

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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The Highway of Holiness

“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah 35:10).

Isaiah 35:1-10 contains a richness of promises for mankind in the Kingdom. All the promises of our Heavenly Father are sure, and here we are assured, that “the ransomed of the LORD shall return.” Isaiah 35:5 says that, “**Then** the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.” We might think how thrilling this is for the **literal** lifting of the curse of physical blindness and deafness, but more is implied.

We await as well the lifting of the curse of spiritual blindness and deafness on mankind. For when this blindness is lifted, the ransom for “the sin of the world” (John 1:29) will be clearly seen by mankind for the first time. This phrase, “the ransomed of the Lord” must refer to all who will accept Christ as their redeemer; as the corresponding price for father Adam. Clarke’s Commentary notes that the word “ransomed” that Isaiah used (H.6299) means “to redeem by paying a price.” This is a clear statement of the ransom. The perfect human life of our Lord was the corresponding price for the perfect human life of Adam. Those ransomed are the billions of mankind raised to life from the grave.

Because God cares, He did not abandon the world of mankind in a hopeless condition. He did not allow death to be the **final** condition of innocent, suffering millions. He provided a “ransom,” the basis of the only true hope for a world in despair. “I will **ransom** them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction” (Hosea 13:14). The Apostle Paul cites this certain promise in 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” The curse of death that Adam brought upon all is offset through the ransom price paid for all by Christ in laying down his life for mankind.

1 Timothy 2:3-6 reads, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be

saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, himself having been a man, Christ Jesus; the one having given himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (RVIC 2002 translation).

Verse 3 is a reminder that the entire plan of salvation has God as its author, and that He foresaw both the fall of man and his recovery from sin before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). Not only those in their graves, but those living through the transition into the Mediatorial kingdom will return. They will live in the kingdom, and if they live in harmony with the arrangements they will enjoy a full *anastasis* (G.386) or resurrection.

WHO ARE THE RANSOMED?

There is an apparent contradiction in verse 10, for these “ransomed” were never originally in Zion. This text cannot be referring to the “church of the firstborn” (Hebrews 12:23), for they are not on this Highway of Holiness, although they are intimately associated with it. This is a “highway,” it is not the “narrow way” (Matthew 7:14). This Highway is for the “weak” (Isaiah 35:3), it is for the “feeble” (Isaiah 35:5), and it is even for the “foolish” (Isaiah 35:8). In spite of all these failings they will not remain “unclean.”

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So this must refer to a calling in the Kingdom that we might term a “consecration to righteousness.” We would like to think that the pouring out of the holy Spirit on all flesh would eliminate these problems of weakness, enfeeblement, and foolishness. But in reality that is not the case. How can we say this? Because the New Creation has the first-fruits of the Spirit even now, and they have had to work with all these problems.

The use of the word “return” becomes clearer when we recognize that sin and alienation from God are an **unnatural** state. Because we are born in sin and shapen in iniquity, sin feels **natural** enough to fallen man. But this is where we need to have a spiritual perspective. Harmony and At-one-ment with God is the natural state of the universe. It is the state that our first parents enjoyed in Eden before we were plunged into sin, depravity, and destruction.

This return of the ransomed comes by the greatest “Highway” construction project that the world has ever seen. The grand highway of holiness. The return from the lost and perishing condition is to Zion, the Holy City where our heavenly father eagerly awaits them. They come with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. It is this portion that God has elected to give to the human race. And what a glorious portion!

Our Lord’s shed blood bought all the creation as well. “The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19-23). The earth was “made to be inhabited,” the Edenic paradise shall be restored. Surely, this is part of the return.

The restless desire for something new that now prevails is not a natural but an abnormal condition, due to our imperfection and our present unsatisfactory surroundings. It is not Godlike restlessly to crave something new. Most things are old to God and He rejoices most in those things which are old and perfect. So it will be with man when restored to the image of God. Perfect man will not know or appreciate fully, and hence will not prefer, the glory of spiritual being, because he is of a different nature — just as fishes and birds, for the same reason, prefer and enjoy each their own nature and element most. Man will be so absorbed and enraptured with the glory that surrounds him on the human plane that he will have no aspiration to, nor preference for, another nature or other conditions than those possessed.

