

# The Heavens Declare the Glory of God

*“Revolving upon its own axis, and describing an ample circuit through the boundless fields of space, is a planet of the solar system bearing upon its surface a population of over a thousand millions subject to sin, disease, and death. This orb of the starry heavens shines with a glory similar to that of its kindred spheres. Viewed from them, it is seen sparkling ‘like a diamond in the sky’; and with the rest of the heavens, declares the glory of God, and shows forth the handiwork of Him that did create it” — J. Thomas, Elpis Israel.*

*Cover illustration: Glow of the Tarantula Nebula within the large megellanic cloud, the galaxy closest to our Milky Way.*

**I**NCREDBLE, inscrutable, inspiring! Such words are often used to describe the endless universe in which our planet is suspended. The Scriptures declare that Yahweh “hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7). Hidden by the walls of space and time, the heavens have always been beyond the reach of man, incomprehensible apart from God’s revelation (Psa. 8:3; 19:1). But now, in the latter days, the cosmic barriers have begun to disperse as men have entered the staggering beauties of the wider creation. This gives evidence to Daniel’s testimony that at “the time of the end... knowledge shall be increased” (ch. 12:4). Space probes and telescopes have given man a glimpse of the unknown that has caused him to become awed at a universe that is beyond his comprehension.

As Christadelphians read reports of the discoveries made by means of space vehicles, it becomes clear that

each new find presents as many new questions as those it answers. This is in harmony with Paul’s observations: “His ways are past finding out” (Rom. 11:33).

The purpose of these articles is to explore the starry heavens above, contemplating its wonders; to see, with Bible in hand, first “that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual” (1Cor. 15:46). We intend to inquire into the marvels of sun, moon and stars, and then examine the usage of these heavenly bodies throughout the Scriptures, as symbols in the political heavens.

Where better to start, however, than with our own earth?

## The Earth Our Home

The key to understanding the Bible symbology of *heavens* and *earth* is found in the Song of Moses: “Give ear O ye heavens... hear O earth” (Deu. 32:1). Moses was speaking to Israel, addressing the rulers as “heavens”, and

the people under their rule as "earth" (cp. Isa. 1:2). Whilst this is the key, we find the proof of this manner of interpretation in Gen. 37:5-10, in the matter of Joseph's dream: "behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me" (v. 9). The response of Jacob clearly shows that he understood the heavenly bodies to be political symbols. In this case he interprets them as: the sun to be the *family head or ruler*; the moon to be the *wife or reflector of honor and glory*; and the stars to be the *dignitaries* in the family circle: the brothers (themselves, heads of Israel's tribes). Jacob's reply shows his understanding: "shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee?" Thus, the earth is a symbol for those upon it who are ruled over by kings, emperors and authorities.

Our earth is a globe of about 13,000 km (8000 mls) diameter. It moves around the sun at an average distance of 149 million kms (93 million mls). It is one of a family of planets, and our sun has been described as "one very ordinary star in the huge stellar system, the Milky Way, which is our galaxy" (Nicolson, *Astronomy*, p. 5). On a clear night we may see thousands of stars, which are actually suns in their own systems enormous distances away, and mostly vastly larger than our sun.

Curiously, whilst the stars vary considerably in size, they have about the same mass (weight). In a subsequent article we shall consider the spiritual lessons to be learned from this, but for now our earth and its family of planets engage our attention.

Our home, the earth, is the third planet from the sun. In order the planets are Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars (Asteroids), Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. The planets do not have circular orbits, for they move elliptically.

This brings to mind Jas. 1:17, concerning Yahweh who is "the Father of lights, with whom there is no *variableness* (Gr. *parallage*: variation)". Yahweh is obviously superior to His creation, and would be fittingly represented by a perfect circle, as indicated by the wheels and rings of Ezekiel's cherubim (Ezek. 1:15-21).

Besides the earth, other planets have moons, and earlier it was thought that there were 31 moons in the solar system. Space probes have now discovered many others: Mars has 2, Jupiter: 16, Saturn: 18, Uranus: 15, Neptune: 8, Pluto: 1 (*Observatory*, Sydney, Aust. 1992).

Our moon is tiny by comparison: a mere 3400 km (2160 mls) in diameter, and only 402,300 km (250,000 mls) away from us. It is somewhat unique, in that its orbit is *regulated by the sun* more than by the earth. It is itself a planet, travelling around the sun, and "perturbed by the earth as it travels" (Hinkelbein, *Origins of the Universe*, p. 47).

Consider the spiritual lesson. As the moon (the ecclesia) travels around the sun (Christ), it is "perturbed" (an astronomical term, yet so apt!) by the earth's influence. The moon is bound to the earth, even as it orbits the sun, just as the ecclesia is influenced by the "earth of flesh" as we orbit our Lord Jesus Christ. This is vexing for us, but, like the moon, we can lighten the darkness of earth's night in the process!

#### **Saturn, the Mystery Planet**

Through a telescope, Saturn presents one of the most beautiful sights in the heavens. It has a curious system of rings, which have long been a *mystery* to enquiring man.

This mystery, plus the fact that Saturn is the *sixth* planet from the sun, reminds us of *Mystery Babylon* (Rev. 13:18; 17:5), which is one of the most powerful and influential bodies in the

ruling "heavens" upon the earth. The connection becomes even more striking when we consider that the original name of Rome was *Saturnia* — the *City of Saturn*. The rings around Saturn correspond to the "halo" so much used by the devotees of the Church of Rome, borrowed from the ancient pagans.

For all its physical beauty, the planet Saturn has no substance, for it seems to be largely a gaseous body with a density less than water (*Astronomy Handbook*, p. 133). Compare the Church of Rome, which also appears grand, and is considered by man to be the most beautiful system — yet it, too, is without true spiritual substance.

Saturn is singular, in that its days are very brief; only ten hours and fourteen minutes long. Similarly, the real nature of the so-called "Eternal City of Rome" is brief; its destiny is proclaimed thus: "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon... for in one hour thy judgment is come... and shall be found no more at all" (Rev. 18:10, 21). Saturn and Rome both speak of the *brevity of life* and *lack of substance*.

#### Venus — The Bright and Morning Star

Most of our knowledge of Venus has come from space probes. Venus is called the *Morning* or *Evening Star*, according to when it is visible. As the Morning Star it heralds the new day, and appropriately represents the Lord Jesus Christ when he introduces the glad Millennial Day, dispelling the night of Gentile darkness. The Master said: "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and *morning star*" (Rev. 22:16).

Unlike its showy companion, Saturn, Venus is a heavenly body of *substance*, a solid body; and with the exception of the sun and moon, it is the brightest object normally seen in the heavens. Venus is a beautiful sight in the morning sky, shining with a bril-

liant silvery hue (speaking of redemption), and the orbit of Venus is "*nearer to a perfect circle* than that of any other planet!" (*New Handbook of the Heavens*, p. 54).

Whereas Saturn speaks of the brevity of days, the length of days on Venus is *as long as its year*. Venus takes longer to rotate upon its axis than to circuit the sun. Its day and its year are about the same — hence it speaks of the Scriptural "day for a year principle" (Ezek. 4:6), and its exceptionally long day also speaks of Christ's never ending day through the millennium and beyond.

Again, consider this. The near equal day and year means that Venus is always keeping its face to the sun, as did the Lord Jesus during his probation: always looking to his Father (the Greater "Sun") to do His will (Jn. 8:29; Isa. 8:17).

This beautiful heavenly body, obscured by cloud cover, represents the One who is the manifestation of Him "whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1Tim. 6:16).

Nevertheless we have the wondrous prospect of the promise: "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works to the end... and I will give him the *morning star*" (Rev. 2:26-28). What an inestimable reward: to be associated with him who is represented by one of the loveliest objects in creation!

Venus appears as the *darkness passes away*; so does the antitype: "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but Yahweh (*Christ comes with the Yahweh Name*: Jn. 5:43) shall arise... and Gentiles shall come to Thy *light*, and kings to the *brightness of thy rising*" (Isa. 60:2, 3). Even so, come Lord Jesus.

— Stan Snow.

*A series on the heavenly creation is to continue, God willing.*

# The Witness of the Stars

*When we gaze into the heavens on a starry night it seems as though a thousand diamonds sparkle upon a black background. These celestial lights are utterly silent, and yet to the spiritual mind with “ears to hear” they positively testify that “the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day UTTERETH SPEECH and night unto night showeth knowledge” (Psa. 19:1-2).*

*Cover illustration: Rosette Nebula, 3,400 light years distance.*

**W**ITHIN the boundless extremities of the Universe, whose laws witness to the magnitude of the Creator’s power, the limits of our solar system appear rather insignificant. *Pluto*, the outermost known planet of our system is about 5,600 million kms (3,500 million mls) from the sun. Yet this considerable distance is miniscule when we consider the distance of the nearest star! It is about 38 million million kms (24 million million mls), It takes light, travelling at the fantastic speed of 300,000 kms (186,000 mls) every second, four years to reach it.

The stars are so distant, and the space between them so vast, that, notwithstanding the fact that they are moving apart at tremendous speeds, their relative positions appear virtually the same to us as they did to Adam. The words of Isa. 55:9 take on greater meaning: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts”. Who is mortal man to imagine that “all things came originally from nothing” when the Word of God clearly states that “there

is but one God, the Father, *of whom are all things*” (1Cor. 8:6)! Scripture informs us that God made the universe *out of Himself*, by His spirit.

