on the mount of Olives as illustrating the blessed effects of the Kingdom of light and peace to comfort and bless Israel and mankind.

A Prophecy of Noah

"Noah ... said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren ... Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." (Genesis 9:24-27)

As time progressed, the Canaanites did become subservient to the Shemites. For of Shem came Abraham, and of Abraham ultimately the 12 tribes of Israel, who were given the land of Canaan. "Behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession." (Deuteronomy 32:49)

But the prophecy also indicates Japheth was to receive of the blessing which would naturally fall to Shem supposing this is the meaning of "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." This was also true. The Gospel, generally repudiated by the Jewish people, was opened to the gentiles. And of the gentiles those of Japheth's descent seem to have been the most highly favored. Might this be related to God's direction of the Gospel into Macedonia (Acts 16:9) and westward into Europe?

A Talent-- the Price of a Man

Israel's tabernacle, in the strictest sense, was the linen tapestry which first overlaid the boards which supported it. "Thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them. ... the five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another ... and couple the [two larger, 5-piece] curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one tabernacle." (Exodus 26:1, 3)

This, in turn, was overlaid with 3 coverings: one of goat hair, one of ram skins, and above all a covering of seal skins (badgers in King James). The supporting edifice was constructed of boards standing upright, measuring 1 1/2 cubits wide, evidently 1/2 cubit thick, and standing 10 cubits tall. (Exodus 26:16) They were arranged 20 per side, and 6 in the back, with an extra board placed at each corner. We cannot be sure how those two corner boards were placed.

Each board was supported beneath by two tenons, each projecting into a socket of silver weighing one talent. The sockets, then, were the fundamental grounding of the whole structure--the foundation, so to speak. Since there were (20 + 20 + 6 + 2 =) 48 boards, there would need to be 96 sockets. (Exodus 26:17-25) But four more silver sockets were employed to hold four pillars supporting the vail leading into the most holy. (Exodus 26:32) This brings the total to 100 sockets of silver, and there were none others.

Our focus now is to identify what was symbolized by these sockets. We think it represents the ransom of our Lord, the redemption price delivered up at Calvary. Or, as silver elsewhere represents truth (Psalms 12:6), perhaps it would be more precise to say they represent the truth

of the ransom doctrine -the basic foundation truth upon which the plan of atonement and redemption is laid.

To see that the silver sockets are directly linked to redemption, we investigate the origin of those sockets. The silver, as all of the elements of the tabernacle, was received from the people of Israel. (Exodus 25:1-8) But the silver was received in a different manner than the other materials, or even the other metals. Exodus 38:24 speaks of the "gold of the offering" verse 29 speaks of the "brass [copper] of the offering" but when the silver is mentioned, verse 25, it is referred to differently. "And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men." (Exodus 38:25, 26) Rather than everyone giving as they could, the receipt of silver was as it were a tax upon the adult men, each paying the same amount, a bekah, which is 1/2 shekel.

To summarize: There were 603,550 men age 20 and up. Each gave 1/2 shekel. There are (evidently) 3000 shekels to the talent. The total, therefore, would be 100 talents, 1775 shekels of silver.

Exodus 30:12-16 explains the tax in more detail. "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel ... then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, ... half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary ... shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one ... from twenty years old and above, shall give ... The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel ... to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation ... to make an atonement for your souls."

The silver sockets, then, are linked directly with the atonement of the men of Israel. The men of Israel represent mankind, so the silver sockets are tied in with the atonement of man. And that which enables the atonement of mankind is the ransom price laid down by our Lord - evidently pictured by the sockets.

But why 100? Well, it is a good round number, and if it were any "un-round" number, we might feel inclined to search for some deeper symbol in the number itself. But it does serve to link those sockets, 100 in number, to three other parts of the tabernacle (used broadly) which have the measure 100 associated with them, and also represent our Lord. They are the gate to the court, the door of the tabernacle, and the vail leading to the most holy. Each of these measures "100" in area. The gate was 20 x 5 cubits, the door and vail each 10 x 10 cubits. Each of these represents our Lord in one sense or another. It is by faith in Christ that we first have access into the court. It is by consecration of our all to be dead with Christ that we enter into the door of the tabernacle, and begin our development as New Creatures. It is through the veil of flesh rent for us that we have subsequent access into the most holy. (Hebrews 10:20)

It is through Christ that we see the "Way" to reconciliation with God, that we subsequently

are begotten by the "Truth" to become "new creatures in Christ," and finally receive "Life" immortal if faithful unto death. Jesus is the "Way [gate], the Truth [door], and the Life [vail]: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) The number 100 running through each of these elements of the tabernacle-the sockets, gate, door, and vail serves to link them together as all pictures of essentially the same thing from one perspective or another -in this case, the one thing being our Lord.