RETURN WITH SINGING

“The desert shall blossom as the rose.” Both the plant and animal creation will be restored to their proper balance. Nature with all its pleasing variety will call to man from every direction to seek and know the glory and power and love of God. Both mind and heart will rejoice in Him.

Yes, this will be a blessed return for the ransomed, but they will return with singing as well.



A Highway of Holiness

Though this is a “highway,” travel on this road will still take effort. At the same time there will be cheer and encouragement along the route. As the goal of Zion (the spiritual administration of the kingdom) is reached, there will be singing and shouts of praise. The Hebrew word here for “songs” (H.7440) actually suggests that the voices will be a little shrill. But the ransomed will come to Zion with joy that naturally spills over into song.

Praises shall be sung to Jehovah both as God and King. Zion originally was the city or stronghold of the Jebusites and occupied the southern portion of the western ridge of what we now call Jerusalem. Zion commanded the highest, most inaccessible, and most easily fortified ground. When it was conquered by David, Zion became his fortified abode or citadel. His palace was built here, and through successive reigns and dynasties, down to the Christian era, Zion continued to be a royal residence and a political center of the land. The musical form used in praise in Zion must have been of surpassing beauty. Possibly, some special voice training was involved.

Even the enemies of Judah recognized the exceptional beauty of the Psalms when sung. They added to the grief of the Babylonian exiles as they came to the rivers of Babylon and the extensive canal system fed by the Euphrates. These Jewish captives were asked to “sing the glad songs of Zion” (Psalm 137:3), recognizing the inherent beauty of these songs. These ransomed on the Highway of Holiness will be singing the glad songs of Zion in the earthly phase of antitypical Zion, the earthly phase of the kingdom. In the next age as well as this age, there is a sanctifying effect in congregational singing.

SONGS OF THE HIGHWAY

Here are some of the songs they will be singing:

- **No more aggression:** “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain” (Isaiah 11:9).

● **No more evil:** “No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast.” “There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or ... a lie” (Isaiah 35:9, Revelation 21:27).

● **No more dying:** “Death where is thy sting, grave where is thy victory.” “There shall be no more death” (1 Corinthians 15:55, Revelation 21:4).

● **No more works of Satan:** “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

● **No more homelessness or starvation:** “They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit. They shall not plant and another eat” (Isaiah 65:21-23).

● **No more sickness:** “And no inhabitant will say I am sick.” “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing” (Isaiah 33:24, 35:5).

● **No more wars:** “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither shall they learn war anymore” (Micah 4:3).

● **No more sadness:** “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” “They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Luke 2:10, Isaiah 35:10).

● **No more fear:** “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6).

● **No more enemies:** “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:25-26).

● **We love those who once were our enemies:** “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

There will be many songs. One of the greatest will be: **No more ignorance of the Lord:** “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. I know and trust the Lord” (Jeremiah 31:34).

EVERLASTING JOY UPON THEIR HEADS

We are told that they will have “everlasting joy upon their heads.” Normally we think of

joy in the heart. But this is a different sort of joy. This joy is built upon a foundation of understanding. This joy is in the head as well as in the heart. It is a joy that blends with song and with gratitude to God for all His leadings. Many times this is associated with the “oil of gladness” (Isaiah 61:3).

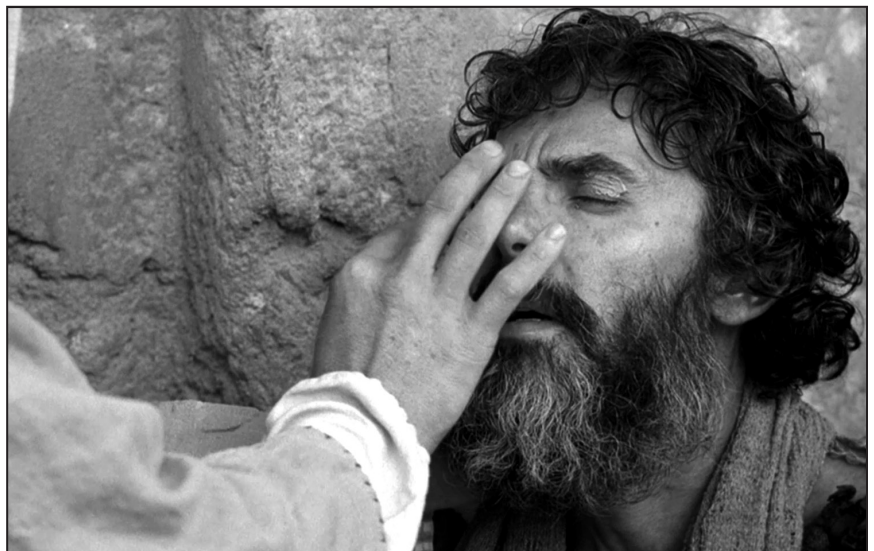
The church of the firstborn has this inheritance now, for ennobling thoughts are transforming. For this reason, Paul writes, “Whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report ... think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