#### Millions of Stars Typical of the Saints

Our sun is one of a cluster, a multitude of suns, or stars, that form our *Galaxy*, which is so large, that, at its speed of travel, light takes 100,000 years to cross it! It is a giant spiral, containing 100,000 million other suns (According to *Story of our Universe*, Johnson Space Center, USA).

The galaxy is a system of stars, figurative of the Body of Christ, declared by God to Abraham: “I will multiply thy seed *as the stars of the heaven*” (Gen. 22:17). The Seed of Abraham is designed to be a *Star System*, beautifully organised “to shine as the brightness of the firmament... as the *stars* for ever and ever” (Dan. 12:3).

We have but a glimpse in Scripture of the details of this divine system by which the saints will be organised in the kingdom. However, the organisation of David’s priesthood and his musicians in the past — divided into twenty four orders (1Chr. 25; Rev. 4:4) — may give us an indication. Notice

how David set in motion his religious system: He arranged Levites (1Chr. 23), priests (ch. 24), singers (ch. 25), gatekeepers and treasurers (ch. 26), secular officers (ch. 27).

#### Differing Brightness and Glory

The Scriptures declare the heavens to be the noblest work of Yahweh: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou has ordained; *what is man...*" (Psa. 8:3).

But there are deeper lessons to be found in the heavenly bodies, beyond their obvious majesty. Gen. 1:14 declares: "God said, Let there be lights in the firmament... and let them be for *signs*". This word is the Hebrew *owth*, capable of meaning "the sign of that which cannot itself be seen" (Gesenius). Therefore we look at the heavens and seek the spiritual lessons therein (Mat. 7:7; Lk. 11:9).

Their natural brilliance is mentioned in Dan. 12:3, "they that be wise shall *shine as the brightness of the firmament*". Telescopes have given some idea of how bright this can be! Notice that Daniel implies that some saints in the kingdom will shine as the general firmament, whilst others will shine as bright stars of particular glory: "they that turn many to righteousness *as the stars*". This is confirmed by the Lord's parable of the Nobleman and the Pounds: Lk. 19:12-19.

#### The Enormity of the Glory

The *great expanse* of the heavens is alluded to in Job 22:12, whereas the *great number* of the stars is mentioned in Jer. 33:22, "the host of heaven *cannot be numbered*, neither the sand of the sea measured". Contrast the faulty imagination of the ancient Greeks who thought the stars numbered about 3,000 (*Creation's Amazing Architect*, p. 31). This is the number that can be seen, at best, with the naked eye. Yet, notwithstanding its antiquity, the Scripture is

in perfect harmony with the demonstrations of modern science.

Yahweh gave the heavenly bodies their orbits and paths according to fixed laws (Jer. 33:25). He has complete control over them (Isa. 45:12), and has *named them all*: "He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might" (Isa. 40:26). This is a most staggering statement. More than one hundred of these star names have been preserved through the centuries, in Hebrew and Arabic (*The Witness of the Stars*, Preface iv).

The divine greatness is further declared in Psa. 147:4, in that God *numbers* as well as *names* the stars of His creation: "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names". Surely one of the joys of immortality will be to know and consider these names, and their significance in Yahweh's plan of salvation.

#### Remarkable Variations in So Many Ways

Advances in astronomy have revealed the great variance of the stars, from *Betelgeuse*, which is 250 times the diameter of our sun, and 1,000 times more powerful, to *Kuiper's Star*, which is a "white dwarf", and only one half the diameter of our earth (*Basic Astronomy*, p. 81). Paul alludes to this variance in the stars when he states: "for one star *differeth from another star in glory*" (1Cor. 15:41). Today, we can appreciate the force of his analogy, for research has revealed that there are stars of many colors: green, blue, yellow, orange, red, white, green-white and red-orange stars.

There are also double stars, which are glorious to see. *Sirius*, the most brilliant star in the sky, is a "double", consisting of a large star, 26 times that of our sun, and a "white dwarf", one three hundred and sixtieth part of our sun's diameter.

#### Unstable Stars

"Variable stars, the surprise pack-

ages of the universe, are stars that change their brightness, sometimes from hour to hour, and in some cases from month to month" (*New Handbook of the Heavens*, p. 130). One such group, termed the *Cepheid Variables*, are pulsating stars, expanding and contracting, giving off the most light just before they are at their largest.

There are still other types of variables, the *catastrophic variables*: i.e., Flare stars, Novae and Supernovae. *Novae* are stars which blaze up suddenly, taking only a few days to reach maximum brightness, and then fade away slowly into obscurity. Hence these stars are not as constant in their light output as is our sun.

The lesson is unmistakable. Our sun represents the Lord Jesus Christ, as we shall show in a subsequent article. His light is constant — like the One he manifests, "the Father of lights, with whom is *no variableness*" (Jas. 1:17). However, in these days of the Gentiles, fast drawing to a close, there are "lights" in the political heavens, which are *bright, unstable* and destined for oblivion (Psa. 7:9; 37:10), as was the case in the closing days of the pagan Roman Empire (Rev. 12:4).

One such notable variable star is *Betelgeuse*, a giant *red* star in the constellation of Orion. Not only is it unstable in its light emission, but its red color speaks of the Adamic Race, whose "stars", or rulers, are generally capricious, lacking constancy, and demonstrating expediency rather than righteousness. Such is their "light" (cp. Isa. 8:20).

Contrast our own sun, which shines with a clear, steady, golden light (*Astronomy Handbook*, p. 48), speaking clearly of the tried faith of the antitypical "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2): our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### A Tabernacle for the Sun of Righteousness

Psalm 19 likens the Lord Jesus Christ to the sun, and the apostles to

the planets. Paul quotes Psa. 19 in reference to the work of the apostles in the first century (Rom. 10:18) whereas Rev. 1:16 likens Christ to the sun.

The Psalmist presents a graphic picture of the sun, holding the planets in their orbits around it by the powerful, yet invisible, force of gravity. Psa. 19 is a parable of the "Sun of righteousness", the Lord Jesus Christ, holding his followers "in orbit" around him by the "invisible" force of the gospel, the belief of which is a very real power indeed (Rom. 1:16).

This parable is particularly applicable to the millennium, wherein will be a "tabernacle", a dwelling for the sun. So: "in them He hath set a tabernacle for the sun" (Psa. 19:4). "Tabernacle" is the Hebrew *ohel*, a tent or house. In the millennium, a *heavenly* house will be instituted for the antitypical sun, the Christ-King, who will move at the *centre* of his household (Eph. 2:19).

The "tabernacle" is an allusion to the *bridal ceremony*, performed under a canopy, or tent, provided for the occasion. It presents a type of Christ and his Bride (the theme of Psa. 19:5), who is "as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber... a strong man to run a race". The literal sun emerges from the obscurity of night to, as it were, "run a race" across the heaven during the day. So, too, Christ emerges from the night of Gentile darkness, from his "chamber" at Sinai (Isa. 26:20-21) to run the race through the *millennial day*. How appropriate that the word "chamber" (Heb. *chuppah*) means the bridal canopy. The "strong man" is the Heb. *gibbor*, a title for Christ as a man of war: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty (*gibbor*)" (Psa. 45:3). Christ will then have prevailed over the nations, and will "climb through the heavens", to shine for the thousand years and beyond (Rev. 20:2-7).

— Stan Snow.

# Monarch of the Heavens

*In Eureka, vol. 3, p. 68, Brother Thomas quotes the fitting words of Isaac Newton: "For the understanding of the prophecies, we are in the first place, to acquaint ourselves with the figurative language of the prophets; which is taken from the analogy between the world natural, and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic". Thus the sun, moon and stars are prophetic symbols based upon the natural world.*

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the 150 million kilometres (93 mill. miles) of space between the earth and sun, our eye would be damaged severely if we should carelessly look at the sun, even through a small telescope. This is a testimony to the power and influence of the sun.

It must be treated with respect, and is thus a fitting symbol for its Creator: "For Yahweh Elohim is *a sun* and shield" (Psa. 84:11). Like the natural sun, upon which man cannot gaze, so is the antitypical Sun, "who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, *nor can see*" (1Tim. 6:16). Yahweh told Moses: "thou canst not see My face: for there shall *no man see me and live*" (Exod. 33:20). As with the natural, so with the spiritual; as with the type, so with the antitype, the *Sun* must be approached with awe and respect (Mal. 4:1-2).

## The Giant Star in the Heavens

The sun has been described as "a gigantic atomic engine" (*Story of our Universe*). It is a huge globe of incandescent gases. Over one hundred earths side by side would just reach across its diameter; more than one million earths

would be required to equal its bulk. For ease of memory, the sun can be considered to have a diameter a little under one million miles, whilst the earth has a diameter slightly less than 8,000 miles.

Its surface temperature is believed to be about 6,000 degrees Centigrade, and it is thought that at its core it would be so hot (about 20 million degrees Centigrade!) that, if it were exposed to the earth, the earth would fry immediately.

The sun is like a controlled hydrogen bomb (*Astronomy*, p. 45), where Nuclear Hydrogen Reactions at the centre pour power towards the surface, 480,000 kms (300,000 mls) away, and from thence, into space all around.

## The Theme of the Sun in Scripture

The word translated "sun" in the Old Testament is the Heb. *shemesh*, from a root, "to be brilliant".

