

THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS
IN
JERUSALEM

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FOREWORD.

For as long as memory serves and, especially when the burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is remembered, our attention is always drawn to the phrase, three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, Matthew 12:40 where, it is generally assumed this means three days and three nights in the grave but this is not necessarily so.

Certainly it would have been as much of a mystery to them as it is to us today but our Lord is not hiding anything from us, the problem arises because translators have either used a word, or words, which do not describe the thought God gave the writer or because words have, unwittingly, been omitted.

Sometimes as in Luke 2:4-5, a phrase has been misunderstood because a word has been added, sometimes as in Exodus 12:40 an important event has been missed because two words have been lost, it is another reason why we must search the Scriptures, God did not hide anything, the truth is there for us to seek and find as the articles which follow will reveal.

Of course it would have been easier to understand if no one had ever made a mistake or never had misunderstood the Word of God but that is also a challenge to us and when we solve the mystery, what a precious reward to all who believe.

‘For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.’ Hebrews 4:12

God bless and guide you as you pray and search.

E. R. FINCK.

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THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN JERUSALEM

As Jonah was three days and three nights 'in the belly of the whale', so shall be the Son of man, three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Matthew 12:40

Many believe this verse reveals that the Lord Jesus Christ spent three days and three nights in the tomb but Scripture does not support this and it would have been as much a mystery to the Scribes and the Pharisees then as it is for us today. Without a doubt, when they heard Jesus say 'heart of the earth' they knew He spoke of Zion, Jerusalem, because they had sung the Psalms praising that beautiful city 'the joy of the whole earth' all their lives. Psalm 48:2

However, they did not know why our Lord said He would be three days and three nights in Jerusalem and were completely unaware that when they refused this final call from God for repentance they were in danger of eternal judgement from which there was no escape unless there was someone who would pay the price of their redemption.

It is why Jesus, knowing His Father had predestined Him to be the Redeemer and Jerusalem as the place where their redemption would be secured, gave them the sign of Jonah to reflect upon, that is, why Jonah was in the whale and what happened to him there, so that, when the sign was fulfilled they would recognise that moment, repent, and find forgiveness.

It is clear that, when Jesus said 'as Jonah was' and 'so shall be the Son of Man' He did not mean 'where' they were but 'why' Jonah 'was' in the whale and 'what happened' to him there because the same destiny faced Him in Jerusalem.

Jonah was in the whale because of the circumstances which followed, when he refused to take the message of repentance to the men of Nineveh and, despite his earnest prayer about this, he paid the price of his sin for three days and three nights, after which, God answered his prayer and delivered him. The sign is clear, 'as Jonah was' in the whale, 'so shall be' the 'Son of Man' in Jerusalem.

It is a picture, a prophecy, foretelling how God, because they had refused this final call to repentance from His Son, had destined that the burden of sin would be borne by Jesus and, like Jonah, He would pay the price of sin for a sinful world for three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, Jerusalem. Isaiah 53:6. Our Lord Himself plainly told us what every moment of those three days and three nights contained for Him.

Matthew 20:18-19 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify Him and the third day He shall rise again.'

Mark 10:34 has, 'And they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him: and the third day He shall rise again'

Luke 18:31-33 adds, 'All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again.'

All those 'things' from His betrayal by Judas for thirty pieces of silver to His resurrection were fulfilled when our Lord was in Jerusalem during that Passover week. It cannot be denied and the eternal truth which is disclosed here is that, from the moment they refused this final call to repentance from Jesus, God reached out to our sinful world in the way He had ordained from the beginning. Genesis 3:15

A living Way which involved the sacrificial death of His Son and His triumphant resurrection. Jesus revealed this soon after Peter had declared Him to be the Christ. Matthew 16:13-16. It fulfils the Promise made to Abraham, Genesis 22:18 'in thy seed shall all the nations be blessed' and the words our Lord said to Nicodemus John 3:17, God sent His Son to save the world.

It was a last call to repentance. They had failed to respond to John the Baptist, disregarded the miracle of Jesus, mocked His claim to be the Son of God, and refused to repent at this final call. Now, if they did not repent after they saw what happened in Jerusalem during those three days and three nights, even the men of Nineveh would rise up in Judgement against them. Matthew 12:39-41

Who has bewitched us, turning our eyes away from the cross and fixing our minds on the tomb? Galatians 3:1

Neither they, nor we now, have any excuse as together, we see Jesus in Jerusalem, the heart of the earth, paying the ultimate price to redeem a sinful world yet, thousands of words have been written trying to prove our Lord was in the tomb for three days and three nights and, whether He was or not does not affect our salvation, it has hindered our understanding of the sign of Jonah and the heart rending story this Scripture itself holds.

Jesus used five particular words to fix in our hearts, a moment in time which would always be a beacon to draw a sinful world to God. They are only used on two other occasions in the whole Word of God, once in Jonah 1:17 and once in 1 Samuel 30:12 where it clearly means three whole days and three whole nights as a comparison between verse 1 and verse 13 which reveals and cradles the most important moments in our lives.

Our redemption.

Born in the heart of God, purchased by Jesus on the cross, fulfilled in His resurrection and triumphant victory over sin and death, during those three days and three nights in Jerusalem.

They began here when Satan entered the heart of Judas just before dawn and he made his way to the Temple and covenanted with the chief priests to betray his 'familiar friend' with whom he had enjoyed 'sweet counsel' for 'thirty pieces of silver.' Luke 22:3-6, Matthew 26:15.

Each Gospel writer presents the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross, and His resurrection in their own personal way but it is Luke who gives us the most detail.

He begins the three days and three nights from here, the betrayal by Judas, Luke 22:3-4, to the resurrection Luke 24:5-7 when the two angels confirmed He had fulfilled all He had foretold in Luke 18:31.

It was finished. He had entered His rest and now on this first day of the week, He was about to meet with the two on the way to Emmaus who were troubled by everything which had happened in Jerusalem over that weekend.

