

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 80

## July 1986

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## Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Reader Friends, Sincere Greetings in the Name of Jesus.

We thank all those who have communicated with us during the past month. We heard through our Sis. Audrey Bundy that Bro. Howells of Victoria, Australia has suffered a mild stroke, we wish him and all others among us who are in poor health a full recovery. Sis Howells sends her love to all brethren and sisters.

In the past we have "been repeating in the Circular Letter some of the works of Bro. E, Brady including "What God hath Cleansed" and "Too true to be New", in these and other works he has shown how Christadelphianism was an advance upon the mixture of "beliefs and superstitions of Orthodox Christian Churches in the days of Dr. Thomas and R.Roberts, sad however they still cling to some orthodox beliefs such as Sin-in-the-flesh. Mortal Resurrection prior to judgment at the return of Christ, even including Our Saviour having to die for Himself, in their efforts to maintain what is among many other bodies such as the doctrine of original sin which makes it to use the words of their statement of faith a "fixed principle" in human flesh.

The "booklets we have referred to were written during the lifetime of John Carter the then Editor of the Christadelphian Magazine, subsequent Editors still propound these false doctrines by their rigid adherence to the teachings contained in their statement of faith, today little fight is left in that body when it comes to contending earnestly for the faith.

We have heard recently of one of their members being threatened with disfellowship if he continues to discuss the important issues of the nature of man and the Atonement either in private or with any member of his ecclesia without the prior knowledge and approval of the managing brethren and requested his written assurance to that effect, if this is not dictatorship we should like to know what is? The brother concerned has since resigned from their body.

This month sees the commencement of another article by Ernest Brady on "Baptism" which was written in the 50's, also included is an exhortation, Thoughts on the book of Joshua by Bro. Leo Dreifuss, "Sincerity under trial" by the late Sis. Minnie Allen, and "The days of Noah and the Ark." From this month apart from the cover sheet we hope to use both sides of each page thus reducing the weight but keeping the contents about the same in length.

Our prayers for the well being of you all and love in Jesus.

Yours in the Masters Service. Harvey and Evelyn Linggood.

## Baptism - A Mislaid Meaning

The most amazing feature of Christadelphianism is their teaching regarding the significance of baptism. The most important aspect of the ceremony has been now almost completely lost sight of, and a secondary and incidental significance given first place.

The matter came into prominence as a result of John Carter's (the then editor of the Christadelphian Magazine) visit to U. S. A. In December 1952 (p. 377) he writes of a meeting with certain "Advocate" brethren whom, he says, "we found emphatic in declaring that they were not baptised for their own sins but for Adam's sin." Having read something of Thos. Williams' works we rather felt that this was probably somewhat garbled, and it subsequently appeared August 1965 (p. 245) that the Editor had received a letter expressly denying some part of the views he had attributed to them. He prints a lengthy reply to this and asks that it be given publicity in "The Advocate." Oddly enough he himself has no scruples about suppressing both the letter itself and the name and address of the writer, so that we have only his version of the matter presented. Such one-sidedness in controversy is unfortunately a characteristic of "The Christadelphian" which we have come to expect and from which we have suffered ourselves; nevertheless a useful purpose is served in that we can discover from the ground on which John Carter developed his argument against the Advocate brethren, the present position of Christadelphia.

Commenting upon the view attributed to Thos. Williams, the Editor says; "This strange and unscriptural position is reached by first saying that where there is no law there is no transgression; and men are not under law until they are in Christ and therefore have no sins for which they are accountable. The only sin for which baptism is required therefore, is Adamic sin." Actually this does not fairly represent the "Advocate" argument though it is probably as nearly as John Carter dared to state it, in case his readers might perceive it to be in accord with what Paul says in 5th and 6th Romans than his own. And although we believe and shall show how and why their argument is defective, there is more than a grain of truth in what they say; they are in fact infinitely nearer to the truth than Christadelphians are ever now likely to be.

It is also our purpose to show that both Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts gave expression to these same views which John Carter describes as strange and unscriptural. We shall thus prove Christadelphianism to be apostate not only to Scripture but also to the men who founded their religion.