Not only does its light dispel the dismal darkness, but its rays also provide health and joy. The great antitype, the Lord Jesus, as the perfect reflection of his Father, is "the Sun of Righteousness which shall arise with healing in his beams" (Mal. 4:2). Even in the days of his flesh, he was a healer of men,

and declared of himself: "I am *the light of the world*: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness" (John 8:12). Christ will dispel the gloom of the world, for Isaiah saith: "Arise, shine for thy light is come... behold darkness shall cover the earth... and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (ch. 60:1-3).

Just as the sun, with its *fiery power and brilliance*, dominates our solar system, whilst at the same time sustaining life for many, so also the Lord Jesus will reveal himself, bringing his *fiery judgments* to the earth, when "he shall be revealed from heaven... in *flaming fire* taking vengeance on them that know not God" (2Thes. 1:7, 8).

#### The Setting of the Sun

Since the sun is used frequently in Scripture to represent the sovereign power and rulership of nations, when a nation's glory fades its "sun" is said to have gone down.

Jeremiah speaks of Jerusalem: "her sun is gone down while it was yet day" (ch. 15:9). He was referring to the destruction of the Jewish State by the Babylonians. The Israelitish sun shone temporarily again under the Persians, but retreated when the Romans dominated the land, after which it was suppressed for two millennia, as at this day.

Jesus spoke of the setting of Israel's sun at the hands of the Romans: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days (AD.70) shall the sun be darkened" (Mat. 24:29).

But Israel's sun will shine again for the *aión* when Christ raises the tabernacle of David and builds again the ruins thereof and establishes its glory (Acts 14:16; Amos 9:11). Isaiah declared: "Thy sun *shall no more go down*" (Isa. 60:20), when it will be fixed in the political heavens of the future (1Cor. 15:24).

When mankind turns away from

their God they experience mental and moral darkness, as Paul observed: "because that when they knew God they glorified Him not as God... and their foolish *heart was darkened*" (Rom. 1:21). Conversely, the reason for the rising and shining of Israel's sun will be because of the hearts of its people: "Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever" (Isa. 60:21). Israel will remain in the light of Yahweh for a thousand years!

#### Egypt's Sun Eclipsed

In Ezek. 32, the prophet takes up a lamentation against Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Its political heavens were to be covered in darkness: "I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark. I will *cover the sun* with a cloud" (v. 7). This "cloud" was the might of ancient Babylon, for "the sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee... they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt". History confirms the accuracy of the divine prediction: as the Egyptian Sun was removed from the political heavens, enveloped in the dark cloud of its enemies.

#### Babylon's Sun Darkened

In course of time, the Medes and Persians moved against Babylon. Its "heavens", formerly resplendent in glory, were eclipsed: "The burden of Babylon... the *sun* shall be darkened in his going forth... I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease... I will shake the *heavens*" (Isa. 13:1, 10-13).

Another dramatic revolution in the political heavens had occurred.

#### The Sun of the Fourth Beast Smitten

Daniel's fourth beast had its *sun*, moon and stars, like the empires which preceded it. Pagan Rome vested its authority and power in its emperors and senators, which constituted the *sun* of the Roman world.

But, like the former illuminaries, it would not last. Rev. 8:12 records: "the



third part of the *sun was smitten*... and the day shone not for a third part of it". This striking figure represents the *eclipse* of the western third of the Roman Empire in AD 476, when Odoacer, king of the Heruli, triumphed over Rome and became king of Italy. His reign was followed by that of the Gothic kings, who continued in power for about sixty years.

In this way the "sun, moon and stars" of the western third of Rome ceased to shine, as the historian Gibbon recorded: "The empire, as it previously existed, came to an end with this event".

#### **Future Glory of Israel's Sun**

The narrative of Isa. 30 is of Hezekiah's deliverance from the Assyrian. The context is also typical of the deliverance of Israel from the power of Gogue, the latter-day Assyrian. Concerning Jerusalem, Isaiah says: "Yahweh will be very gracious unto thee... thine eyes shall see thy teachers [the saints] and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:19-21). Their way will be illuminated by the beams of spiritual wisdom emanating from Zion's hill.

To emphasize the glory of Israel in that day, Isaiah introduces the beautiful figure of the *heavens* of Israel shining with a *sevenfold light*: "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be *sevenfold*, as the light of *seven days*" (ch. 30:26).

This sevenfold light signifies the *complete* and *perfect* light of Israel's civil constitution in the day of the Millennial reign of her great king. The sevenfold light of Israel's *moon* signifies the complete and perfect ecclesiastical constitution of the nation, as manifested in the priesthood of the saints, whose light is described as the "sun". This is most fitting, for the saints are

then the Bride of the "Sun of Righteousness", and are *at one* with him, sharing his light (Mat. 13:43).

There is an irony in this sevenfold brilliance of Israel's sun. Babylon of old heated the furnace of affliction "seven times more than it was wont to be heated" (Dan. 3:19), in an endeavor to destroy God's people. In the Age to come Yahweh *will* make Israel a "sevenfold furnace" to successfully consume the latter-day Babylon (Rome): "Behold, the Name of Yahweh [Jesus comes with the Name: Jn. 5:43] cometh from far, *burning* with His anger... his tongue is a devouring *fire*... for through the voice of Yahweh shall the Assyrian be beaten down" (Isa. 30:27, 31). Again: "Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword... saith Yahweh, whose *fire* is in Zion and His *furnace* in Jerusalem" (Isa. 31:8-9).

Zechariah speaks in similar vein: "I looked and behold a lampstand all of gold... and his *seven lamps* which are upon the top thereof" (Zech. 4:2). The prophet describes "seven pipes" to the lamps as literally "seven and seven", indicating seven times seven lamps. Thus we are previewing a *sevenfold increase* (a perfection) of divine light in the Kingdom Age.

#### **The Suns (Stars) in the Heavens a Type**

There are some stars which actually exhibit a "sevenfold increase", as it were, described by the astronomer Nicholson: "stars which can sometimes brighten by several magnitudes in a matter of minutes". Then there are the "Novae stars which blaze up suddenly, taking only a few days to reach maximum brightness". Further, there are the "Supernovae, which may brighten by a factor of hundreds of millions" (*Astronomy*, Nicholson).

Hence there are abundant types in the natural heavens, illustrative of the principles and predictions of Bible prophecy concerning the "Sun of

Righteousness who shall arise with healing in his beams" (Mal. 4:2). This light of Christ shall shine with a "seven-fold", perfect brightness, radiating throughout all the planet "to earth's remotest bounds". The apostle John was privileged to have already seen him in a vision: "I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were *the sun*, and his feet as pillars of fire" (Rev. 10:1).

#### The Reward of the Righteous

What are these things to us? They are certainly much more than of mere academic interest. Our Lord has involved *us* in the glory of the heavens: "Then shall the righteous *shine forth as the sun* in the kingdom of their Father" (Mat. 13:43).

But sadly, not all can thrill to these Scriptural analogies and parables, and therefore the Lord immediately adds: "who hath ears to hear, let him hear".

Thus we must develop a ready ear to listen to and ponder upon the *Exhortation of the Sun*, for it is:

- an emblem of *constancy*, and following an *unerring course* (Psa. 72:5);
- a symbol of the man who loves God (Jud. 5:31);
- a figure of the just ruler, who reveals the beams of the morning sun (2Sam. 23:4);
- a type of the saint who progresses to maturity, like the

sun's majestic course across the heavens (Prov. 4:18).

The mighty sun in our natural heavens is an awesome, majestic and brilliant illuminary. Yet for all this, the glory of Christ and his brethren during the Age to come, will figuratively eclipse its power: "the sun shall be ashamed, when Yahweh of armies shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" (Isa. 24:23). Therefore, we must absorb the power of the Spirit's light today, that we might be the divine light-bearers for eternity.

— Stan Snow.

#### A CORRECTION

A reader objects to the comment on page 325 (vol. 58), that "*Venus always keeps its face to the sun*". He points out that because of the retrograde rotation of this planet, its aspect varies in relation to the sun. Brother Snow acknowledges the error, and notes "that the time between one noonday and the next on Venus would be a fraction over 116 earth days, and the year on Venus is 243 earth days. Therefore Venus has a year of about two days. Hence the point about keeping its face to the sun is not absolutely valid. However I do not believe this negates my general argument regarding the significance of Venus, nor concerning the *Day for a Year* principle. If we regard a day in the life of a planet as being one complete revolution of the planet upon its axis, and if this period equals the time it takes for the planet to complete one circuit of the sun, then I think it reasonable to see the *Day for a Year* analogy. But we can each decide for ourselves concerning the relevance of this suggestion".

# The Moon

## A Faithful Witness

*“Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah” (Psa. 89:35-37). The moon is of itself a dark body, but reflects the light of the sun. It is thus only visible when it is in association with the brilliance of the sun — as the ecclesia is in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**T**HE respective roles of the sun and the moon are given in Genesis, chapter one: “God made two great lights; the *greater* light to rule the *day*, and the *lesser* light to rule the *night*” (v. 16). According to some astronomers (*Astronomy Handbook*, p. 40) it is a matter of coincidence that, notwithstanding the real difference in size of these heavenly bodies, because of their differing distances from earth, they both appear to be about the same size in the sky. Clearly there is no coincidence here. The sun and moon move along the same path in the heavens, but by Yahweh’s appointment they rule with a different brilliance and at different times. The lesson is striking: the sun (Christ) will rule, or illuminate the *Millennial Day* (Psa. 19:5,6). The moon (ecclesia) has been appointed to rule and illuminate the *Gentile night* (Gen. 1:16-18), for the past 2000 years, since the departure of the Lord Jesus: “Who is she (ecclesia) that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the *moon*?” (Song 6:10).