He encouraged them saying, 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.'
Luke 24:25-27

Is it just a coincidence this echoes Genesis 2:2 when God had finished His work and rested?

Is it just a coincidence that this Sabbath was also the Feast of Unleavened Bread and, as such, was a High Day, a Great Day, akin to the Atonement Day, which it echoed, and carried with it the same responsibilities as that Day itself holds?

Is it just a coincidence that, exactly three days and three nights after Judas had betrayed Him, He rose from the dead?

Does it matter?

Yes! it matters!

From that moment in time, Matthew 12:38-41, God reached out to a sinful world in a way they had purposed from its foundation, through His Son who, on the cross, paid the ransom for sin for all who would come to Him.

This is the sign of Jonah.

'As Jonah paid the price of his sin for three days and nights in the whale so shall the Son of Man pay the price of sin for three days and three nights in Jerusalem.'

Praise God a greater than Jonah is here, Matthew 12:41 because through Him, all who see and understand what our Lord accomplished on the cross and in His triumphant resurrection, there is forgiveness and the promise of eternal life and, for those who see and understand and still refuse to repent, there is the danger of eternal judgement.

Hosea 6:1-2 foretold it.

'Come, and let us return unto the LORD: For He hath torn, and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.'

The Call has never changed.

Whosoever will may come.

THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS
Jonah 1:17 Matthew 12:40 1Samuel 30:12

THURSDAY	NISAN 13	FRIDAY	NISAN 14	SATURDAY	NISAN 15	SUNDAY	NISAN 16
NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY
////////	12	////////	12	////////	12	////////	12
E////////D		E////////D		E////////D		E////////D	E
V////////A		V////////A		V////////A		V////////A	V
E////////W		E////////W		E////////W		E////////W	E
N////////N		N////////N		N////////N		N////////N	N
////////*	*	* * * *	* * * *	////////		////////*	*
////////1	2	3 4 5 6	7 8 9 10	////////		////////11	12
////////		PREPARATION DAY		THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD		////////	
////////		////////		////////		////////	
////////	← 24	HOURS →		////////		////////	
////////		////////		////////		////////	
////////		////////	← 24	HOURS →		////////	
////////		////////		////////		////////	
////////		////////		////////	← 24	HOURS →	
////////		////////		////////		////////	
////////		////////		////////		////////	

←————— 72 HOURS —————→

1. Judas covenants to betray Him sometime before dawn.
 Luke 22:1-6. Mark 14:10-11. Mathew 26:14-16.
2. The disciples 'made ready' the upper room. Mark 14:16. Luke 22:13.
3. The Passover and the new Covenant. Matthew 26:20.
 Mark 14:18. Luke 22:15.
4. Gethsemane Jesus delivered to the priests and sinful men.
 Matthew 26. Mark 14. Luke 22:47-48. John 18:5.
5. The judgement and condemnation.
 Mark 14:55. Luke 23.
6. The morning and Pilate, then Herod and his mockery. Luke 23.
7. Pilate's judgement and at the 'third hour' the Crucifixion. Mark 15:25.
8. Darkness over the land at the 'sixth hour', noon. John 19:14.
 Matthew 27:45. Mark 15:33. Luke 23:44.
9. The ninth hour His plea. 'My God. Why have you forsaken me?'
 Matthew 27:46.
10. As the 'even drew on' they laid Him in the sepulchre. Matthew 27:62.
11. He arose before dawn on the first day of the week. Matthew 28:1.
 Mark 16:2. Luke 24:1. John 20:1.
12. He met the two on the 'first day' on the way to Emmaus. Luke 24:16
 Mark 16:12

Luke 24:1-26 summarises **all** that took place at this time.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

How, why, and when, this simple message of salvation in Matthew 12:38-41 became a fruitless search for a Redeemer who, it was supposed, spent three days and nights in a grave instead of in Jerusalem is difficult to understand. Jesus, our Lord, did not give them the story of Jonah to consider a grave, He gave it because it held the promise of deliverance from the eternal judgement they faced because they had refused this final call to repentance. They knew the story well.

Jonah had sinned when he disobeyed God and when he tried to run away it became even worse because he fell into a dreadful place, nevertheless, a place 'God had prepared for him' and there, for three days and three nights he paid the price of his sin until God heard his penitent prayer and delivered him. Although Jesus knew they would not understand why He had given them the 'sign of Jonah' at this moment, what He then went on to say is they would, if they considered it carefully.

He said, as Jonah was, so shall the Son of Man be, that is, knowing that the burden of sin had now fallen upon Him because they had refused the message He had brought to them from God He would now have to pay the price of sin for three days and three nights in the place 'God had prepared for Him' the 'heart of the earth' which every one of God's chosen people knew as Jerusalem.

Certainly not obvious at that moment but inescapable once they saw what happened in Jerusalem during those three days and nights in that Passover week, but neither they who saw Christ pay the price of redemption on the cross nor we who know of His triumphant victory over sin and death in His resurrection, have any excuse if we bury this truth in the grave.

It has been disclosed there are, at least, two million seeking an answer to the mistaken belief that Jesus spent three days and three nights in the grave and, even though thousands of words have been written trying to prove it was so, none have been successful, nor can be, because our Lord was not in the grave for three days and three nights, He was in Jerusalem and, all, without exception, either misquote Scripture, rearrange it, add a Sabbath, change the crucifixion and resurrection day.

Even the most plausible, which suggests Jesus used 'parts of days' to signify three 'full' days, as we often do, is misquoting the words our Lord used here, besides which, it only accounts for three days and two nights. Jesus plainly said 'three days and three nights' and it is only used here in Matthew 12:40, Jonah 1:17 and 1Samuel 30:12 where it means three 'full' days and three 'full' nights as a comparison between verse 1 and verse 13 reveals.