It will be agreed of the two steps of reasoning by which they reach their conclusion that baptism is not primarily for personal sins, the first is a plain scriptural principle laid down in so many words by Paul in Romans 4:15: "Where there is no law there is no transgression," and in Romans 5:15: "But sin is not imputed, where there is no law." The statements are conclusive and admit of no ambiguity; if they mean what they say they write "Finis" to the doctrine that sin is literally in the flesh. Only those who are under law are scripturally sinners, and the damnable doctrine of physical condemnation which Christadelphianism inherited from Roman Catholicism which has robbed them of this clear, just and scriptural principle. As we shall prove, a sound and well-established realisation that condemnation in Adam is a matter of Law and Divine Constitution was an integral part of Christadelphian teaching in its early days; the rot set in when Robert Roberts was forced off the rails by his jealous opposition to Edward Turney and his obsession that sin had become a physical property of human flesh. Having come down on the side of the false premise that being in Adam was a matter of physical corruptibility and therefore a condition only to be altered by a resurrectional change, it was merely a matter of time and logical process till the present position was reached where baptism has no significance beyond that of washing away of personal sins and the vital and saving truth is lost.

The "Advocate" brethren were undoubtedly right in their view that it is law which constitutes men sinners, but they were wrong in their belief that men are not responsible until they have been baptised. The question is, how do men come under law? and Scripture clearly answers "by enlightenment." Jesus says: "Except I had come and spoken unto them they had not had sin. But now they say we see; therefore their sin remaineth." And again: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men love darkness rather than light." If sin is in the flesh how could Jesus say they would not have

had it at all except He had come and spoken to them? If the condemnation is physical the coming of light into the world could neither add to it nor remove it. But if condemnation is, as Paul defines it, a legal enactment passed upon or hanging over the human race and becoming operative upon those, and only those amenable to it because they know of it, then it opens up a conception of God's purpose at once meeting the facts and satisfying the mind.

The call of the Gospel, whether obeyed or not; the realisation that God has a purpose, is what makes a person responsible and determines his relationship to his Creator and finally to life or death. Paul makes this abundantly clear in Romans: "For without the law sin was dead, for I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died."

We are not able nor do we expect to be able to say what degree of understanding constitutes a man responsible, but it is reasonable to believe that as soon as a person becomes aware that the Bible reveals a purpose he is under some obligation to seek to know and do the will of God or suffer the consequences. As for the rest, their deeds may be utterly evil and depraved, yet they are like the beasts that perish, not under law and therefore not accountable.

Thus, apart from their mistake regarding responsibility, the "Advocate" brethren base their view upon the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles and are correct in their conclusion that baptism into Christ is not primarily for the remission of the sins of the individual, but signifies the believer's deliverance from a state of bondage under Adam into a state of freedom in Christ. Had they been as clear-sighted and scriptural in regard to the nature of man, and sloughed off the encumbrance of sin-in-the-flesh, they would have been able to reason more logically about responsibility and its implications. The consequence of their failure has been that they have largely died out; the last remnant known to the writer in this country was the Watford ecclesia and one or two in London, who have now become submerged into the Suffolk Street fellowship, and their distinctive teaching originated by J.J. Andrew, a highlight in Christadelphian history, largely lost.

It appears that "The Advocate" is still published in U.S.A. So presumably their somewhat smoky light still shines, but in view of the doctrine of sinful flesh which it shares with "The Christadelphian" there is no point in our going further into the issues between them. We can, however, protest against John Carter's manifest unjustness to the Advocate position and what we can only regard as his wilful misrepresentation to his readers. He gives the impression that they teach that baptism has nothing to do with personal sins, whereas Thos. Williams says in "Rectification": "That baptism is for the remission of personal sins... we accept as heartily as he does... The issue is, does baptism have anything to do with the effects of Adamic sin? The claim we are contending for is, that in baptism there is a transition from condemnation inherited from Adam to reconciliation in Christ, and this is what our opponents deny."