We are to love and cultivate that which is pure to such an extent that that which is impure will become painful to us, distressing, and we will desire to drop it from memory, and this will only be accomplished by continually thinking upon those things that are pure, and avoiding the giving of thought to the things that are impure. We are to recognize true loveliness, and to esteem it. When we would think on the purest of things we must of necessity lift our mental vision to as high a point as possible, and, as nearly as we may be able, discern the loveliness of the perfect character of our God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and proportionately the loveliness manifested in one or another of the followers of Jesus, who walk closely in his footsteps (March 4 Manna).

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

In full support of Paul’s words there is a fascinating study by Dr. Daniel Amen, a fellow of the American Psychological Association, who researches the scans of working brains to see which portions of the brain are active during different thought processes. He writes (Daniel G. Amen, *Change Your Brain, Change Your Body*, Three Rivers Press; 2010, page 285).

“Practice gratitude. If you want your brain to work better, be grateful for the good things in your life. Psychologist Noelle Nelson and I did a study on gratitude and appreciation. She was working on a book called *The*



The blind will see, the lame will walk, the dumb will sing, the dead will be raised.

Power of Appreciation and had her brain scanned twice. The first time she was scanned after thirty minutes of meditating on all the things she was thankful for in her life. After the appreciation meditation her brain looked very healthy.

“Then she was scanned several days later after focusing on the major fears in her life. ... I scanned her brain after she mullied on these thoughts. Her frightened brain looked very *different* from her healthy gratitude brain and showed seriously decreased activity in two parts of her brain. Her cerebellum had completely shut down.

The cerebellum, also called the little brain, is involved in physical coordination, such as walking or playing sports. New research also suggests that the cerebellum is involved in processing speed, like clock speed on a computer, and in thought coordination, or how quickly we can integrate new information. When the cerebellum is low in activity, people tend to be clumsier and less likely to think their ways out of problems. They think and process information more slowly and get confused more easily.

“The other area of her brain affected was the temporal lobes, especially the one on the left. The temporal lobes are involved with mood, memory, and temper control. Problems in this part of the brain are associated with some forms of depression, but also dark thoughts, violence, and memory problems.

In Noelle’s scans, when she practiced gratitude her temporal lobe looked healthy. When she frightened herself with negative thinking, her temporal lobes became much less active. Negative thought patterns change the brain in a negative way. Practicing gratitude literally helps you have a brain to be grateful for.”

Dr. Amen goes on to suggest a practical exercise:

“Write down five things you are grateful for every day. ... The act of writing helps to solidify them in your brain ... when depressed patients did this exercise every day, they actually needed less antidepressant medication. Other researchers have also found that people who express gratitude on a regular basis are healthier, more optimistic, make more progress toward their goals, have a greater sense of well-being, and are more helpful to others. Doctors who regularly practice gratitude are actually better at making the correct diagnoses on their patients.”

Let us modify this good advice for those who are in Christ. This is something we can do in our prayers as well as in our meditation. Let us think on five things each day to thank God for in our prayers. By counting our blessings and naming them one-by-one, we will be surprised at what the Lord has done and we will indeed have healthier minds.



Jesus and the woman at the well (copyright Simon Dewey, courtesy Altus Fine Art).

WELLS OF SALVATION

Isaiah 35:10 closes by saying, “they shall obtain joy and gladness.” This will be a full measure of joy. It will be both joy and gladness. A parallel text from Isaiah says, “In that day thou shalt say, O LORD I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me” (Isaiah 12:1).