The simple truth is that none of these measures are necessary, it is a matter of interpretation and, if those who expound the translation to us had understood 'heart of the earth' as 'Jerusalem' instead of 'grave' none of those two million would still be hungrily looking for the truth. Not a word of Scripture needs to be changed. The thousands of words, including these we ponder now would be unnecessary because the message in the sign of Jonah would have been understood and we would be rejoicing in the love, mercy and grace shown as God reaches out to a sinful world.

Where did our Lord say this would happen and how? He told His disciples the three days and three nights would be fulfilled in Jerusalem and described, in detail, everything He would have to endure as our redeemer between His betrayal and His resurrection and, although it is repetitious, let us look at those verses again.

Matthew 20:18-19 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify Him and the third day He shall rise again.'

Mark 10:34 has, 'And they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him: and the third day He shall rise again.'

Luke 18:31-33 adds, 'All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again.'

On Wednesday Nisan 13, two days before the Passover, as they made their way to the home of Simon the leper, Matthew 26:24, Jesus spoke again of His imminent betrayal, saying 'the Son of Man goes as it is written of Him but woe to that one by whom He is betrayed'. Psalm 41:9 and on that night, Thursday Nisan 14, they had a supper at which the true nature of Judas was revealed and, in the morning, when Satan entered into his heart, Luke 22:3-5, he went to the Temple and betrayed Jesus to the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver, Zechariah 11:12-13. The three days and three nights begin here.

They 'made ready' the upper room before even on Thursday Nisan 14, Mark 14:16, Luke 22:13 and, after even, Friday Nisan 15, Jesus shared the Passover with His disciples, spent a 'brief hour' in agonising prayer with God about all that lay before Him and, surrendering His will wholly to His Father, He waited for Judas to commit his final act of betrayal, delivering Him to the chief priests and the Gentiles who, together, mocked, scourged, condemned, and crucified Him.

His body was placed in the sepulchre but He was not there. He was in Paradise, where He had promised to meet the thief on the cross who had called Him Lord. It is finished was His cry and He entered into His rest and remained at rest until the Sabbath, Nisan 16 was over.

Reminding us of the first Sabbath when God rested from all His Work. Genesis 2:2-3 Then, on the first day of the week, God raised Him from the dead. The final, triumphant victory over sin and death! Isaiah 11:10 has, 'And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people and, to it shall the Gentiles seek and his rest shall be glorious' and Luke 24:26 records what our Lord said to the two on the way to Emmaus who were puzzled by all the things which had happened in Jerusalem in those days.

Jesus said, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.'

He entered into His glory. Hebrews 4:11-16 'Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.'

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do with.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'

THE FINAL WORD

'As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall be the Son of Man, three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.' Matthew 12:40

This verse has brought ridicule from the atheist, denial from most who believe in evolution and supreme confidence to all who believe the Word of God to be infallible and, despite its apparent improbability, have discovered, as we have in the preceding pages, that every word of God has a purpose and it is always more fruitful to look further than words which have drawn us to a passage and discover why God wanted us to read the message He has for us there.

Jesus used the story of Jonah as He did in His parables, either with a situation which was unusual or, in this case, an event beyond our understanding, with the hope it would encourage us to search for, and find, the message He has for us in the words which follow and if, as His disciples we do this, we will discover eternal truths which are never seen by those who deny God as Creator.

When His disciples said to Him a day or so after this encounter with the Scribes and the Pharisees, 'Why do you speak to them in parables?' Matthew 13:10-16 He said. 'I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand' and, speaking from Isaiah 6:9-10, added, 'in them is the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled'. It is the same today, the world still resists, or avoids, God's call to repentance which is why our Lord added, 'blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.'

He has given us, His disciples, a gift far beyond anything we could ever have imagined, as Paul wrote in 1Corinthians 2:16 'we have the mind of Christ' ready to and eager to reach out to a needy world.

All His disciples have this gift from God and there comes with it the wonderful opportunity to share any revelation He may give them with all who look for the wisdom of God in this troubled world in the same way our Lord did in Matthew 13.

Blessed are all eyes that see, and all ears that hear, for now they treasure in their hearts, the same thoughts that were in the mind of our Lord.

Despite our faults, God has prepared a place for us, just as He prepared a place for Jonah and Jesus, so that His Purpose will be fulfilled in our lives.

Amen!

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Sometimes, God whose thoughts are higher than ours asks us to accept by faith a concept which is beyond our understanding and, one of these is the virgin birth, ridiculed by the unbeliever, disputed by most scientists and a mystery to many believers also but, although the unbeliever or the scientist cannot accept this situation as the believer does, we accept it because our faith insists that we do.

Foretold in Isaiah 7:14-16. 'Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Butter and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you disdained will be forsaken by both her kings.'

The fulfilment of the prophecy began when Mary gave birth to her Son, in whose infancy, there were two kings, Herod, who had been appointed by Rome and had already reigned for many years and after his death, Archelaus, who reigned for a time until he was deposed a few years before Jesus was twelve, the age considered to be the age a child could responsibly choose between good and evil.

The 'land Ahaz despised' Judah. The 'two kings.' Herod and Archelaus. Matthew 2:1,22. The 'virgin and her Son.' Mary and Jesus. Luke 2:16 and the two kings, there in His childhood, were gone never to return, Matthew 2:21 Luke 2:42, 46 before He was twelve years old.

Matthew and Luke record the beginning of the fulfilment of this prophecy which history itself confirms even today, so we can confidently say, with full assurance, this is the sign God gave to Ahaz in, Isaiah 7:14-16.

Jesus was born of the virgin Mary in the then impoverished land of Judah, the 'land Ahaz had despised' during the reign of Herod, Luke 2:7, two years before the Magi arrived and 'when Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him'. Matthew 2:3 because he saw a threat to his kingdom and although it is hard to understand how a king could order the killing of all children up to the age of two, to remove a threat to his throne, he did so.

Joseph, Mary and Jesus fled to Egypt at this time only returning when they heard Herod was dead but, when they learned Archelaus had taken the throne they settled in Nazareth fulfilling Hosea 11:1 'Out of Egypt I called My Son.'