Apart from his use of the word "inherited", which requires qualification, Thos Williams is right here and if John Carter had quoted him fairly, probably many of his readers would have realised it. It is evident from an anonymous letter quoted on p. 295 (Oct.) that everyone is not stupid even if occasionally ungrammatical. Another example of John Carter's unethical methods is seen on p.248 (Aug.) where he paraphrases some words of Thos. Williams, and implies that he argued that Jesus was alienated from God, whereas on the identical page from which the words are taken he rejects the conclusion. The Editor says Thos. Williams dealt in abstractions; it may be so; these at any rate are facts and they reflect no credit on John Carter.

Now he affirms that the sole purpose of baptism into Christ is for the forgiveness of personal sins; this and no more. He says: "Baptism is into Christ for the remission of sins," and he quotes Robert Roberts' words: Men were "baptised in the apostolic age for the remission of their individual sins always." Remember, no one has denied that remission of sins is an object of baptism, but it is one incidental to a much more vital significance, a legal death and rebirth, which Christadelphians now deny. In support of John Carter again quotes Robert Roberts' words; "the evil springing from our connection with Adam will not be cured till death is swallowed up in victory," and he adds the comment: "Robert Roberts never wrote anything different from this." Perhaps he really believed this; if so we must refresh his memory.

On many occasions Robert Roberts gave expression to the precise view defined by “The Advocate,” and now scorned by John Carter. For example, in 1878 (Christadelphian. p. 225) he wrote: “Legally a man is freed from Adamic condemnation at the time he obeys the truth and receives remission of sins, but actually its physical effects remains until this mortal (that is the Adamic condemned nature) is swallowed up in the life Christ will bestow upon His brethren at His coming.” So that ignoring for the moment what he terms the physical effects, at that date he believed that Adamic condemnation was a law from which baptism frees a man at the same time as his sins are forgiven, he says: “Legally a man is freed.” Robert Roberts may have changed his mind later, but it is still untrue to say he never said anything different from what John Carter reproduces.

Certainly, however, he had not changed his mind during the next 16 years for in 1894, in the course of the debate with J.J.Andrew, he was asked: “Do you adhere to this statement that he is legally free from Adamic condemnation?” Robert Roberts replied: “I understand God gives the obedient believer a clean slate.” J.J.Andrew asked: “What is wiped out?” Robert Roberts replied: “Everything that stands against us in any way, whether from Adam or ourselves,” J.J.Andrew then asked: “Then there is a passing out of Adam into Christ at baptism?” Robert Roberts replied: “Certainly.”

It should not be thought that we deny anyone the right to change his mind; we had to change our own radically some years ago, and have often thought how some of his admirers might have profited more by those words from Dr. Thomas: “Must a man never progress? If he discover an error in his premises, must he for ever hold to it for the sake of consistency? May such a calamity never befall me. Rather let me change every day, till I get right at last.” What we criticise is the dishonesty of changing one’s mind, and one’s teaching, and claiming that it is the same as it has always been. Worse still in the practice of suppressing and misquoting the dead to lend colour to a faked picture.

To be continued next month.

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## Thoughts On The Book Of Joshua.

This book is often regarded as just Jewish history. It is Jewish history, and deals with the conquest of the promised land by the Israelite under their leader Joshua. But in many respects it is a pattern of the second entry of Israel into their own country under the leadership of Christ, when He returns. And so it is profitable for us to consider a few incidents, examine them in conjunction of what we are taught about Israel after the Spirit, and to see what we can learn. There comes to mind the incident when Achan sinned.

When the Lord delivered Jericho into Joshua’s hand, the Israelites were commanded to kill everything alive, and to destroy everything. But Achan coveted a wedge of gold which he found, took it and hid it under his tent. As a result the Lord was angry with all Israel, and they were defeated in their attempt to take the next town, Ai, until Achan was punished. Now when we read this account, there is one little incident, which I think, is often overlooked. Joshua sent messengers to Ai, as he had done with Jericho. These messengers returned and said: “Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither, for they are but few”.

After their first success at Jericho it seems they began to trust in their own strength and to leave God out of it. But as soon as we begin to leave out God in our plans, things begin to go wrong. So it seems there was another reason why the Israelites were defeated, besides Achan’s sin: their trust in their own strength. Not long before that incident, Moses had just warned them that if they sinned, one of their enemies would put a thousand to flight. He told them that it was not they, but the Lord, who fought their battles. They should have learned the lesson by then that numbers do not matter with the Lord, for He is able to save by few, if necessary without any human help. Moses’ warnings should have been fresh in

their minds, for that happened not long before his death. Yet, to judge from the messengers' talk "Let not all the people go up... for they are but few", it seems they had not learned that lesson.