“In that day” speaks to the same time when there is the “return” of mankind in the kingdom, as we found in our theme text of Isaiah 35:10. While there are beautiful lessons for the church, the application in general seems to be for the world of mankind: “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation” (Isaiah 12:1,2).

This salvation will acknowledge that our sufficiency comes from God. In the place of mankind’s current weakness there will be strength and song. The “arm of the Lord,” our Lord Jesus and his bride, is how Jehovah will exercise this strength:

“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3). These wells of salvation are a reference to the church and Ancient Worthies. Jehovah is the source of salvation, but it is through the agency of the body of Christ — the church — and their visible helpers — the Ancient Worthies — that the blessings flow. There seems to be a link to the promise in John 7:38, for these wells shall contain living water. Likely these are placed along the highway at convenient points, much like today’s rest areas on our Interstate highway system. There will be no long journeys to infrequent oases in the desert:

“In that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention

that his name is exalted” (Isaiah 12:4). In the kingdom, all the peoples of mankind will be eager not for the distressing news of our day, but for the news of his “doings.”

“Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth” (Isaiah 12:5). Only in the kingdom, may it be said, “this is known in all the earth.”

“Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee” (Isaiah 12:6). Our Heavenly Father who planned for all of this experience with sin from before the foundation of the world is to see both his earthly and heavenly creatures inhabit Zion in perfect at-one-ment. The joyful cries and shouts are what we expect in response.

THANKFULNESS AS OUR PRESENT INHERITANCE

Joy and gladness may be our **present** inheritance. There are certainly reasons enough for morbid thoughts that rob us of joy and gladness. We could certainly dwell only on those things that remind us of our fallen state whenever we would like to rob ourselves of joy and gladness. There is a fallen tendency to see the worst in all circumstances, but even at this present time we may choose to send sorrow and sighing fleeing by developing gratefulness. Gratefulness can be practiced, cultivated, learned.

With our waking thoughts and prayers, as our eyes greet the morning, we may remind ourselves that we have eyes to see, while millions of our human brothers and sisters are blind in their literal sight — and billions in their spiritual sight. When we then open our eyes with this thought, chances are that we will be more grateful for the gift of sight and more alert to the needs of those who lack that gift. Before turning off the light in the evening we may jot down one thing for which we never before have given grateful thanksgiving. One of the Lord’s dear ones has done this for years, and testifies that the supply still seems inexhaustible.

Gratefulness brings life to joy. Once we stop “taking for granted,” there is no end to the surprises and delight we may find. A grateful attitude is a creative one, and a giving one, because, in the final analysis, opportunity is the gift within the gift of every moment — the opportunity to



In everything, give thanks.

see and hear and smell and touch and taste with pleasure. Everything is a gift. Grateful living is a celebration of these gifts. There is no more joyful bond than the one that gratefulness celebrates, the bond between our Heavenly Father, the giver, and we, the thanksgivers. As St. Paul assured his beloved brethren in Corinth: “Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15)

THE ULTIMATE JOY AND GLADNESS

But what of the far-distant future when the human race is fully at one with God, evil has vanished without a trace, and death is a thing of the past? asks Bro. A. O. Hudson in his treatise, “God of All Space.” The Bible goes little further than the close of the Millennium, with which is associated the disappearance of evil and the entry of reconciled man into everlasting life.

Jesus alluded to that time in Matthew 25:34. “Come ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” This, says Paul, is when Christ, at the close of his Millennial work with mankind, “shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, the Father, that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

Of the state of humanity after that moment there is barely a hint, only that “the dwelling of God is with men ... and there shall be no more death ... for behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:3-5). “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isaiah 65:17). “In the coming ages,” says Paul, God will “show the immeasurable riches of his grace” (Ephesians 2:7).

It will take an eternity to know our Heavenly Father but the unassailable principle which the Bible enunciates with clear and definite voice is that life goes on. Life is endless. Of the ultimate joy and gladness, Pastor Russell has so beautifully written those words at the closing of *The Divine Plan of the Ages* (pages 191-194):

“Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay — not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth’s society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete (Revelation 21:4).”

— Br. Richard Doctor

In the Beginning God Created the Heavens

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). “Thus saith the LORD, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the breath of man within him” (Zechariah 12:1).