Total solar eclipses occur when the moon comes between the sun and the earth, and at that moment both perfectly correspond in size — which has a spiritual significance as we shall see.

### The Beauty of the Moon

Men have long extolled the romantic beauty of the moon, the only source of useful light in the darkness of the world’s night. It is certainly an apt symbol for the faithful ecclesia in this dusky, gloomy world!

The beauty of silvery beams of moonlight casting a path of glory across the waters of the sea is a parable of the redemptive work of Christ and the ecclesia. Silver speaks of redemption, and it is the work of the ecclesia (the moon) to mirror the light of Christ (the sun) across the nations (the waters) of the earth (Exod. 30:12,13; Num. 3:46,47). The darkness of the environment makes that light appear exceedingly bright.

In celestial terms, the moon is but a baby. It is a mere 2,160 miles (3,400 kms) in diameter, whereas the earth is 8,000 miles (12,800 kms) and the sun

about 1,000,000 miles (1,609,000 kms) in diameter (approx.). The moon is a mere 246,000 miles (396,000 kms) from the earth, a very small distance in astronomical terms. But to observers on earth, the moon is an object of beauty. It is in fact a planet in its own right, travelling around the sun in companionship with the earth. As one astronomer has observed: "it belongs to the sun rather than the earth. Its path is determined primarily by the sun and only incidentally by the earth... The moon travels in reality on a planetary track which is slightly 'disturbed' by earth" (*Origins of the Universe, Hinkelbein, p. 47*). This amazing statement accords with the antitype. The ecclesia (moon), is regulated by Christ (sun), and because in close association with the world (earth) the ecclesia is "disturbed" by the influences of the world. But the ecclesia is primarily influenced by the Sun of Righteousness, and is in constant orbit around him. The ecclesia, like the natural moon, cannot escape the gravitational pull of the earth, but, like the moon, the ecclesia *belongs to the sun!* However, when we put on spirit nature, we shall no longer be bound by this earth's gravity (Acts 1:9,10).

This will be true in both a natural and a spiritual sense, in that day.

#### **A Faithful Witness in the Heaven**

The Psalmist emphasised the certainty of the promises to David: "I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne... It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a *faithful witness in heaven*" (Psa. 89:35-37).

In the darkness of night, the moon is a constant reminder that the sun still exists, and that, though hidden from our view for a time, the sun's reflection in the face of the moon is a testimony to the sun's power and glory and warmth awaiting us at the approaching

day. Hence, in drawing our attention to the moon, the Psalmist speaks of the "sun" of David's throne, of which the moon is a witness (v. 36-37).

When closely viewed through a telescope, the moon is of dazzling brightness. Similarly, close examination of the ecclesia should reflect some of the glorious character of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2).

Who among us would deny that the world is now in a state of darkness? Jesus said: "I must work the works of him that sent me, *while it is day: the night cometh*, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:4,5).

Notwithstanding the apparent brightness of the moon on occasions, it is in reality a poor reflector of the sun's light. Photometer measurements show that the full moon gives only one part in 465,000, of the sun's brilliance (*New Handbook of the Heavens, p. 78*). It would take five skies entirely filled with full moons to equal the sun's light. Also, moonlight is more yellow than sunlight.

The spiritual lessons in all this are impressive. We must realise that as Yahweh's ecclesia of called out ones, we are but poor reflectors of the glorious character of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This was especially true of the ecclesia of Israel in the days of the prophet Isaiah: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9). One of the joys of immortality for us will be to develop an ever increasing appreciation of the majesty of our "Sun" of Righteousness.

Meanwhile, we reflect his light: "shining exceedingly white as snow" (Mk. 9:3), to the best of our ability; but which is, we confess, a paler *yellow*, like the moonlight.

Yet our efforts can be acceptable to

our Heavenly Father, being works of *faith*, represented by the *golden* (yellow) moonlight upon a dark earth (Heb. 11:6). We must also remember that the light of the ecclesia, although inferior, does, like the moon, promise a tomorrow: "darkness shall cover the earth... but Yahweh shall arise upon thee... and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. 60:2,3).

#### The Moon and Her Phases

Of all the heavenly objects, the moon is the one that undergoes the most dramatic changes; it goes through a constant cycle of phases each month. Like the earth, the moon is always half lit by the sun. As it goes through its phases night by night, different features of its surface are illuminated. The phases occur as the moon travels round the earth in a period of about 27 days, but because the earth is also moving, the interval between successive new moons is more than two days longer. Hence it takes the moon 29 and one half days to pass through its phases, and this is known as the Lunar Month (*Basic Astronomy*, p. 56; *Astronomy Handbook*, p. 101).

When the moon is between the earth and the sun it cannot be seen from earth. As it moves away from the direction of the sun, we can see more and more of the illuminated side until it is opposite the sun in the sky at full moon, and the whole orb is visible. The moon then begins to approach the position of the sun once again and shrinks back through a thin crescent to new moon.

#### The Spiritual Lesson of the Phasing Moon

The ecclesia of Christ has, in a remarkable parallel, waxed and waned down through the centuries, alternating from strength to weakness, as the Lampstands shone brightly and then dimly with heaven's light. If we consider Israel as the ecclesia of Yahweh

(Acts 7:38) we note with sadness, that in the days of Elijah the numbers had *waned* to a mere 7,000 (1Kgs. 19:18), who had not "bowed the knee to Baal". The ecclesial moon had waned to a thin crescent, scarcely worthy of the appellation of a "light in the heaven".

By contrast, in the later times of Nehemiah, the ecclesial "moon" had *waxed* to a greater spiritual fulness: "All the people gathered themselves together *as one man*... and Ezra and the priest brought the law before the congregation... and he read therein... and the ears of *all the people* were attentive... they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading... and all the congregation... sat under booths (Feast of Tabernacles)... and there was very great gladness (Neh. 8:1,2,3,8,17).

So it has also been with the ecclesia called out of the Gentile nations. There is no standing still for the ecclesia of Yahweh. The ecclesia is either *growing or declining*, either *waxing or waning*, and we are not necessarily speaking of the *numbers* in the ecclesia, but rather the *spiritual health* of the ecclesia, which though it may grow in numbers, may decline in its "first love" of the things of the Hope of Israel (Rev. 2:4).

#### Saints Called Out of The Gentiles

##### Illustrate the Phasing Moon

The history of the Truth down through the centuries clearly illustrates this principle. It has waxed and waned since Christianity's spiritual decline in the third century AD. Bro. Thomas traces groups of witnesses from the middle of the third century, as predicted in the Apocalypse, down to our own day. Commencing with the Novatians, he writes: "The head of the majority (of Christians) was Cornelius, the bishop of the ecclesia in Rome; and the leader of the 'few names' in the Sardinian State (Rev. 3:4) was Novatian who was elected bishop in Rome in

opposition to him, about AD. 251. He (Novatian) is acknowledged by his opponents to have been no heretic; and to have excelled in genius, learning and eloquence... Such was the state into which the ecclesias had fallen in the second half of the third century, against which Novatian protested. Many in all the Roman empire — *Christadelphians*, in contrast to 'Christians', a name disgraced then as now — united with him in bearing a noble testimony against the prevailing corruption in the camp; and by so doing acquired the name of Novatianists" (*Eureka*, vol. 2, pp. 227-229).

The rise of those who adhered to the Truth can be likened to the *waxing bright of the ecclesial moon*. But in time they passed from the scene, and the "moon" waned once more.

But Yahweh did not leave Himself without witnesses, and so, in another part of the Roman Empire another group of people with another name arose, like a *new moon* waxing brighter in the night of Gentile darkness. Bro. Thomas observes: "In the Roman Africa, then... there appeared, in the early part of the fourth century, an intensely anti-catholic people, who, as the faithful agents of the Lamb... were opposed to all their dogmas, and schemes of aggrandizement. They contended for 'the simplicity which is in Christ', as exhibited in the Word" (*Eureka*, vol. 2, p. 342). These people were known as the Donatists. Bro. Thomas quotes the historian Du Pin: "The learned Du Pin has noticed them: 'Indeed, they did not teach anything that was contrary to the apostles' creed'... Du Pin's is a noble testimony to the purity of their discipline. They maintained that an ecclesia of Christ should be constituted of just and holy men, or, at least, of those who appeared to be such; and that, although wicked men might lurk in the ecclesia, yet,

when professors manifested themselves to be wicked, *the brethren should put them away* [OUR EMPHASIS]. This was the principle of the so-called Donatists — a principle fully supported by the New Testament" (*Eureka*, vol. 2, p. 345).

But once again, with the passage of time, they too began to decline like the *waning moon*. They remained a separate body until the close of the sixth century, after which few traces of them under the name of Donatists can be found in history.

#### **The Ecclesial Moon Continually Phasing**

The true saints, and witnesses of Jesus against apostasy, have existed in the past as a minority within these larger anti-papal witnessing communities (Rev. 12:17; 11:3-7).

In the middle of the seventh century, the Paulicians arose, who set up their communities after apostolic pattern, as much as it was in their power to do so. Gibbon the historian has much to say about them. We can trace them through to the thirteenth century, to the country of the Albigeois, in southern France, known then as the Albigensian Paulicians, who later developed into the Waldenses (*Eureka*, vol. 3, p. 270).