A Life or a Talent

The weight of the silver sockets is also noteworthy. It was a talent. A talent of silver is elsewhere referred to as the price to be paid for a man's life, and this strengthens the identification of the talent-weight silver sockets as representing the price required for mankind's life -the ransom.

The account is in 1 Kings 20. The King of Syria had twice attacked the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, and the Lord had given the victory to Ahab, king of Israel. After the second battle Ahab should have slain the opposing king, Benhadad, but instead made a pact with him and spared him. For this God's punishment was that Ahab would die. His life would go for the life of Benhadad. This judgment was communicated to Ahab in the following way. A prophet placed himself so as to intercept Ahab in his passage. The prophet pretended to be a soldier, and even arranged to be wounded to make it convincing. He told Ahab that during the battle a man delivered a captive to him with the warning "if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver." Ahab judged the man [prophet] should therefore die, whereupon the prophet explained that just such a judgment was to befall Ahab for freeing Benhadad. (1 Kings 20:42)

The point of the story we concentrate on here is that the prophet equated the value of a life with "a talent of silver." Why, if not to tell us that symbolically a talent of silver is representative of the ransom of a man's life? It is very consistent, then, that the silver sockets of the tabernacle, each a talent in weight, point to the price of man's redemption-the Ransom.

Talent-Weight Hail Stones

We will add another reference in a more tentative vein. Silver does represent truth, as referred to earlier. So does water, and hail, which is frozen water. In Revelation 16:21 there is described a "great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent ... the plague thereof was exceeding great." This occurs in the last of the 7 plagues, Armageddon. It refers to the last great conflict which overturns the powers -that be. May it not represent the hard cutting truths concerning the rights or worth or value of men (so described as a talent in weight, like the silver sockets) which are the cause for the final overturning?

Revelation

Scripture generally requires careful study to get the full value, and this is certainly true of apocalyptic scripture. But with a respect for the studies of devoted brethren preceding, a thoughtful look at history, and a reverent application to the prophetic word, we have every reason for optimism in trying to understand Revelation. Unlike Daniel who was told to "Go thy way ... for the words are closed up," we are urged "blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things written therein: for the time is at hand." (Revelation 1:4)

Revelation has always been helpful to the Church. Evidently it helped the brethren early in the age see that a difficult adversary would come from Rome, the seven hilled city. (Revelation 17:5, 9) Bro. Streeter's research on this is interesting. (*The Rev. of Js. Christ*, pp. xxxv-xxxvi)

"From Irenaeus (145 A.D.), a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John, to Chrysostom and Jerome (345 A.D.), there was a very general agreement on the following matters which may truthfully be said to constitute the key to Apocalyptic interpretation:

1 That the 'little horn' of Daniel 7, the 'man of sin' of 2 Thess. 2, and the 'beast' of Rev. 13, were to rule from Rome, and that these prophecies referred to one and the same power-the Antichrist.

2 That the hindrance to Antichrist's full development and rule, mentioned by St. Paul (2 Thess. 2), was the Roman emperors reigning in the city of Rome.

3 That the ten-homed dragon and the ten-homed beast of Rev. 12, 13, and 17, were the same as the fourth beast seen by Daniel (Dan. 7), and that they describe different aspects of the Roman Empire.

4 That the 'ten horns' on the beast seen by St. John and on the fourth beast of Daniel referred to a division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, at a time future from St. John's day.

5 That when this breaking up of the Empire would take place, the predicted Antichrist would then begin to rule.

It is a most remarkable fact that all the noted expositors throughout the entire Age until now are agreed in these matters. It is true that the writers who lived during the first two and a half centuries supposed that when Antichrist became seated at Rome, his career would be a brief one. However, it is reasonable to suppose this would be the case in view of the Divine rule of progressive interpretation of prophecy."