The Bible asserts the universe had a “beginning” and that it was subsequently “stretched.” The scientific community would not have supported the assertion that the universe had a beginning during the early 20th century. At that time, Albert Einstein, Sir Arthur Eddington, Sir James Jeans, Sir Fred Hoyle, and the rest of the world’s famous cosmologists agreed that the universe could not have had a beginning. Yet while they agreed upon that, as might be expected, they differed considerably over hypotheses and theories to account for the existing universe, let alone the beginning of life.

The idea of action by God did not appeal to many scientists. Yet, the origin of the universe and the origin of life needed some rational explanation. In an article published in *Nature* in 1931, Eddington replaced God with random motion when he postulated, “[the] way out of the dilemma ... [is] ... If we have a number of particles moving about at random, they will in the course of time go through every possible configuration, so that even the most orderly, the most non-chance configuration, will occur by chance if only we wait long enough”¹

Variations on the Eddington thesis echo down to our day in the polemics of Dr. Richard Dawkins author of “The God Delusion.” Dawkins embraces the concept of an unobservable “multiverse” with an incredible number of variations (10 with 500 zeros following) to explain the “fine tuning” of the physical constants that makes life possible for us. This reasoning seems to remove the need for God in the reasoning of some scientists.



Edwin Hubble, 1889-1953, found that the Universe is expanding.



Beginning the Universe

As the 20th century moved forward, one-by-one, Georges Lemaître’s Cosmic Hesitation Model, Eddington’s further hypothesis on it, James Jeans’ Steady-State Cosmology, Fred Hoyle’s C-field, and Willem de Sitter’s Oscillating Universe, all fell progressively before direct astronomical measurements.

By the late 1920s the pioneering work of Edwin Hubble in his observations of galaxies and their associated “red shift” established that the universe was expanding and argued for a “beginning” and a “stretching,” just as the Bible asserts.² The Bible presents a view of a Creator who stands outside of nature, and creates nature itself.

Not wishing to concede defeat, Hoyle derisively called Hubble’s expanding universe — with a beginning and stretching — the “Big Bang.” The name “Big Bang” stuck, although the term “Cosmic Inflation” is preferred today. Sadly, a portion of the Christian community that asserts a belief in the Bible are as confused as to the implications of the “Big Bang” as they are on other aspects of scripture.

Today, the equations of the theory of general relativity set forward by Albert Einstein have been tested in a multitude of ways and have thus far passed every test. They may therefore be proposed as the description of cosmology: the dynamics of the universe. The combined equation for Einstein’s theory of general relativity may be simply written although solving the combined equation for general relativity is no simple matter.

Nonetheless, from general relativity we can infer both the age and current size of the universe. Today linking theory and observation with direct observation using the Hubble space telescope we know the age of the Universe to a much higher precision than before Hubble: around 13.8 billion years.^{3,4} As the current Hubble telescope looks out in distance it is sometimes termed a “time machine,” for these distant observations look back in time — the Hubble telescope has now made the direct observation of the early universe a reality.

SO WHAT HAPPENED WITHIN LESS THAN 100 YEARS?

The 20th century began with no cosmologists putting forward a theory that the universe had a beginning. What a contrast to the close of the 20th century where a universe with a “beginning” and “stretching” is now considered the “standard model.” “Cosmic inflation,” i.e. the “Big Bang,” has validated the Bible!

— Br. James B. Parkinson

(1) Eddington, A.S., “The End of the World: from the Standpoint of Mathematical Physics,” *Nature*, Volume 127, pages 447-453, 1931.

(2) “Red shift” may be explained in simple terms. The three lightest elements, hydrogen, helium, and lithium, have a fixed characteristic emission spectrum at well measured frequencies. When this emission spectrum pattern is observed in galaxies more and more distant, Dr. Edwin Hubble was stunned to see greater shifts towards the “red” end of the spectrum. He realized that the only plausible explanation was that the universe was expanding, or being “stretched” and that the universe had a finite age or “beginning.” The “fixed” stars were not “fixed” at all, but moving away from us at high speed.

(3) www.spacetelescope.org/science/age_size/

(4) Interested readers may contact the “Beauties of the Truth” website for a more detailed examination of the differential equations involved and their solution developed by Bro. J. B. Parkinson. Or see the Dawn’s “Creation” booklet, 2nd or 3rd edition.

Matthew 5:32, A Usually Misunderstood Text

What Does the Divorcer Cause?