This brief listing of witnesses of Yahweh, revealing the "moon" in her "phases", would not be complete without mention of the early Baptists, who formed part of the witnessing of the 17th century (*Eureka*, vol. 3, p. 297) as evidenced by their *Statement of Faith*. As a testimony to the "waning" of the Baptist "moon", we have but to compare their early vigour and enlightenment, with their acceptance of apostate doctrines today.

We must heed the exhortation that our "moon" does not wane, but waxes ever brighter, as the day of Christ's coming draws near.

— Stan Snow.  
(to be continued)

# The Advent of the New Moon

## The Monthly Bearer of Blessing

*“Blow up the trumpet in the NEW MOON, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day” (Psalm 81:3). “Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners” (Song 6:10).*

**A** *Lunar Eclipse* occurs when the moon passes into the earth’s shadow. At a total eclipse it passes completely into the central shadow, and this event may last for several hours. Even when totally eclipsed, the moon is always dimly visible, because the earth’s atmosphere passes some light into the shadow, giving it a *reddish* color.

Eclipses are relatively rare, because the moon’s orbit is inclined at five degrees to the plane of the earth’s orbit. If the moon moved exactly along the plane of the earth’s orbit, the line up with the sun at “*new*” and “*full*” would be perfect and there would always be an eclipse of the sun and moon respectively at these times. But it does not. So eclipses are rare and interesting. It can take from four to six hours for the moon to pass completely through the earth’s shadow (*Astronomy Handbook*, p. 102; *The Solar System*, p. 73).

Consider what happens when an

eclipse occurs in the heavens — and the significance of its scriptural parallel. The light of the sun is prevented from reaching the moon, because *the earth gets in the way!*

The lesson is unmistakable. The Light of Christ, the “Sun of righteousness”, can be prevented from covering us (the “moon”, Song 6:10) when, for any reason, the *world* is allowed to obscure our view, for “the cares of *this world*, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word (*the light*) and it becometh unfruitful” (Mk. 4:19).

James refers to this principle displayed in the natural heavens, when he says of Yahweh, who is superior to His own creation: “the Father of *lights* (i.e., sun, moon and stars) with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (i.e., the shadow or obscuration of an eclipse)” (Jas. 1:17). The word “turning” is in the Greek *trope*, from which we get “tropics”, which are zones on earth, formed by the earth’s

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### Cover Illustration:

The Dumbbell Nebula in Vulpecula, taken with the 508cm reflector at Palomar in California. This object, one of the most interesting in the sky, was discovered by Messier in 1764.

turning. James makes the encouraging point that, whilst the light from the heavenly bodies can be inconsistent and suffer occasional eclipse, God's goodness is *absolutely consistent* and without variation.

#### **Fair as the Moon — Clear as the Sun**

In earlier articles, we referred to the Song of Solomon where the Bride of Christ is described as being "fair as the moon", a *reflector* of the Sun's glory.

But there is a more glorious sequel. Ch. 6:10 provides a general summary of the Bride of Christ's attributes. It describes the Bride as *the moon*, shining out of the dark vault of heaven — a marvellous symbol of the true ecclesia in the midst of the darkness of the world.

But the verse also introduces us to a new morning: "Who is this that looketh forth *as the morning*". The morning referred to is the Millennial Dawn, the new day of the Kingdom Age, which David desired to see: 2Sam. 23:3-4. At this epoch there will be a transformed Bride, whose glory will then be as dazzling as the sunlight. Hence the sequel in Song 6:10, declares that the Bride will be "*clear as the sun*". Isaiah amplifies this, declaring: "in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall, the *light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun*" (Isa. 30:25-26). This speaks of the day when the Bride shares the immortal nature of the Bridegroom: "shining forth *as the sun* in the kingdom of the Father" (Mat. 13:43).

#### **The New Moon: The Sign of Blessing**

"Blow up the trumpet in *the new moon*, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day" (Psa. 81:3). This was a psalm for the Feast of the New Moon.

There were two such feasts: the regular monthly feast (Num. 28:11-15), and the Feast of Trumpets, referred to in Psa. 81 as "our solemn feast day" —

and the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:23-25, 34).

These feasts began at *the new moon*. The new moon commenced a *new cycle of blessings*; a new beginning for another month, enjoying the goodness of Yahweh upon His ecclesia. It was the cause for rejoicing, and was celebrated by the sounding of trumpets: "in the day of your *gladness...* and in the beginning of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets" (Num. 10:10). The *Feast of the New Moon* will be reintroduced in the Age to come, as the cycle of blessings continues throughout the Millennium (Ezek. 45:17; 46:6). These blessings are alluded to in Deut. 33:14, "and for precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by *the moon*" (lit., the "moons"; i.e., months).

Who can count the many blessings of the moon as it continues its monthly orbit around the earth? Men have learnt to plant crops in accordance with the moon's position, and the remarkable *Grunion fish* of California has a reproduction cycle strictly regulated by the moon and the fortnightly high tides (spring tides) of the ocean (H. Enoch, Professor of Zoology, University of Madras).

#### **The Moon in the Apocalypse**

There are several occurrences of the *moon* throughout the Apocalypse, and none is more interesting than that of the Sixth Seal. There the moon is said to "become *as blood*" (Rev. 6:12). In commenting upon these symbols, Brother Thomas says: "the apocalyptic symbolization is illustrative to them that can 'see', of the conflict of the saints with pagan Rome until they 'conquered' it... this being the nature of the Apocalypse, we must not look to the natural, but to the *political universe* for the interpretation of its signs" (*Eureka*, vol. 2, p. 278).



At the beginning of this article we pointed out that during a *total lunar eclipse*, when the earth totally blocks the sun's light from reaching the moon, the moon takes on a *reddish color*. Consider the sense in which this happened during the dramatic events in the Roman Empire, in the years AD312-324. The pagan priesthood, which until then had derived its "light" from the imperial pagan government, lost all support from the pagan government, when that government was overthrown by Constantine. There was a political "earthquake" among the peoples of the Roman "earth", and this turmoil prevented the "moon" (the pagan priests) from receiving light and support from the pagan "sun", the imperial power, which was itself eclipsed, becoming "black" (Rev. 6:12). During this total eclipse, the "moon turned as blood". This is an appropriate symbol, for the civil wars were stained with blood for the vanquished.

In Rev. 12, which also deals with this period, but from the perspective of the downtreading of the saints, *the moon* appears under the feet of an apostate woman. The "woman" symbolises Roman Catholicism. The "moon" is rightly shown to be under the feet of the Catholic Woman, for the pagan priesthood was entirely subjected to Catholicism, following the triumph of Constantine, and his pseudo-Christian armies: "and there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and *the moon* under her feet" (Rev. 12:1).

#### **New Moon Blessings in the Kingdom**

There is soon to come a complete change in the identity of *The Moon*. The present ecclesiastical systems of the world are to be replaced by the divine selection; the *Moon* created for Yahweh's glory. It will be a time when the *Moon* will affect the lives of all humanity for their benefit and joy.

The prophet Isaiah predicts a time of blessings upon the nations as the constant succession of worshippers flow to Zion: "it shall come to pass that from *one new moon to another*, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith Yahweh" (Isa. 66:23). This speaks of monthly and weekly observances at Ezekiel's Temple.

This will be especially true of the Feast of Tabernacles which all nations will attend (Zech. 14:16). This feast, held on the fifteenth day of the *seventh* month, speaks of the Kingdom Age. The month will commence with *the new moon*, but in the middle of the month, at the blaze of the *full moon*, the joyous Feast of Tabernacles will be the realization of the *fulness of blessings*, so long promised to all nations. The *fulness of the moon* portrays the perfected universal ecclesia, the Bride of Christ, embracing the world when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

*New moon* after *new moon* (month by month) the nations will look for the blessings of their king. The symbolic trees of Rev. 22:2 produce fruits and blessings at each *new moon*, or month, when "the tree (lit. wood of trees) of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit *every month*; and the leaves of the tree (trees) are for the healing of the nations". Here are symbols depicting the saints performing their spiritually-healing work upon the nations, as the people present themselves at the House of Prayer at each *new moon* throughout the Millennium.

It is appropriate to realise that there will also be literal trees with healing properties at the precincts of Ezekiel's Temple, as described in Ezek. 47:12, one of the many wonders to be revealed in that longed for day.

### Christ Appears to the People at the New Moon

It was the custom for kings to eat meat with special guests at the time of the *new moon* (1Sam. 20:5, 24-25). This will be the case in the glorious Kingdom of the future.

Christ is entitled "Messiah the Prince" (Dan. 9:24-26), as the "prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5), as the "Prince of life" (Acts 3:15), and as "a Prince and a Saviour" (Acts 5:31).

In the kingdom, *The Prince* stands to appear before the people at the *Feast of the New Moon* as declared in Ezek. 46:1-8. This will be a moment of great joy, honor and blessing to the mortal nations permitted to view their great king at these times. But this joy will pale beside the honor of the immortal saints who will "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 8:11) along with their Lord. The saints will sup with Christ, as he said: "when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Mat. 26:29; Lk. 22:15,16).

As the special guests of the great king, the saints will be honored above all others at Christ's table, for he promised them: "that ye may eat and drink *at my table in my kingdom*" (Lk. 22:30). Again: "blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom" (ch. 14:15).