It was from here a few years after Rome deposed Archelaus when Jesus was twelve, the age considered to be the age of understanding and responsibility, His parents took Him to the Temple. The prophecy was fulfilled 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.' Luke 2:52

Of course scoffers point out that the word 'almah' means 'young woman' in Isaiah but, while this is true, it also means 'virgin' and we have three witnesses who clearly understand the prophecy meant 'virgin'. Matthew, in Matthew 1:23, Luke, in Luke 1:27 and, the most reliable of all, Mary. Luke 1:34.

The virgin birth is as certain as today follows yesterday to the Christian and although it is a mystery to us we believe it because God chose Mary to be the one who would bear the Christ Matthew 1:19-24 and it was about to be fulfilled when they came to Bethlehem. Luke 2:4-5

Matthew does not tell us much about what happened after Joseph took Mary to be his wife, other than, after Jesus was born they lived in Bethlehem about two years, a short time in Egypt and, when Herod died and Archelaus took the throne, they made Nazareth their home and Jesus grew up happily there with His brothers and sisters, and became known as the carpenter's son, and later, as the carpenter until He was about thirty years of age.

Luke 1:26-56, is more particular about their lives after they were married and records the three months Mary spent with Elizabeth, her cousin who was expecting the son God had promised her husband Zechariah as he served in the Temple, a son he was to name John who we know as John the Baptist who baptised Jesus some thirty years later.

Mary stayed with her until the promised son was born. Mary then returned to Nazareth because her own time was at hand, as promised and when Joseph obeyed the decree to register they came to Bethlehem. Luke 2:4-5

'Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.'

However, because the word 'wife' was added here, it has confused the meaning of the relationship between Joseph and Mary and later versions, which assume it meant they were not married, changed the last words after registered to read as 'with Mary to whom he was engaged and expecting a child'.

Luke would never have used those words. He knew as surely as Matthew did, and we do, that Joseph took Mary to be his wife as soon as he was assured the promise to Mary was true. He is not speaking of marriage; he is proclaiming the imminent fulfilment of the promise made to Mary. Matthew 1:20-21, Luke 1:26-35

The last lines of Luke 2:4-5 should be read as 'Joseph came to Bethlehem with Mary who, as promised, was great with child.' The Christ.

Jesus would never have been accepted in their world, read in a synagogue, or the Temple had they thought to bring such an accusation against Him for it would have failed, as we know from Matthew 26:59-60 when He stood before the 'chief priests, the elders, and all the council who sought to bring false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but they found none even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.'

The child was accepted at the Temple for circumcision and Mary also when she presented herself as clean after the required forty days of purification were fulfilled, Leviticus 12:2-4, Luke 2:21,22.

Simeon and Anna knew and declared it when the Holy Ghost drew them to the Temple to see the 'hope of Israel' they looked for. Jesus was twelve when He met with the doctors in the Temple and, after He went back to Nazareth 'He grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.' Luke 2:52 and, at thirty, after His baptism by John the Baptist, His life and ministry was open for all to see.

It began in the synagogue in His home town, in the synagogue on the Sabbath day when He was given Isaiah 61:1-7 to read. It was a dramatic moment and even more so when He gave them His interpretation.

He said, 'The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.' Then He closed the book, and gave it back to them and sat down and the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were on Him as He said, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears.' Luke 4:16-21

It must have been disappointing that, although all were amazed at the gracious words they heard from someone they knew as the carpenter's son who, with His brothers and sisters had grown up amongst them over the last thirty years, that only a few understood. It was from this moment He reached out to the sinful world to which He had been called to save and, for the next three years, He went through out the nation, teaching repentance and forgiveness, mercy, love and the grace of God, healing many as He made His way to the cross.

Even Pilate found Him to be without fault. Luke 23:4, 14 and no one in the whole nation could bring an accusation against Him.

NO ONE could accuse Him or His mother of anything.

Despite this unbelievers still persist with rumour and, if the Christian remains silent or ever concedes rumour might have said His birth was illegitimate, they perpetuate a lie.

It must be said again.

There is no Scripture which even suggests His birth was illegitimate. Jesus was never accused of being illegitimate and if the virgin birth is still a mystery to us we accept it by faith, that is sufficient and it must be unwavering.

If this is yet a problem and your knowledge as a nurse or a doctor teaches you this is impossible, don't let that deter you, this is an act of God and by it was born the child, the Christ, who is our Lord and Saviour.

It is true.

SONS OF GOD.

Genesis 6:2

Sometimes though we interpret a word, or a passage in a way which is comfortable for us, an instance of this follows.

Sixty years ago, it is now 2010, a Christian friend encouraged me to read a book which examined the Bible record and it was quite enriching until the author came to the Flood, where 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,' Genesis 6:1-5.

He introduced the thought that those evil people whose only thought was of pleasure, who 'sat down to eat and rose up to play' were a nation like that because Sons of God, angels, had left their heavenly abode when they saw the daughters of men were so beautiful and this union brought about a people who no longer looked to God and certainly, never heeding the words Noah brought to them from God and the flood came and carried them all away.

If such a concept is not challenged it has the potential to draw men and women away from the eternal truth in the Word of God.

The Lord was speaking of men when He said, before the Flood, 'My spirit shall not always strive with man' Genesis 6:3 and, after the flood He said. I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, neither will I again smite any more every living thing.' Genesis 8:21. The author of this book obviously believed that this wicked generation was the end result of a union between angels and the daughters of men and this is impossible as Scripture itself declares.

First. No 'kind' can successfully mix with any other 'kind' Genesis 1:12-25.

Second and realistically. 'The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.' Galatians 5:17.

Finally. 1Corinthians 15:35-58, in particular, verses 43-44, speaking about the body. 'It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.'