The common translation of Matthew 5:32 is: “But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (KJV). However, the Greek word translated “to commit adultery” (*moicheuthenai*,¹ from the verb *moicheuo*) is in a past tense.² A reader will easily recognize that “causeth her to have committed adultery,” or “to have been committing adultery,” is not credible; the divorcer cannot retroactively cause anything. So most translators alter the tense of the verb to a present tense, from which the reader infers the adultery will then



The Apostle Matthew

be in the future. (But what if she does not remarry?) Nevertheless, it is possible to understand it in the tense Matthew records (using italics for translator-supplied words):

“But I say unto you, That whosoever is putting away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to be deemed to have committed adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced is deemed to commit adultery.”³

— Br. James B. Parkinson

(1) Early manuscripts read thusly. Most (but not all) later manuscripts, headed by L and Δ (8th and 9th century respectively, none earlier), have changed it to *moichasthai*, which is present infinitive, “to commit adultery.” Thus, the fault lies not with the King James translators themselves, though the revisers have less excuse.

(2) Technically, aorist tense (“unseeable” tense): 1st Aorist, infinitive, passive, per Bagster’s (or Harper’s) *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*.

(3) The divorcer, and also any man waiting for her to be divorced, are guilty in Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18. Curiously, the divorcee is not said to be guilty in any of these three scriptures.

Locusts and John the Baptist

“His meat was locusts and wild honey” (Matthew 3:4)

From time to time there are friendly discussions as to whether John the Baptist ate locust insects or locust bean (Matthew 3:4, Mark 1:6). One approach to resolving the question is to see how the Greek word for locust(s) is used in the rest of the Bible. If that is not sufficient to resolve the question, then see how other ancient writers used the word.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary notes that “The name of the insect was first applied to the carob bean.” That could weigh in favor of John eating locust bean (carob bean, acacia bean).

Leviticus 11:22 declares four kinds of locusts as clean foods, acceptable for humans. That eliminates a potential objection to John having eaten the insect kind of locust.

The Greek word for locusts is *akris* (singular) or *akrides* (plural). The word is used in only two other places in the New Testament, in Revelation 9:3,7, where the “locusts” come out of the smoke of the abyss; there they are likened to scorpions and to war horses with heads, faces, hair, teeth, scales, wings, and stinging tails of scorpions. The Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament, in Exodus 10, uses the word to describe the locusts of the eighth plague, which ate up the two remaining crops of Egypt.

Thayer’s Lexicon defines the Greek word as insect locusts, and not as carob bean. It is defined as “grasshopper, locust, cricket” by Liddell & Scott (unabridged).

Therefore, pending further information, the other usages of the word indicate John the Baptist ate insect locust and wild honey, however unappetizing it may seem to some of us.

— Br. James B. Parkinson

Memorial, Thursday, April 2, 2015

“This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).

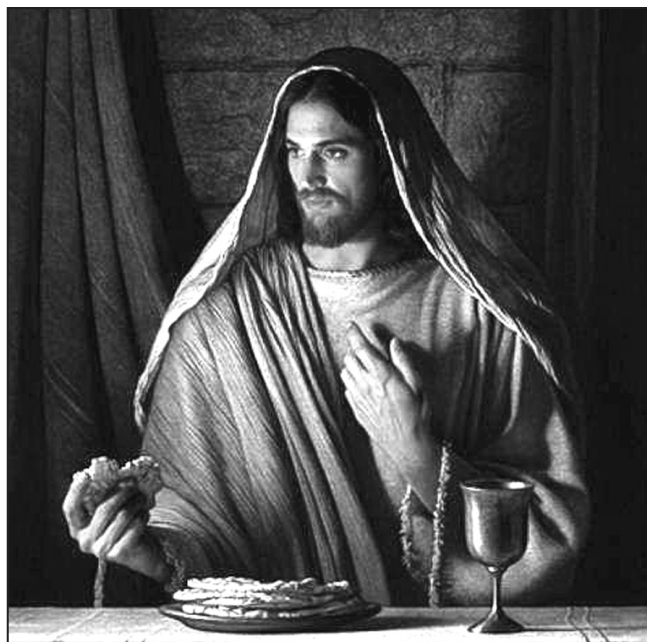
Our Lord inaugurated the Memorial in the upper room with his apostles on Thursday, April 2, 33 AD (by the Roman Julian calendar).¹ The coming Memorial is unusual in that the Nisan 14 observance will also begin after Sunset on Thursday, April 2. This brings together the Nisan 14 remembrance with the actual correct solar-calendar date as well as the day of the week in 33 AD.