In the times of David, the king employed his officials by roster, and those rosters changed at each *new moon*: "their officers that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out *month by month* throughout all the months (i.e., moons) of the year, of every course were twenty and four thousand" (1Chron. 27:1). It is very likely that the King of kings will do likewise when he raises up the *Tabernacle of David* (Amos 9:11; Acts 15:16). Hence, the *new moons* will be of great interest to the immortal saints, when their appointed turn arrives to visit the Temple, to sup with the King, and perform their very pleasant duties in the vigor of Spirit nature.

— Stan Snow.  
*To Be Continued.*

### Criticizing Brother Thomas — A Discouragement

**A**S Paul begat Onesimus, so Brother Thomas, either directly or remotely, has spiritually begotten us. His writings are as powerful to instruct today as they were when *Elpis Israel* first appeared. But what about Dr. Thomas' mistakes? These are not so likely to hinder anyone's obedience to the Truth as is the discouragement caused by those who by loud and insistent criticism turn many away from his peerless expositions. If what we deem to be error calls for notice, let us take it in hand, meekly and humbly, just as we should deal with a parent's fault. The fruit of the doctor's teaching is to be seen in hundreds of ecclesias and in thousands of brethren rejoicing in the teaching of the Gospel. What can the doctor's critics show as the result of their efforts? Time spent in handing on Brother Thomas' instruction will make both ourselves and others wise unto salvation. Those who occupy themselves thus are not likely to devote much time and energy to our Brother's shortcomings.

— R. Roberts, 1870.

# Wandering Stars

*“On account of the luminaries in the natural heaven governing the day and the night (Gen. 1:14-18), all luminaries in the symbolical language signify ruling powers... ‘I am’, saith the Lord Jesus, ‘the bright and the morning star’ (Apoc. 22:16); the Star which the Spirit compelled Balaam to predict would ‘come out of Jacob’ (Num. 24:17). By this star is evidently intended a ruler, a conqueror, a great potentate; for, as the Sceptre of Israel, he is to ‘smite the princes of Moab, and to destroy all the children of Sheth’. A Star, therefore, sometimes signifies a destroying power. The word is on occasions put for that which is inconstant, or meteoric in its motions. Hence, in Jude, such stars are styled ‘wandering’ or shooting stars” (Eureka, vol. 3, p. 58).*

*Cover Illustration: Pacific Ocean, photographed from Apollo 9 from an altitude of 130 km. The cloud arrangement is typical of a meteorological depression, and there is considerable cumulus and altocumulus.*

**I**N their book, *The Solar System*, the astronomers Reidy and Wallace recount how throughout history there have been tales of gigantic stones falling from the sky.

It was only in 1803 after such a fall at L’Aigle near Paris, that the European scientific community accepted the origin of these stones, now called meteorites. Meteors, or “shooting stars”, look splendid as they flash briefly across the night sky. They are, however, not stars. They are simply tiny pieces of planetary material rushing through space and being burned up by friction in our atmosphere at speeds of up to 72 kms (45 miles) per second. Most meteors are very small and inconsequential.

Sometimes lone meteors appear; whilst showers of them occur at regular intervals as large numbers of these par-

ticles move in groups orbitally around the Sun.

Some of these heavenly objects are quite large, and may reach the ground, in which case they are known as meteorites. Very often, the meteor will explode before reaching the ground, scattering its fragments over a large area. The passage of such a meteor through the atmosphere is marked by a very bright trail and audible bangs. Some notable finds are the Hoba West meteorite in South Africa, weighing 60 tons, and a Greenland meteorite of 36 tons (*Astronomy*, Nicolson).

### Great Stones From Heaven

When Joshua fought against the five kings in Canaan, Yahweh “cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died; they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel

slew with the sword" (Josh. 10:11).

The Hebrew word for "stones" is *eben*, literally a stone of any kind. It is possible that God used meteorites to effect this great overthrow by Joshua. The mention of "hailstones" in this verse, is a translation of the Hebrew *eben barad*, literally, *stones that hail*. The hailstones of ice with which we are more familiar, are described by a different Hebrew word, in the great destruction upon Gog: "I will rain upon him, and upon his bands... an overflowing rain, and great hailstones" (Ezek. 38:22). The Hebrew *elgabish* literally reads: "and stones, great crystals". This indicates ice hail of a stupendous nature, which will crush Gog's war machine upon the mountains of Israel. But the stones which hailed upon the enemies of Joshua do not appear to be the ice crystals, but a meteor shower of the greatest intensity.

In his Bible Commentary, Adam Clarke lists 27 recorded "fallings" of stones from the sky, from the days of the Roman empire, up to and including the fall near L'Aigle (Paris), to which we have already referred. He gives numbers of stones, their weights, the dates, and the authorities for the findings. It is very possible that an occurrence such as this, divinely directed, helped Joshua in his day.

Nor can we limit the future hail upon Gog to ice hail, for Isaiah describes the fall of the Latter Day Assyrian in this manner: "Yahweh shall cause His glorious voice to be heard... with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones (*eben barad*: "stones that hail" i.e., meteorites)... for the Assyrian shall be beaten down" (Isa. 30:30-31). We conclude from these testimonies, that the future hail upon Gog may well be both stones and ice hailstones.

#### **Wandering Stars and Darkness Forever**

Jude uses graphic language to

attack false teachers within the ecclesia. He writes in verse 4: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old, ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men". Bro. H. P. Mansfield wrote of Jude: "He had been engaged in writing a treatise on the common faith (v. 3), but was interrupted in this labor of love and pleasure by the spectacle of rapid spiritual declension that was sweeping ecclesias. Moved by the Spirit, he laid aside the pen of exposition and took up that of warning and rebuke" (*Expositor: James to Jude*, page 313).

Jude effectively confronted the false teachers. In verses 12 and 13, he describes these men who had crept into the ecclesia unawares, by six striking metaphors. The sixth and final metaphor is that of "wandering stars". Some authorities suggest Jude likens the false teachers to meteors, which, in splendour, flash briefly across the ecclesial heaven during this "night" of Gentile darkness.

The Greek word translated "wandering" is *planetai*, meaning a *wanderer*. Our English word "planet" is derived from this Greek word, because the planets move about the sky, unlike the stars which have fixed positions. The planets do not move at random, but have well defined orbits around the sun. Thus, both stars and planets are disciplined, in that they have set positions and paths in the heavens, as God has appointed for them.

But meteors are different, and can suddenly appear at diverse places in the darkness of night, startling observers as they light up their portion of the sky in a momentary flash of light, only to be swallowed up by the darkness for ever. Their light is of no lasting value. They are neither fixed nor permanent, and useless for navigation. The ancient navigators relied upon the heavenly bodies for guidance across sea and

land. To trust in such “wandering stars” leads into danger and destruction.

Jude’s metaphor is therefore very apt and descriptive, for there were “wandering stars” in the ecclesial sphere in his day, just as there are today. To follow them, notwithstanding their apparent brilliance, will lead to shipwreck and the “blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 13).

The Truth has been revived in the latter days. Let us “turn not from it to the right hand or to the left” (Josh 1:7). Let us not gaze after those who would demean our interest in the kingdom, or divert our energies away from it, for “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18). There are those who will not allow themselves to be “carried about of winds” (Jude 12) of false doctrine (Eph. 4:14), refusing to follow that which is popular, or to be absorbed by the eternal night, but who will “shine as the brightness of the firmament... and as the stars for ever and ever” (Dan 12:3).

On the other hand, “meteors” or “shooting stars” as they are known, do not properly belong to the heavens above at all. Brother Thomas observes: “They have no appropriate place in the starry heavens, but are engendered in the lower regions of the earth’s atmosphere” (*Eureka*, Vol. 3, page 59). He is quite correct. Meteors which are asteroids or minor planets, move in a belt, whose orbit around the sun is between Mars and Jupiter. They only light up our night sky when they move into the lower heavens and enter earth’s atmosphere.

#### **False Teachers — Brilliant but Brief**

When you next gaze upon a “shooting star”, remember Jude’s analogy, and consider the false teachers who troubled the ecclesias in his day, as well as in ours. We should avoid those who say that Christadelphians have not found the Truth in its fundamental

entirety, that our pioneer brethren were “yesterday’s men”, and that it is time to move on. Such “shifting stones” say that we ought not be obsessed with the kingdom and its details, but that we should move on in today’s world and take a greater participation in society, acting for the amelioration of its problems according to the wisdom of men. Such teachers would do well to consider that “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to *take out of them* a people for His Name” (Acts 15:14).

Truth does not change, because it is Truth. It is a finality. Bro. Roberts expressed this superbly when he answered a critic in 1898: “Then there is the proposition that ‘Christadelphianism is not a finality’. If this were our opinion, we should be found altogether elsewhere. We would not sacrifice present respectability and present ease for the sake of a thing admitting of uncertainty and requiring further ‘enquiry’. In this point we totally differ from all our critics. We are certain we have attained to the Truth; we are positive, we have no doubt. The Truth is not with us an object of search, nor a subject of investigation, it is a possession and a finality, and this confidence is not a matter of assumption nor an idiosyncrasy. It is founded on a lifetime’s incessant daily reading of the Scriptures”. Brother Roberts has much more to say on this matter, including the fact that he would not want to belong to that class, condemned in the scriptures, who are “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2Tim. 3:7).

#### **Comets and Meteors**

The connection between meteors and comets is clear when meteor showers are considered, say the astronomers Reidy and Wallace (*The Solar System*, p. 211).