Angels were not responsible when mankind fell away from God as we read in Genesis 8:21 it was the wickedness of mankind that brought the flood and as we see the same 'falling away' from God today it gives us, who are the direct descendants of the eight who were saved in that day, an added incentive to declare the gospel for we know we cannot blame angels for the distress the world is in today.

The thought that 'sons of God' were angels probably arose here because some earnest soul could not bear to think that man, whom God had created could fall into such wickedness but, as we know, it is easy, when we have everything, to be careless about true values.

What happened is simple.

Genesis 4:26 records that after the birth of Enos the line of Seth began to call upon the Name of God and it seems obvious that the line of Seth became known as sons of God, much as those who were called Christians when they called upon the Name of Christ at Antioch, whereas the line of Cain who knew God also, did not worship Him as such, being more interested in the material gifts He had given them and, over the hundreds of years that followed from Enos to Noah, they drifted away from God altogether. Genesis 4:19-22

They were men and women, one line from Seth, the other from Cain and when they intermarried the more worldly line of Cain, over the next 1656 years, drew them away from God and although He sent Noah with the message of repentance and the offer of salvation, they refused His call, were judged, condemned, and swept away in the flood. Hebrews 11:7

The author of the book did suggest, what he called another 'sporadic' visit later on, which could explain why we read of giants, and if that were so, perhaps there might be more visits in the future but that kind of thinking only shows how ridiculous this belief is that sons of God were angels. We cannot allow it to become a part of our thinking without protest.

There is no justification for anyone to suggest the sons of God here in Genesis were angels, yet today, 60 years later, it is firmly entrenched in the minds of many and sometimes preached from the pulpit confusing the minds of those who are searching the Word of God and, it can also affect other Scriptures.

The phrase 'sons of God' only occurs twelve times in Scripture and, each time, it is easy to understand its meaning.

In Job 1:6 and Job 2:1 it is thought these were angels reporting to or receiving instructions from God but it is clear, from the conversation which follows, that these sons of God who gathered here on this 'certain day' were humans who had come together to praise God and no angels were present but the thought does bring a question.

Would God, who knows every thought of all the hearts He has created, who created angelic beings for special tasks, require them to report on 'certain days' for instruction or commendation, surely not?

God was there and so was the accuser, Satan, and when God said to Satan, Job 1:8 'Have you considered my servant Job?' Satan challenged God to try Job's integrity; God agreed and out of this, because of his faith, Job 23:10, Job 'came forth as gold' and Satan was defeated.

However in Job 38:7 God is speaking of angels. They were the ones who were present when 'God took the earth and hung it in an empty place in the north' Job 26:7, and here in Job 38 we read of their wonder and praise when in the words the 'sons of God shouted for joy' as they waited breathlessly for the final act, the creation of mankind.

THE SPIRITS IN PRISON

1 Peter 3:18-20

Peter makes it quite clear who they were and how Christ was preached to them. They were those who refused to listen to Noah who, filled with Spirit of Christ, preached salvation until the long suffering of God ended and the flood came and swept them away.

'For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison' (by the Spirit) who formerly were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited 'in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.'

Christ was preached then, almost 2000 years before Jesus was born, by Noah because the Spirit of Christ was in him as it was in all prophets. 1Peter 1:9-11. 'Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.'

And Acts 4:10-12 has this. 'Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'

The spirits in prison were those who refused the salvation God offered them through the words Noah preached to them for 120 years and, as Acts 10:43, which speaks of Christ has. 'To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins and, 1Peter 1:10-11, who confirms it was salvation through Christ which was offered to them here.

Redemption, salvation, was to be through Christ, Ephesians 1:4 'God has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world' in 1 Pet 1:20, who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you.

Christ was appointed the Redeemer before the foundation of the earth, the one to defeat Satan Genesis 3:15, the one through whom all nations would be blessed Genesis 12:1-3, the anointed One, Psalm 2:2, Immanuel, Isaiah 7:14 Jesus at His birth and, as Acts 4:12 has it, 'Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'

Wherever salvation is preached, repentance needed, or forgiveness sought, and whoever proclaims the message, it is the Spirit of Christ which lights the way reveals the truth and opens the door to eternal life.

2 Peter 2:4 reveals that angels sinned as well as men.

All, in different ways. Some angels were cast down to earth Isaiah 14:12 some were put in chains, and the spirits of men, in prison. We do not know why but, as we are to judge angels one day Jude 1:6, 2 Peter 2:4 and, although we are not told what that sin was, it appears from what we read in Isaiah that they were joined with Satan in his rebellion before mankind were created.

However it is clear.

The spirits in prison were men and those who had fallen away from God and refused to repent when Noah, in whom the Spirit of Christ dwelt, had brought them the message from God.

BAPTISED FOR THE DEAD

We are baptised into a living Christ, which brings us to two interesting questions Paul asked in 1 Corinthians 15:16 'If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised,' and, 1 Corinthians 15:29. 'What shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptised for the dead?'

This phrase has been thought, by some, to explain how newly baptised believers take the place of those who were now with the Lord. A nice thought, but all new believers and those who have received their reward stand together in time, some by what they have done and some by what they are doing.

They stand, in the Gospel, with all those who have gone before them.

Some believe the Scripture directs their attention to members of their family who did not have the opportunity to hear the message our Saviour brought, and they should be baptised for them.

That is not possible. The Word of God makes it perfectly clear that, 'No one can by any means redeem his brother, or give God a ransom for him.' Psalms 49:7

Paul is concerned about their unbelief in the resurrection here. A problem he had to deal with all his life, sometimes to his advantage, Acts 23:6, but more often because disbelief in the resurrection destroyed the message of the cross. Acts 17:32

In Paul's second letter to Corinth, he wrote that, although his first letter had made them sorry, he was glad because it had brought about godly sorrow to their benefit and, as we read his first letter again, we realise what a change it had made to their lives.

To be sure, there was much to praise God for, as they struggled to build the Church, because there were many differences among them that Paul tried to help them through. He had much to praise them for, but was not hesitant when what they needed was admonition, and, perhaps in this portion of his letter is the one problem he was anxious to correct.