Later, as the Man of Sin Paul warned of developed, the brethren were able to see that papal, rather than pagan Rome, was the greater adversary. This not only helped the reformers, but later allowed brethren to mark the end of papal power, and note the prophetic guide posts

of Daniel leading to the Lord's return. Now it helps us see that it has been time to "come out" of Babylon to the light of Present Truth. And with the light shining more brightly now than ever before, Revelation as a whole should be clearer than ever.

Today many brethren understand much of Revelation in a rather uniform and consistent way. Their understanding is a reasonable extension of the understanding gradually developed by the Lord's people throughout the age, in response, we feel, to the leading of the Lord's holy Spirit. In contrast to this, many "Protestant" fundamentalist interpreters follow a persuasion sometimes called the "futurist" view of Revelation. This view puts most of Revelation into the future, rather than applying it to the experiences of the Church throughout the age. The "futurist" view is a tangent which evidently originated from Catholic expositors during the Reformation. Protestant reformers were applying such passages as Revelation 17:5 to the Papacy (rightly so), and a defense was sought. We quote Bro. Streeter again, who in turn quotes H. G. Guinness.

"The Futurist interpretation applies the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse to the Jews after the Church is glorified. ... It originated in the Roman Catholic Church, and was a reply of the Roman Catholic theologians to the Reformers of the sixteenth century who applied those Apocalyptic visions that portrayed the great Apostasy, the Antichrist, to the Romish system.

Rome had her theologians, learned men, among whom were Ribera and Bellarmine. Ribera was a Jesuit priest of Salamanca. In 1585 he published a commentary on the Apocalypse, denying the application of the prophecies concerning Antichrist to the existing Church of Rome. He was followed by Cardinal Bellarmine, a nephew of Pope Marcellus II, who was born in Tuscany in 1542, and died in 1621. Bellarmine was not only a man of great learning, but the most powerful controversialist in defense of Popery that the Roman Church ever produced. Clement VIII used these remarkable words on his nomination: 'We choose him, because the Church of God does not possess his equal in learning.' Bellarmine, like Ribera, advocated the Futurist interpretation of prophecy. He taught that Antichrist would be one particular man, that he would be a Jew, that he would be preceded by the reappearance of the literal Enoch and Elias, that he would rebuild the Jewish temple at Jerusalem, compel circumcision, abolish the Christian sacraments, abolish every other form of religion, would manifestly and avowedly deny Christ, would assume to be Christ, and would be received by the Jews as their Messiah, would pretend to be God, would make a literal image speak, would feign himself dead, and rise again, and would conquer the whole world -Christian, Mohammedan, and heathen; and all this in the space of three and a half years. He insisted that the prophecies of Daniel, Paul, and John, with reference to Antichrist, had no application whatever to the Papal power.'

The earliest of what may be termed Protestant writers who adopted the system of Futurist interpretation are Todd and Maitland, the latter living from 1792 to 1866. There have been many since their day who have adopted their views, with some minor changes. These views are very little different from those of the two Roman Catholic

theologians above mentioned. It cannot therefore be successfully disputed that the Futurist interpretation of the Apocalypse had its origin in Rome at the end of the sixteenth century and was designed to relieve the Papacy from the terrible stigma cast upon it by the Protestant interpretation. ... The Historic interpretation was, of course, rejected with intense and bitter scorn by the Church it denounced as Babylon, and the power it branded as Antichrist, and it is still opposed by all who in any way uphold these.' " (*The Rev. of Js. Christ*, pp. xxiv-xxvi)

In coming articles we will look at Revelation itself. We will examine the basic structure of the book, and some of the areas of detail which contemporary brethren often concern themselves with.

We hope that if the book appears formidable to some, grasping its basic order and plan will ease the mind, and make Revelation easier to reason upon. For it is a book meant for our upbuilding, our help.

A brief outline of Revelation will be helpful. To us the book seems to divide rather naturally into five segments.

- 1) Introduction (Chapter 1)
- 2) A series of 7-staged histories of the Gospel age (7 Churches, 7 Seals, 7 Trumpets-Chapters 2 -11)
- 3) An historical overview of the Church, true and nominal (Chapters 12, 13)
- 4) The Harvest (Chapters 14-19)
- 5) The Kingdom (Chapters 20-22)

More on these divisions later.

We urge that the presentations of this journal be tried thoughtfully by all readers. "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good." We do not necessarily endorse every expression of contributed articles appearing herein. Information on the authorship of any article is freely supplied on request. Address all correspondence to: Beauties of the Truth, 9159 Via de Amor, Santee, CA .92071. Published through Millennial Morning.