These showers mark the annual passage of the earth through a particularly dense cloud of dust particles left

by a comet. Just as the earth occasionally passes through the tail of a comet, so it sometimes passes through the stream of dust left behind by a comet. When the earth passes through a stream of this dust, grains hit the earth's atmosphere, heating up and ionising (i.e., electrically charging) the air around them until it glows. Such events leave a bright streak across the night sky, a "shooting star".

Meteors can be seen on any clear night, and these are known as sporadic meteors. They follow no set pattern and originate from random points in the sky.

The fascinating fact to a Bible student is, that after midnight the rate of sporadic meteors increases, sometimes two or three times the evening average. Astronomers explain that the rate changes because of the earth's motion. When evening falls, an observer is looking in the opposite direction to that in which the earth is travelling, and any meteors must catch up to the earth before entering the atmosphere. After midnight the observer's hemisphere faces the direction of earth's travel, and therefore even a stationary meteor may hit the atmosphere at a greater speed

than one that must chase the earth. This explains why more meteors are seen in the hours leading up to dawn than after sunset.

So it is with the antitype. We are living at the *dawning* of the "day" described by Malachi, which shall "burn as an oven", also referred to by Jude as "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints" (Mal 4:1, Jude 14). On this day, the "Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams... and ye shall tread down the wicked" (Mal 4:2,3).

As we approach this longed for "day", wandering and shooting stars are more evident in the ecclesial heavens. As the dawn draws near, "perilous times" are upon the ecclesias (2Tim. 3:1), and bright "lights" without true orbit, threaten to lead their adherents into obscurity.

Contrast the brevity and delusion of such erring stars with the permanency and consistency of Yahweh, the divine lightgiver (James 1:17). The Truth as apostolically delivered has been revived in the latter days. Let us not release our hold upon it to follow the flickering and temporary glory of wandering stars. — *Stan Snow*.

• God has told us of the latter days, that "evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth". The current aspect of things has a wonderful resemblance to this description. There have been times of turmoil before, but never in the present form or connection. Therefore, though filling the natural mind with alarm, it is of a nature to inspire the believer in God's Word with hope and gladness. The portents are of the day of Christ which after devastating storms will dawn upon the world in peace and glory, a morning without clouds. The crisis is long drawn out and liable to fatigue mortal expectancy; but its glorious end is so sure and so stable when it arrives that we may well with patience wait.

• The real state of an ecclesia is found in the individual lives of the brethren and sisters. Let us follow them in their dispersion during the week, and ask how they act when thrown upon their own resources. What do they do with their leisure time and surplus money? How do they transact their business or do their work? Do they continue instant in prayer, abounding therein with thanksgiving? Or have they a name to live but are dead? In the answer to these questions there is revealed the true state of an ecclesia.

# The Changing Heavens

*Cover Illustration: A photo taken from Voyager 1 during its approach to Saturn, when still 18 million kilometres from the planet. The soft, velvety appearance of the low-contrast banded structure, and the increased reflection of blue light near the perimeter of Saturn's disk are due to scattering by a layer of haze above the planet's cloud-deck.*

**I**N *Elpis Israel* (p. 387) Brother Thomas wrote: “By gazing at the natural luminaries as some professors are accustomed to do, no light can be derived, nor signs observed premonitory of the coming of the Lord. This is the ‘way of the heathen’, and a custom which is vain (Jer. 10:2, 3). The natural heavens are impenetrably dark in relation to his appearing. The believer or spiritual watchman, must take the ‘sure word of prophecy’ which is the only ‘light capable of enlightening him in the surrounding gloom. This world is a ‘dark place’ and its cosmopolites who understand not the prophetic word, mere embodiments of fog... By the ‘shining light of prophecy’ we shall be able to interpret the signs which God has revealed as appearing in the political heavens and earth”.

This quotation demonstrates that Brother Thomas clearly understood that events among the nations, and not events among the stars, are the intelligent signs of the thief-like coming of the Lord. These are the political and social signs to which God has directed us, to be determined according to the “Law and the Testimony” (Isa. 8:20).

## The Political Heavens

It is to the political heavens that we look with the aid of Bible prophecy. Like the natural creation, the political

heavens also has its “earth”, “sea” and its “firmament” (expanse above). It also has its greater and lesser “lights”, its constellations of “stars”. It has “hurricanes”, “earthquakes” and “hailstorms” which are just as injurious to the nations as these events are in the literal environment.

At creation God called the firmament “heaven” (Gen. 1:8); so also in the political system rulers are in the “heaven” and the society beneath them is the “earth”.

Although, in 2Cor. 12:2 the apostle Paul alludes to three distinct political heavens, which we will consider in detail, there have been many other political heavens throughout the course of human history. There have been the Egyptian, the Assyrian and the Idumean heavens, whose demise is described in Isa. 34:4, 5 as: “the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down... for my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold it shall come down upon Idumea”. The Babylonian heaven is described in Isa. 13:1, 10-13. The Roman heaven is mentioned in Col. 1:16 and Eph. 6:12, as “spiritual wickedness in *high places*”, literally “in the heavenlies” (AV mg.).

## The Heavens and the Day of Yahweh

When a political heaven falls it is noted as “*a Day of Yahweh*” because

He rules in the Kingdom of Men (Dan. 4:17), and these heavens always pass away with violence, as is evident in the passing of the empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. Speaking of the demise of Babylon's "heaven", Isaiah said: "The burden of Babylon... Howl ye; for the *day of Yahweh* is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty" (Isa. 13:1, 6). Again he says: "Behold, *the day of Yahweh* cometh... to lay the land desolate... for the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light" (Isa. 13:9-10). Notice that it is the nation, not the literal heavens, that is shaken, for v. 11 states: "I will punish *the world* for their evil, and *the wicked* for their iniquity". The people of Babylon were to suffer the violence of this "day of Yahweh".

#### **Wars in Heaven and Quakings on Earth**

Various mechanisms can remove a political heaven. Sometimes an "earthquake" is used for a political change, and this is caused by the common people in a state of revolution.

Sometimes the fierce tumult on the earth (amongst the peoples) will cause dark smoke to ascend and obscure the heavens (the rulers). Such an example is found in Rev. 9:1-2, "And the fifth angel... opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the *sun* and the *air* were darkened". This was fulfilled in the rise of the Mohammedan power amongst the masses, the "abyss" of the peoples in Arabia (AD632). A commotion amongst the Arabs resulted in the "eclipse" that darkened the "sun" of the Byzantine empire. The authority of the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire was obscured as if by "smoke" out of the furnace of affliction.

On the other hand, sometimes wars are in the "heavens". This happens when the turmoil of the peoples infects

the rulers. In the natural heavens electricity from the earth gathers in the sky causing lightning flashes across the heavens. When applied figuratively, this occurs when the rulers are set at war with each other. When the political heavens are in this dangerous condition, hail may descend upon the earth beneath, putting all in jeopardy. An example of such a war in the political heaven is found in Rev. 12:7, "There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels".

"Michael" is a title for Christ in his capacity as warrior (Dan. 12:1), and Constantine, in the early fourth century, evidently delighted to claim to be Christ's representative in the war against the forces of paganism, symbolized by the "Dragon". Both antagonists had "angels", or messengers, under their command. The war was fought to gain the ascendancy in the rulership of the Roman heaven, so as to control the Empire. So complete was Constantine's victory over paganism, that the pagan political heaven is said to have disappeared "like a scroll" when it is rolled together" (Rev. 6:14).

In these events Constantine was a type of Christ, who will completely change the political heavens and usher in the Millennial Age: "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the host of heaven shall be rolled together as a scroll... for it is *the day of Yahweh's vengeance*, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion" (Isa. 34:4, 8).

#### **The First Heavens: Mosaic**

The three heavens alluded to by the apostle Paul in 2Cor. 12 are associated with the Israel aerial, and must be viewed as three phases of the *Kingdom of God*. He speaks of the third and final heaven when he describes a man (evidently himself) who, in a revelation of the Lord, was "caught up to the *third*



heaven" (v. 2). Paul defines this *third heaven* as "the paradise" (v. 4). The *third heaven* is therefore the new order that will exist on the earth after the Millennium, when there will be no more sin or death (Rev. 21:1, 4; 20:14). It will be the paradise restored.

It appears in Rev. 21:1 that the "new heaven" replaces the "*first heaven*". But this is a wrong translation. The previous heaven is actually the *second heaven*, the Millennium, and the word "first" should more correctly be translated "former" as in v. 4 (see *Eureka*, vol. 5, pp. 333-336).

#### **The Foundation of the World**

Since the *third heaven* is the paradise in its perfection, and the *second heaven* is the Millennial stage, then the *first heaven* must relate to the Mosaic dispensation, making all three, different phases of the Kingdom of God. This is fitting, for the founding of the Mosaic system is called "the foundation of the world" (Heb. 9:26).

The *first heaven* is therefore the Israelitish constitution, or Kingdom of God, established under the Mosaic covenant (Deut. 32:1). Concerning Israel Brother Thomas writes: "when they arrived at Sinai... they became the kingdom of the Deity (Exod. 19:5, 6, 8). These events signalize the '*foundation of the world*' to which frequent reference is made in the New Testament" (*Eureka*, vol. 5, p. 89).

This phrase "foundation of the world" must be interpreted according to the context. In *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas wrote: "Thus having passed sentence upon the serpent, the woman, and the man, the Lord appointed them a new law, and expelled them from the garden He had made. These three sentences, and the New Law, constitute the *foundation of the world*" (p. 123). Thus, the phrase "foundation of the world" can refer either to the events in Eden, or the events at the establishment

of the nation of Israel, depending upon the context in which it is used.