When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, one of the first things they did was to set up the tabernacle at Shiloh. Later, when they had settled, the tabernacle was replaced by the temple. Thus, the Israelites were the first assembly of God. At Christ's return, when the Israelites will be re-settled in Palestine, the new Church of God will be established. So many lessons can be learned from the book of Joshua that apply to us as prospective members of that Church. When Achan sinned, all Israel suffered defeat. When a member of the Church does wrong, it affects the whole assembly one way or another. It gives occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully, and it casts a stumbling-block into the path of any outsider seeking the way of the Lord. It deprives the Church of its force of Testimony. Just as Israel could not stand before their enemies until Achan was put to death, so in the case of a serious matter of wrong doing, the Church cannot prosper until it puts away that wicked person.

When eventually Israel did overcome the city of Ai, we read that Joshua was commanded by God to take all the people of war with him, not just two or three thousand as the messengers had advised. Man's counsel does not necessarily fit in with God's plan. These battles were the Lord's "battles, just as at the return of Christ the resurrected saints will fight the Lord's battles, not their own. And where the Lord's work is involved, it is a concern for the whole Church, even those members who have no active part to play, not merely the concern of a limited number. Not a concern of two or three thousand, but a concern of the whole assembly. And without the Lord's consent it won't prosper, just as we as individuals can do nothing without Christ. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Psalm 127:1.

Another thought that comes to mind concerns Rahab. We know the account of how the harlot Rahab hid the messengers, when they spied out Jericho, and because of that, perished not with the others, but dwelt with the Israelites. Now Rahab's name is mentioned in the epistle to the Hebrews among the names of those like Abraham, Isaac, etc., who were saved by faith. And is an example to show how one act of faith and obedience towards God can cover a multitude of sins. Her motive for doing kindness to those messengers was not merely fear, not merely the desire to be in the right camp to escape punishment. Had that alone been the case, and nothing more, then surely she would not have been mentioned with all those who, like Abraham, were justified by faith. But we learn from her own words to the messengers that she had faith. She said: "I know that the Lord hath given you the land". She knew by faith. Now at that time, which was long before Christ, the only way for a Gentile to be saved was by becoming a Jew. That happened very rarely. Yet it happened to Rahab, for her name is mentioned twice in the New Testament. In the epistle to the Hebrews (11:31), and in the epistle of James (2:25). And notice the order: first, in the chapter in the epistle to the Hebrews which deals with justification by faith: second in the chapter of the epistle by James which deals with how faith is made perfect by works.

Rahab became thus one of the first Gentiles to be saved. And from Paul and James and the book of Joshua we learn the correct way of salvation. Through one act of obedience prompted by faith, her past sins were forgiven. Otherwise she would not have been mentioned with faithful Abraham. She was justified by faith, but only after she demonstrated her faith by works. By faith in the risen Christ, coupled with a single act of obedience by submitting to immersion, all our past sins are forgiven, and we also are justified by faith. Finally, we see that there is no room for boasting before God. The Pharisees made this great mistake of thinking that because they were Abraham's children and kept the Law of Moses to the letter, they would enter the kingdom. Christ told them "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you" (Matthew 21:31). Here is an example of one. There is indeed no room for boasting before God. God will save the humble who are willing to trust and obey Him, no matter who they are, or what their past.

Let us close with Paul's exhortation against High mindedness. Romans 11:17-25, "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou barest not the root, but the root thee: Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be

grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed, lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again”.

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## **Don't Believe All You Hear.**

We are constantly being told that we teach that the flesh and nature of Jesus was different from that of all other men. If we had ever believed or taught so, then we should deserve some of the epithets we are given, but it is a complete untruth. We believe that Jesus was the same in nature and experience as us, but different in character and origin. We believe that flesh as such is neither clean nor unclean but simply the living material of which human beings are formed. The thing that matters in the sight of God is their relationship and the character which human beings display.