They could understand the good news that God in His love had sent His Son to save them from their sins and redeem them to Himself, and they rejoiced in the salvation He had purchased for them, but they still stumbled at the resurrection.

Paul began his letter praising God for their faith in Christ and what His sacrificial death on the cross had brought them, and commended them for their zeal in reaching out to others but, at the same time; he reminded them of the resurrection of Christ. 'So that you come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1 Corinthians 1:7

He had been able to guide them through the many differences that beset them, but, at this point, 1 Corinthians 15, he is obviously troubled by something which had been reported to him, and it is concerning the resurrection of Christ.

He writes, ' I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.' Verses 3-4.

Remember, Paul is writing to the believers in Corinth who have been baptised into Christ, and he wrote very plainly to them, demanding an answer to his question. How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

It is not difficult to understand the meaning of his words but he did not leave it there, He said, 'into whom were you baptised?' and at their answer, 'into Christ' He reminded them what that meant.

If Christ is dead and you are baptised into Christ, you are dead with Him.

Why be baptised for the dead if the dead rise not?' 1Corinthians 15: 14-19.

It is clear what had happened. The Corinthians, in their zeal to have the Church grow, had failed to preach the resurrection, and Paul did not hide his disappointment at their neglect.

However we know from his second letter to them, that his severity here, brought them to a closer walk with Christ and each other.

His words in 2 Corinthians 7: 8-12 tell us so. 'Though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent; for I perceive that the same epistle has made you sorry, though it were but for a season'.

'Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance: for you were made sorry after a godly manner, that you might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world works death. For behold this selfsame thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yes, what clearing of yourselves, yes, what indignation, yes, what fear, yes, what vehement desire, yes, what zeal, yes, what revenge! In all things you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.'

There is no thought of taking the place of any faithful saint who has gone to be with their Lord.

Certainly no suggestion they be baptised for another.

They are to believe in, and preach the Gospel in the same Way it has been delivered to them, in Truth, Light, and Love. 1 Corinthians 1: 30.

IN THE BEGINNING

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

These words declare the complete sovereignty of God over all His Creation and the pages which follow reveal the purpose He has for mankind, how often we have failed to meet his expectations, despite the evidence of His handiwork, we, mankind have not responded to Him.

This verse presents the finished work of God in the creation of the material world and after that, as Job wrote 'God took the earth and hung it in the north' Job 26:7 and it was then at that time all the heavenly beings 'shouted for joy' Job 38:7 as they waited breathlessly for the final act, the creation of mankind.

Yet Genesis 1 verse two clearly reveals that the earth was formless and empty and the question arises, why would God, who makes 'all things well' Mark 7:37, John 1:3, make an earth waste, without form, and void?

Some accept that He made 'matter in fluid form' or as 'chaos awaiting organisation' or some other primal beginning, but our belief in those words 'in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' are the ground for our belief He made a perfect world for a specific purpose, Hebrews 11:1-3, and all the Scriptures which follow this opening verse confirm that.

If we ignore the evidence of His creation, we stand in great danger, and as chapter one in Romans tells us, it is a choice and for those who do ignore these words and the evidence which swirls about them and look to another source, or power, to explain the complexity of this world and the universe which holds it should read what Paul said to those who looked for God in Athens. Acts 17:23-29.

However, there is another way we can understand these two verses in Genesis because of Job 26:7, Job 38:7 and an even more positive verse in Isaiah 45:18 where God Himself declares 'Thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited. I am the LORD, and there is no other'.

It is an undeniable fact and it is just as certain that something happened after the heavens had been created and before the foundation of the world. Christ was glorified, John 17:5, and appointed as the Redeemer, Ephesians 1:4 and Lucifer, Satan, defied God, Isaiah 14:12-17.

Sin had entered the universe. However, nothing turned God from His purpose and after restraining Satan and his followers, He formed that perfect world Isaiah 45:18 describes and made it ready for the creation of mankind and, unexpectedly, placed Satan there, an inexplicable act of grace and witnessed by Jesus our Lord Himself. Luke 10:18.

We may find it difficult to understand why God dealt with Satan in this way but it reminds us of His infinite patience with us. Perhaps Satan could have found

redemption but, obviously, Satan considered this as exile instead of an encouragement and we can understand why he destroyed the earth with such savage fury, first marring every vestige of sentient life on the earth, the very surface of the world itself.

What an empty victory it was. He had destroyed everything only to discover he had no power, and never did have the power to create and he was alone on a lifeless world shrouded in darkness. Genesis 1:2.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Holy Spirit, (personified in God and His Son) moved upon the face of the waters. Genesis 1:2-5.

Whichever explanation is taken, the first day of creation on earth began here. 'And God said, Let there be light and He took away the darkness and the evening and the morning was the first day.' Every day revealing more and more of the glory of His creation culminating on the sixth day when He said, 'let us make man in our image and our likeness' and, having done so, He hallowed the seventh day as a day of rest.

Then, after giving Eve to Adam to be his wife and companion He put them in the Garden He had prepared for them and told them 'to tend and keep it' Genesis 2:15, that is, guard it or protect it as in Genesis 2:15 and if we should wonder from what or from whom, surely it is from Satan who by now was desperately looking for a way to rid himself of these two weaklings who had been given dominion over what he considered was his earth.

Desperate because he had discovered that, although where once he could have destroyed them with a word, now he could do nothing against them, in fact, he could not destroy anything God had created on this world he saw as his own. Matthew 4:8-9, John 14:30, 16:11, 2 Corinthians 4:4 and, then he remembered what God had said to the two in the garden that day.

'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' Genesis 2:16-17

It was so easy! He would encourage them to eat of the forbidden fruit and they would destroy themselves.

First he confused Eve about which tree it was she should not eat from then, taking her to the tree, emphasised how pleasant it was to the eye and how good it looked to eat, its power to make one wise and the assurance God would not ban her from this tree and thus convinced, she took of the fruit, ate it, and gave it to her husband.