This linkage did not occur during the entire 20th century. It is the only time this linkage takes place in the 200 years between the years of 1870 and 2069 (the actual year when the last linkage occurred or the year it shall next time occur was not researched for this note). A comprehensive review of the historic Memorial dates and the method employed for setting the Memorials appears in earlier issues of “Beauties of the Truth,” February 2009.²

Hence, this year a Thursday evening memorial occurs on both the same day of the week and the same calendar date as it did in Jesus’ day, and our Friday would match the Friday of his crucifixion. On the day of Jesus’ death the moon was in eclipse in the east as the sun was setting in the west, at 5:41 pm. Less than half of the umbral shadow remained, but it was conspicuous on the upper portion of the moon. The remainder was in the penumbral shadow, clearing from 6:25 pm to 7:41 pm (Friday, April 3, 33 AD).

On Friday, April 3, 2015, as of sunset at 6:23 pm, the moon will have previously risen in the eastern sky at 5:34 pm, and no eclipse will occur that evening. However, the following day, Saturday, April 4, a lunar eclipse will begin at 12:02 pm (these are all Jerusalem times). It will continue in some form until it is complete at 5:56 pm. During the height of that eclipse it will be total, and the almost six hours of this eclipse makes it a very long eclipse.

However, that eclipse will not be visible at Jerusalem. Moonrise on Saturday evening Jerusalem time April 4, 2015, will be at 6:28 pm, 32 minutes after the close of the eclipse. So compared to Jesus’ day, the eclipse would be one day later, and not visible at Jerusalem. (This information is from the program Sky View Café, which is available at skyviewcafe.com for those who wish to



This do in remembrance of me.

download and explore this.) The eclipse should be visible in Western North America, Australia, and Korea.³

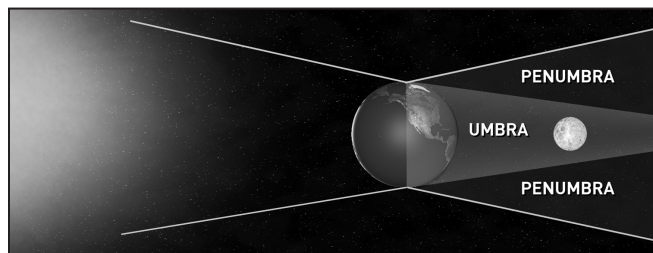
(1) Ruggles, Clive, “The Moon and the Crucifixion,” *Nature*, Volume 345, 21 June 1990, page 669. This article sets forth the very strong case for April 2-3, 33 AD and the author observes, “Problems arise in translating these constraints in a Julian date, largely because of the empirical nature of the Jewish calendar.”

(2) Charles Redeker, “Memorial Observances,” *Beauties of the Truth*, February 2009. James B. Parkinson, “Memorial Dates,” *Beauties of the Truth*, February 2009. James B. Parkinson, “Lunar and Solar Calendar,” *Beauties of the Truth*, February 2009.

(3) A good map of visibility can be found at: www.eclipsewise.com/oh/oh-figures/ec2015-Fig02.pdf

- 09:01:25 UT — Penumbral Eclipse Begins
- 10:15:46 UT — Partial Eclipse Begins
- 11:58:01 UT — Total Eclipse Begins
- 12:00:16 UT — Greatest Eclipse
- 12:02:32 UT — Total Eclipse Ends
- 13:44:48 UT — Partial Eclipse Ends
- 14:59:03 UT — Penumbral Eclipse Ends

These “Universal Times (UT)” are for Greenwich. For Jerusalem local time add 2 hours, 20.8 minutes. But for Standard Time add 3.0 hours, as the SkyView website has done. This table appears to be the Espenak computations (the standard) — it differs by a few minutes from Sky View.



Lunar Eclipse illustration

Financial Report

4,421.63	Balance January 1, 2014
1,660.00	Donations
-1,286.53	Expenses
4,795.10	Balance January 1, 2015
620	Current subscribers