The same kind of flesh can manifest good character or bad, according to the behaviour and thinking of the man concerned. We have renounced nothing but the unscriptural teaching that sin (an abstract word meaning transgression of law) is literally in the flesh of human beings and that this was the defilement from which Jesus could only be cleansed by death.

E. Brady.

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## **Sincerity Under Trial**

Sincerity is an attribute essential to all professing godliness, without it we cannot draw near, or be drawn to God, for as He is true so He desires truth and sincerity in those who would be His children. The Apostle Peter exhorts us in I Peter 2:1, “Wherefore laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.” The Psalmist said, “Thy law is truth, the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.” That should be the attitude of each of us, hating every false way, but cleaving to that which is good and true. As Joshua spake to Israel after they were brought into the Promised Land, “Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth.” This we each have vowed to do, when we passed through the waters of baptism, for we said in effect, as did Israel of old, “all that the Lord hath spoken we will do.” We know how lamentably they failed and how we too have also failed in greater or lesser degree. For what is the first of all commandments? “Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.” This said Jesus is the first and great commandment and we all have doubtless realized our failure to order our lives in sincere and dutiful obedience to this, there are times when we feel we can attain great heights, at others we feel weak and incapable for love of self so often rises above the whole hearted love of God. As in our daily duties, when in robust health we take a delight in our work, and what is more satisfying to the heart than the feeling of having accomplished something worthwhile when we retire at the end of the day. However tired we may feel physically there is that sweet contentment that comes only from a day well spent. So likewise when we are spiritually healthy and have spent a day in doing those things which we know please the Father, we experience a peace that nothing and no-one else can give us. But we must not forget that the way to the Kingdom is the way of suffering for all. Christ warned His disciples of the hardness of the way when He said “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” Paul exhorting the disciples at Antioch said we must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom, though later when writing to the Hebrews says, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised

thereby.” Hebrews 12:11. Trials may be to us either, stumbling blocks or stepping stones, which ever we make them. All of us undoubtedly stumble at times, some may perhaps feel they are always stumbling but if we do not yield to despair but rather strive with renewed effort to keep a sharper look-out and be better prepared to face whatever may be ahead, using each trial as a stepping stone on the pathway that leads to everlasting life, then we can rejoice in the hope of a life of blessedness in the service and presence of Jesus when He comes in all His Glory. So we must be exhorted daily from the Word, “Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.” Joshua 1:9. The writer, Samuel Smiles, wrote in his book entitled ‘Character.’

“The greater part of courage that is needed in this world is not of the heroic kind. Courage may be displayed in everyday life as well as in historic fields of action. There needs for example the courage to be honest, courage to resist temptation, courage to speak the truth, courage to be what we really are and not pretend to be what we are not, courage to live honestly within our own means and not dishonestly upon the means of others. Men may know what is right, they may understand the duty they have to perform but will not summon up the requisite resolution to perform it.”

We know that Christ our great example was tempted like unto us, and pondering over His temptations as recorded for us do we not marvel at His sincerity and perfect obedience. Having our nature can we not understand how great was the struggle? “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Jesus was tempted by words of scripture which, misapplied can be the most subtle of all temptations if we seek to justify ourselves in an action which we know, if we are honest has no real justification. But Christ’s knowledge of the scriptures was complete. His sense of proportion perfect; He used it for the glory of God, never for the gratifying of human desires. So He answers “Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God.” We too must be perfectly honest and beware of misapplying the Word. For instance, when we should let our lights shine before men, do not let us excuse ourselves by saying “...give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine;” for we know not whether a chance word may bear fruit or not.