Satan must have been elated but once more he had misunderstood what God had in His heart from the very beginning.

However although Sin and Death had entered the world there came with that the Promise of victory one day in the 'seed' Genesis 3:15 in which we rejoice today.

NOTES

To add credence to the view that God created a perfect world and Satan laid it waste the Authorised translation of Genesis 1:28 uses the word 'replenish' meaning to refill something which had been emptied and is used this way again in Genesis 9:1 after the flood but is not used again except for five times in the form of replenished according to Young's Concordance 1962 and, if we believe what God declared in Isaiah 45:18, just 'fill' does not answer the circumstances here.

Also unfortunately, the phrase 'tend and keep' has now been translated as 'tend and care for' or 'tend and cultivate' but as both of those words only mean to practice good husbandry, the fact that something or someone posed a threat to the garden is no longer presented.

Further to this. The word 'was' can sometimes mean 'became' depending on the context and the subject, such as John 1:14, 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.'

However, for whatever reason we are brought to Genesis 1:2, it does not alter anything between Genesis 1:3 and 3:23 and what God created and blessed in those seven days as recorded in Genesis.

The second explanation reveals how the seed came to be 'in the ground' of verses 11–13 in Genesis 1 and how and why Satan was present when God created mankind.

But is not the general accepted view.

FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS

'The law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.' Galatians 3:17.

One can almost feel the elation Paul must have felt when he penned those words, rejoiced in the fulfilment of the Promise made four hundred and thirty years from the Promise, so, it is a surprise when we read in Exodus 12:40 'Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.'

The two passages do not agree and it is because Paul is speaking from the Septuagint version of the Word of God, used a century or so before the birth of Christ and for the same time after, and this has two words in it which are not in any modern version. They are (and Chanaan)

The accepted version has this.

'Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.'

The Septuagint has

'Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt (and Chanaan), was four hundred and thirty years.

Which is correct?

The authorised version and all that follow, by only taking the 430 years back to the entry into Egypt are saying the Promise began at that time and it did not, it began 220 years before that and therefore Israel only spent 210 years in Egypt.

All because some scribe missed two words when he copied the Septuagint and it has caused endless problems.

Paul was right and even a brief look at chronology will support him when he wrote, 'The law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.' Galatians 3:17.

The law was 430 years from the Promise, a time wherein the very foundation of the faith on which we stand began.

Abraham was 70 and worshipping false gods with his father Terah when God gave him the Promise Joshua 24:2-4 a promise, Genesis 11:29, that all nations on the earth would be blessed through his seed and, believing the call God made to him, he prepared to leave his homeland and dwell in the land to which God had called him. Genesis 12:1-3

When he was 75 Abraham left his homeland with his wife and the souls he had gained and, joined by Lot and his family, dwelt in Canaan as God had directed him then, ten years later when Sarah had not given him a son, he took Hagar, Sarah's handmaid to him, and the following year, she gave him a son. Ishmael which brought great difficulty between Sarah and Hagar.

When Abraham was 99 and Sarah had still not given him a son, Abraham approached God and God assured him that the next year when he was 100, Sarah would bear him a son and, at this time, God made the covenant of circumcision with him and confirmed the Promise He had made to Abraham when he was 70.
Genesis 17:7

This is the promise and everlasting Promise given to all people in all nations who believe that the promised seed here is the anointed One, the risen Christ, the one who they love and trust. Their Saviour and Redeemer.

However. God also reveals to Abraham that He would now make another covenant, not with Abraham, but with his son Isaac, and the nation which would arise from him. Genesis 17:13, Romans 4:13-16

A chosen nation, of chosen people who would preserve His Word and lead other nations away from their false gods and draw them to Himself.

He told Abraham it would often be difficult as they moved towards nationhood over the next 400 years but the covenant was everlasting.
Genesis 17:19-21

They would often be mistreated, looked down upon, misunderstood and scorned but some, who scorned them, would later, give them refuge even though they did not trust them. They would also bring them into bondage, however they should not let this deter them because God would deliver them and lead them to a new land, a land flowing with milk and honey for an everlasting possession.

His land.

However. When the time came that they were delivered, they, led by Miriam and Aaron, murmured against Moses their leader, and finally, refusing to enter the land He had promised, broke the covenant, and spent 40 years in the wilderness.
Numbers Chapters 12 and 13.

Psalm 105:8-10. 'He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations. The covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a law, To Israel as an everlasting covenant.'

They were only in Egypt for 210 years certainly not 430 and when they broke the covenant made with Isaac by refusing the land God had given them the Promise was only deferred until Christ was born.

The covenant begins when Isaac was born and Abraham was 100.
Genesis 21:5

Jacob was born when Isaac was 60 Genesis 25:26	60
Jacob came to Egypt when he was 130 Genesis 47:9	190
Israel spent the next 70 years in Goshen, the best land in Egypt until Joseph died aged 110 Genesis 50:26	260
Jochebed and Amram married Exodus 6: 20 after Levi died, and a new Pharaoh ruled. Miriam was born but no dates. Therefore, Chronologies, knowing the Covenant with Isaac ended 400 years after it was made calculate 83 years back 83 years from that date to Aaron's birth	317
And add the birth of Moses 3 years later	320
80 years to the Exodus. The end of the Covenant	400

God had not forgotten His promised of deliverance from bondage and when they left they were laden with gifts from their oppressors, as He had said.

They had reached the land flowing with milk and honey and here at this point they refused the 'pleasant land' broke the Covenant God had made with Isaac and were now committed to the law. Psalm 105:8-10

400 years from the covenant with Isaac when Abraham was 100 and 430 years from the promise made to Abraham.