Again when we are to live peaceably with all men, it also says, as much as lieth within you, I think lieth within you, means as much as you can with a good conscience. Peace is bought at too great a price if we sacrifice our principles to gain it. If we have to make an enemy because of our beliefs, let us remember, we must obey God rather than man, lest Christ’s condemnation of the Pharisees falls upon us when He said, well did Esaias prophecy of you, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me,” Let us look for a moment at the one who so rightly earned those titles “friend of God and father of all faithful.” Told to take his son so dearly loved and the seed of promise and offer him for a burnt offering on one of the mountains. Abraham rose up early and saddled his ass, took two of his young men and Isaac his son with wood for the offering and went to the place which God had told him of; Genesis chapter 22 gives us the full account, v 10 says “And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.” Can we imagine a test more severe or heart-rending than to be called upon to slay ones only son, one dearly loved? We are told of no struggle on the part of Isaac nor any hesitancy on the part of his father, yet had we been present we might have witnessed the tears and pleadings of Isaac even as Christ in his last hour upon the cross, cried unto His Father, “My God why hast thou forsaken me?” but this was not a testing of Isaac, but of the faith of Abraham, and though we can only dimly imagine the agony of his mind in that supreme effort to obey his God, we know he proved his faith and sincerity by his works.

The Apostle James reminds us that faith without works is dead, being alone. “A man may say thou hast faith and I have works, show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works. For as the body without the spirit is dead so faith without works is dead also.” Christ spoke of many ways in which it was possible to be insincere, and we can and must apply them in our day. He said, “No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other, ye cannot serve God and mammon.” If our minds are centred on the attainment of the things of this life we cannot give God that wholehearted love which He requires, for where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. Take heed, said Jesus and beware of covetousness, for

a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Our fleshly desires can be so many and varied, and though we may not be able to indulge and satisfy these desires, we should not covet, but remember the exhortation; having food and raiment let us therewith be content. Eternal life is not dependant on a mere acceptance of certain principles but in doing the Will of God. How often are we reminded, there is no standing still in the truth, we either go back or forward. Paul writing to the Ephesians says, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."

If the word reproves or rebukes us, let us be exercised thereby and strive for that perfection of character that will meet with the approval of the one who gave His all that we might have hope of life in His presence when he comes again. We are called to a life of self-sacrifice and if that way seems hard, let us remember the invitation to "come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." As our faith and love is perfected and we endeavour to walk humbly and in all sincerity before God, then we shall know, and feel somewhat of that "Peace which passeth all understanding."

Sis. Minnie Allen.

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## **The Days Of Noah And The Ark.**

We read of these days in Genesis ch. 6 and the events relating thereto v. 5 "And 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." v. 3 "And the Lord said My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." v.7 "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth..." v. 8 "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." v. 9" ...Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." At verses 14-16 we have recorded God's instructions to Noah, with details of the ark, and the purpose of the ark is given in the following verses up to verse 21. At verse 22 we read, Noah did according to all that God commanded him.

The story of the flood and the ark is one of those events recorded in the Scriptures which have "been the subject of much doubt and criticism, by the scoffer and even by some religious leaders. We however have no doubt in our mind. Jesus used the events and happenings of Noah's day; He equated the goings on in the then world en mass saying it would be similar just prior to the days of His second coming. See Matthew 24 v 38; Luke 17 v 27; Hebrews 11 v 7.

A little while ago I was given a book (written in 1976) concerning Noah's Ark. Its feasibility and that it may still exist somewhere hidden in an ice-cap, or enclosed in molten lava following possible volcanic eruption in a part of an area in modern Turkey.

First let us look at a number of points which are raised by various critics, the measurements are given in cubits; but what cubits? If you look at any Biblical Encyclopaedia it will record various lengths from a little over 17" to around 21", also mentioned is a common cubit and a Royal cubit, measuring sticks of a cubit found in the tombs of ancient Egyptians have found to vary by inches. Today the generally accepted cubit is 18" which is the basis of any calculations used in this article. The Ark was approx. 450 ft. long, 75 ft. wide, 45 ft. high which gives us well over 1½ million cubit feet capacity, indeed a massive structure for those days, but let us remember Noah had 120 years during which to arrange for its construction. Many and varied are the calculations which have been made from time to time, but the scripture gives us nothing definite other than God's statement that the end was to come of that wicked generation, 120 years then destruction. One person has suggested with say hired helpers, who in the first place were merely curious what was happening may have been employed, for to them it was just a job, but we feel sure Noah would preach to them in no uncertain terms concerning his God and what was to happen. Did they heed? NO. Only Noah and his immediate family entered the ark of all the human race. But let us remember this ark was of God's providing. Our minds turn again to the

Scripture referred to earlier, Hebrews 11:7. One mathematician calculates that the site construction of say 15 cubit ft., daily would have taken 81 years. This would leave something in the region 40 years for the trees of a suitable size and type to be found, cut down, roughly prepared and transported to the construction site for final preparation before being assembled. Verse 14 of Genesis ch. 6 “Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shall thou make in the ark, and shall pitch it within and without with pitch.”

Various renderings are given to the word rooms, such as nests, stalls, suitable spaces as needed by various types of animals. At the time when the King James Version of the Scriptures was published no equivalent word was known for ‘Gopher’ wood. Very little however has since been found, the more appropriate expression is that in the New English Bible, namely Ribs of Cypress, probably some resinous wood is implied; most botanical authorities favour the evergreen cypress, which is extremely durable and was a species found in abundance throughout ancient Palestine, and was used by the Egyptians for coffin making, because of its durability, which has been confirmed by those who have found these coffins in various tombs and remarked upon their state after 1000’s of years locked away in tombs and in the earth. When we speak of pitch in our country the first material that comes to mind is that black substance we see being heated up for coating roofs with to make them waterproof. Others however in the case of the ark think it very likely was a particular tree called gopher wood which had a high content of resin in themselves and could be tapped as are rubber trees, and the ark was coated with it to form a hard shellac-like substance with a resin base. What a shock the unbelieving world will have, should it be in these last few days of Gentile times the ark may yet be found preserved and what an evidence of the truth of God’s Word as seen in the Bible.

Another matter which the critics like to raise is the number of animals and whether the ark could hold them all. Various numbers are calculated by different people who endeavour to calculate their numbers and they vary from ¾ million to well over 1 million. I think however that the types of animals related more to the various species rather than individual ones; in which case they would not exceed 50,000 land animals which could not have survived otherwise than on land. Many need not be included such as amphibians, fishes, molluscs, worms, sponges and other marine mammals. The book I was given was written by Americans, they go into details of the size of cattle trucks used in that country and after making comparisons in relation to carrying capacity of the ark with volume for volume only 25 - 40% of the ark would be taken up with animals. One also wonders if modern ship builders have made any great advance in their designs? Unless it be in the luxury fittings. Experts in design declare the ratio of length-width-height of the ark would make it a very stable structure, with a 6 to 1 “basic the centre of gravity would result in it righting itself even from a 90 degree tilt, while natural forces as wind or wave movement would leave it unaffected.

Other aspects raised by the critics such as the collection of the animals. It is well known that the animal kingdom are able to sense pending danger, often events to happen in the future far away from their immediate surroundings. Records exist of animals leaving areas which after they have left were hit by volcanic eruption, earthquake, floods and other natural disasters. It has been known that at such times the most unlikely animals will congregate together which in normal times would be un-heard of. Something draws them from their immediate surroundings and often in hoards they make to a place of safety, either from danger or to where there is food which would sustain their life. In such cases it is not unknown for predators and their prey to flee to a place of safety and there remain for long periods together despite their former relationship. Zoologists confirm the ability of many animals to hibernate when danger is pending in addition to their normal hibernation period, while others are able to regulate their dormancy period, during which their need for food drops. The Scriptures give us nothing definite on some of the aspects put forward but within reason it can be assumed that again we see God uses elements and natural processes to bring about His declared purpose relevant at the time.

Of course up comes the old issue of where did all the water come from and go to after the flood? Turn to Genesis 1:6 and 7.

“God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God... divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.”

So here we have masses of water above and below the firmament. The flood came, not only did the water come from heaven as rain, there may also have been an amount of volcanic eruption under the seas. Look at Genesis 7:11 "...the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up and the windows of heaven were opened," v 20 "...and the mountains were covered." Now ch. 8 verses 2 and 5 "The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped and the rain from heaven was restrained." "And the waters returned from off the earth continually." After 150 days when the water began to abate, no doubt a certain amount of geologic upheavals, tidal waves, and erosion would leave its mark as waters rushed off land causing rivers, valleys and other scars everywhere as changes in the ocean beds, which may have accommodated much of the water.

All this brought about because of the wickedness of man. Look around the world today and what do we see? As in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man.

H. Linggood

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