Their deliverance was miraculous, the Plagues had defeated all the gods of Egypt yet, on the eve of entering the promised land they rebelled and the LAW came into being. Exodus 12:12

It did not make the PROMISE of 'no effect' but it postponed it.
Galatians 3:17-18

It was 430 years from the PROMISE, 400 years from the COVENANT with Isaac and all had been foretold and fulfilled.

TAX COLLECTORS CHEATS

Are all tax collectors men who are in this profession for personal gain?

Two who usually have this charge laid against them and need someone to defend them are Zacchaeus and Levi who are quite often accused of being thieves and sinners because they were tax collectors, publicans, and their profession had the reputation of being men who cheated their own people for monetary gain.

However, not all were thieves and there were some present when John the Baptist called Israel to repentance, Luke 3:10-12 and to those who came to him saying, 'Teacher, what shall we do? And he said to them, collect no more than what is appointed for you.' And he says the same to us today 'Whatsoever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord.' Colossians 3:23.

He did not tell them to change their profession; he just told them to be honest. Perhaps these two were of those who asked the question, 'what shall we do' that day men who were looking for the 'hope of Israel' and Jesus saw Levi the day He called him to follow Him, knowing his heart. The same as Zacchaeus, Jesus saw him in the fig tree and answered his hope with the words 'salvation has come to your house this day.' Luke 19:9.

We know Zacchaeus was a small man and a tax collector perhaps because he was unable to do manual work or because he had taken it upon himself to save his own from others who were not so concerned about their countrymen but whatever the reason, we know he was an honest man, confident of his integrity and in an unassailable position where in he could not be condemned.

Listen to his words. Luke 19:8 'And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.'

No one, other than an honest man could say that.

Levi also, was perhaps, a small man unable to do heavy work who, conscious of the way some tax collectors took advantage of their own people, entered the work to protect them. He might have been one of the tax collectors Luke spoke of and when Jesus, knowing his heart, called him, he rose up and followed Him at once.

Levi, or Matthew, must have been an earnest believer as the following 'study' of Matthew by an unknown scholar reveals on the next page.

The Gospel according to Matthew has a similarity with the five books of Moses.

Genesis	Matthew 3:1	7:28
Exodus	Matthew 8:1	11:1
Leviticus	Matthew 11:2	19:2
Numbers	Matthew 19:3	26:2
Deuteronomy	Matthew 26:3	28:20

All the Matthew passages above end with a similar ending. The Greek word 'sunteleo', to 'end fully', as in Matthew 7:28.

Other passages the Greek word 'teleo' meaning to 'end' or 'finish'. Such as Matthew 13:53* "Finished, teleo, these parables."

Other similarities have been noticed.

POSTSCRIPT

What we have discovered of course is that the 'God breathed' Scriptures, in the original text are, as one would expect, without fault.

We are the ones who have hidden the truth, sometimes by adding a word or words to His Word, sometimes by leaving out a word or words as we copy them but, whatever the reason, the truth is hidden.

Quite often, when a word has many possible meanings, we have chosen the wrong one for the situation it is in and it changes the way we understand the whole passage.

We saw this in our look at the three days and three nights question where the word 'earth' turned our thoughts to the grave whereas, the word 'nation' turns them to the cross in Jerusalem.

We remember how the wrong choice of a word to replace the 'betrothed' when speaking of their relationship before they were married and retained that word, or a similar one, in Luke 2:5 sometimes adding the word 'wife' but this resulted in an exposition which was still confusing, and later versions replacing those words with 'engaged to be married' and destroyed the sanctity of the Godly promise given here completely.

It changes the picture of a loving husband and wife eagerly looking forward to the birth of the promised Christ, to a drab picture of an unmarried couple expecting a child. What a travesty of Scripture and the open reading of Luke 2:5, in this form, has already marred the sanctity of the union between man and woman in the sight of God.

In the look at the phrase 'spirits in prison' we discovered Christ did not go down into hell to preach to them. Why would He, there is no possibility that repentance can be preached in hell.

The Word of God clearly tells us repentance can only be found in this life, after death is the judgement. Hebrews 9:27

The spirits in prison here are the spirits of those who refused to repent when Noah, in whom was the Spirit of Christ, preached repentance to them before the flood came and took them all away.

Neither did Christ go to hell to preach redemption for redemption is being preached, has been preached and, will be preached to every creature, whether in heaven or in earth, until the time appointed by God is complete. Romans 8:20-23.

Christ Jesus suffered all the agony of hell for us when He paid the ultimate price for sin on the cross, eternal separation from God, knowing God is there but eternally separated from Him.

We can hear the agony in His voice when He cried out. 'My God! My God! Why have you forsaken Me?' Mark 15:34

Jesus did not go to hell after His death on the cross. He went to where He told the thief on the cross He would meet him that day. He said. 'Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.' Luke 23:43.

As God rested on the seventh day. He was at rest. Hebrews 4:1-10.

Sometimes a word, or words, have been left out because a scribe has missed them and Exodus 12:14 is an example of that. There, because two words are missing, we can miss all the exciting events which happened as Israel struggled towards nationhood after the Promise to Abraham, the Covenant with Isaac. Their acceptance in Egypt, their captivity and deliverance when God judged all the gods of Egypt, Exodus 12:12 and their foolishness when they refused the Promised Land and found themselves under the bondage of the Law.

We have seen in baptised for the dead, how important our faith in the resurrection is.

How, in the 'tax collector' the small word 'if' confirms a man's honesty when it is present and how it can condemn him when it is not.

God, through the prophets, illuminates the past, Isaiah 45:18 and foretells the fulfilment of the future. Isaiah 7:10-14

The 'God breathed' Scriptures in the original text, are infallible.

They have lost some of their true meaning because we have added to them, taken words away from them, copied them carelessly, used an unsuitable word when a better one was available, or made a mystery out of a plain fact.

'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience when, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God.' 2Corinthians 1:12.

Can we by any means accept anything that is less than the truth?

Of course not.

Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Light.

There is no other Way.

NOTE

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E. R. FINCK.

All scripture references are from the KJV or NKJV of the Bible.