#### **The Mosaic Heavens Established**

The setting up of the *first heavens* witnessed the Song of Moses, a Song of Deliverance, recorded in Exod. 15.

A second song of Moses — a Song of their future Apostasy — recorded in Deut. 32, makes reference to this Israelitish heaven, which is, as we have seen, the *first heaven*: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of My mouth" (Deut. 32:1). Through Isaiah, Yahweh spoke to the *rulers and people* of Judah: "Hear, O *heavens*, and give ear, O *earth*: for Yahweh hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me" (Isa. 1:2).

#### **The First Heavens Dissolved**

The apostle Peter wrote to Jewish believers residing in certain provinces of Anatolia (1Pet. 1:1). They had been taught that they were living on the eve of a "Day of Yahweh", and, as already indicated, such a "Day" occurs at the fall of a political heaven. Hence Peter says: "But the *day of the Lord* will come as a thief in the night; in which the *heavens shall pass away* with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2Pet. 3:10). He was referring to the impending dissolution of the Mosaic Commonwealth in AD70, which brought to an end the *first heaven*.

But what were the "elements" which were to melt? These were not the physical elements of nature, understood by the ancients to be "fire, air, earth and water". Nor did Peter refer to the elements discovered by modern science. The Greek word used by the apostle has the meaning of "proceeding in order", and signifies elementary parts, such as sounds, or letters, or "first principles of any knowledge".

Paul uses the word in Heb. 5:12, as “the *first principles* of the oracles of God”. These elements comprised the *elementary principles* of the Mosaic Law, which “melted away” with the disappearance of the Law and its ordinances circa AD70, when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple worship.

#### Future Jewish Heavens

Though for centuries the Jewish heavens have been in darkness, as the nation has languished in obscurity during the period of Gentile domination, it will not always be so. The future revival of the Jewish heavens was indicated in Moses’ latter-day blessings on the tribes, to be fulfilled when Messiah the Prince, as sun of righteousness arises with healing in his beams (Mal. 4:2). Then, Israel “shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also *his heavens* shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel” (Deut. 33:28, 29).

But for the present, Israel is still spiritually desolate, and her heavens are vanished, as Paul declared they would: “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thine hands (i.e., the Jewish constitution of things established under

Moses). They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed” (Heb. 1:10-12; cp. also Isa. 51:6; Psalms 102:25-26). Paul is quite specific: “In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:13). Accordingly, the *first heavens* passed.

We now eagerly await the *second Jewish heavens*, to be established by the Lord Jesus Christ, and known as the glorious *Millennial Heavens*, which we shall consider in our next chapter (God willing).  
— Stan Snow.

### 150 Psalms in Rhyme

## Psa. 6: A Prayer for Deliverance

O Lord, in Thine anger rebuke not I pray,  
In Thy hot displeasure, no chastening lay,  
Have mercy upon me, O Lord, I am weak;  
My bones are sore vexed, and Thy healing I seek.

My soul is sore vexed for Thou, Lord, seest all;  
Return O my God, and deliver my soul.  
O save me, I pray, for Thy great mercy’s sake;  
For death and the grave no remembrances make.

So weary with groaning, my tears fill my eyes;  
I water my couch. I am sad when I rise.  
Mine eye is consumed, for my grief is so great;  
It grows old by watching my enemies’ hate.

Ye workers of evil, depart ye from me;  
The Lord hath me heard, and my weeping doth see;  
The Lord hath now heard my request for His care;  
And loving and caring will answer my prayer.

Ye workers of evil, depart ye from me;  
For God will announce His decision to be;  
Let them be ashamed; let them all be vexed sore;  
Let them go away and oppress me no more.

— N. Schofield (N.Z.).

# The Second Symbolic Heavens: The Millennium

*Illustration: "M.13 in Hercules", the finest globular cluster in the northern sky was discovered by Edmond Halley in 1714, and is just visible to the naked eye when the sky is clear and dark. The number of stars contained in this cluster has been estimated as half a million; its distance from the earth is 22,500 light-years.*

**B**ROTHER Thomas explained that "the New Heavens and the New Earth styled apocalyptically 'the Former Heaven and the Former Earth', and termed in Rev. 21:4 'the Former Things passed away' are the Second Israelitish Heavens, reckoning the Mosaic as the First; the destruction of which is treated of in 2Pet. 3:10; Heb. 8:7-13. But though the Mosaic Heavens were to be fired and dissolved and the elements melted with the fervency of the heat, he consoled his brethren of the circumcision who believed with the assurance that they would be succeeded in the appointed time by 'New Heavens and a New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness'. These are the Millennial Heavens, to establish which is an important element of the work to be performed by Christ at his appearing in power" (Eureka vol. 5, p. 335-336).

The "Hope of Israel" can be defined as a fervent belief in, and hope to attain, the second Israelitish Heavens, which every "Israelite indeed" (Jn. 1:47) understands will be greater than the first, or Mosaic, heavens (Hab. 3:9). These Second Heavens will have immortal rulers (Lk. 20:35-36; Rev.

2:26-27) who will be united with the "Morning Star", the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 2:28).

The opening of these second heavens is described in Rev. 4: "Behold, a door was opened in heaven... and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne" (vv. 1-2). The elevation of Christ to the throne on Zion's hill will completely establish his power throughout the earth.

#### The Present Heaven Occupied by the Nations

The "heaven" of "the times of the Gentiles" (Lk. 21:25), and its high places, are possessed by principalities and powers of Gentile origin (Tit. 3:1). This present heaven is shut tight against entrance by the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are prevented by their belief and practices from involvement in these Gentile heavens. The godly principles they espoused when they accepted the call out of (Greek) the nations (Acts 15:14), precludes them from sharing power and influence in the current order of things. Only by abandoning these lofty principles, and falling down in homage before the Gentile tempter (Mat. 4:9) can the saints become involved in the governments of this world.

But the heaven will not always be closed to them. It will not forever be held by the Satan, the Adversary of God's Truth, for Christ saw the Adversary expelled from heaven: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Lk. 10:18). Christ's words have a proximal and a distant application. Those who heard him speak could look to the demise of Pagan Rome, the great adversary and *Satan* of that day, whose fall from the political heaven occurred at the hand of Constantine in AD311.

But Christ looked further down the corridors of time, as he later communicated to John on Patmos: "And he laid hold on the dragon (*Kingdom of Men*), that old serpent (*sin powers*), which is the devil (*political calumniator*) and Satan (*religious adversary*), and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:2).

#### Great Warrior Required to Breach the Political Heaven

The Satan will not voluntarily vacate the heaven. A valiant one is needed to effect a breach and march through, as through a "door", to take possession of the heaven: "I looked, and behold, a *door was opened* in heaven" (Rev. 4:1).

What power can crash through the adversary's fortifications and enter the heaven? Daniel described it as "a stone was cut without hands which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces" (ch. 2:34). At the head of Heaven's armies, the Lord Jesus Christ was seen by John at the *opening of the heaven*: "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him... and in righteousness he doth judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11). Christ is the "stone power" which smashes Europe (the feet of the image) effecting an entrance to the new heavens of the Millennial age.

But notice that John, as representative of a *class of persons*, is then invited to ascend up to power in that heav-

en: "I heard as it were a trumpet talking with me; which said, *come up hither*" (Rev. 4:1). John, who describes himself as "your brother and companion in tribulation" (Rev. 1:9) is typical of all the glorified saints who, after centuries of humiliation and degradation, ascend the second Israelitish heavens: "I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind... for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy" (Isa. 65:17-18).

The "sun" of this heaven will be the Lord Jesus, and his twelve apostles will assist him, sitting upon "twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mat. 19:28). Their glory will surpass anything that has gone before, because even "the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when Yahweh of Armies shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously" (Isa. 24:23).

Notwithstanding the wondrous glory of this heaven, and the brilliance of the millennial sun, the scene will fall short of the **Third Heaven**, the Paradise of the future.

#### The Third Heaven of Paradise

The Millennium will not be a perfect age, even though it will represent a great transformation compared with Mosaic and Gentile times. After the thousand years' reign by Christ and the saints, the whole system of things upon earth will be changed, and a new world order will result.

This new society will be *Royal*, not *Priestly*. What use will the world have for priests when there is no more sin? Why the need for priests when "sin in the flesh" is destroyed? How could priests perform any duty where there is no longer any evidence of error and ignorance?

#### Christ a Priest for the Age Only

During the Millennium Christ will be a priest "*for ever* after the order of

Melchizedek" (Psa. 110:4). The words "for ever" are *le olahm* in Hebrew, meaning "for the age; for the hidden period". This does not mean for eternity, for in that case the words would be *olahm ad*, which literally mean: "for the Age and beyond".

Hence Christ gives up the kingdom to the Father at the end of the Millennial age: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father... then shall the Son also himself *be subject unto Him* that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1Cor. 15:24-28).

The kingdom, having the *priestly elements removed*, remains the kingdom still, but a *sinless kingdom*, adding to the vast dominion of the Architect of the Universe. Thus, the kingdom of God will be a kingdom on earth without end, but not without change! This is the *Third Heaven: Paradise!*

#### Scripture Reveals a Picture of the Third Heaven

The closing chapters of the Bible reveal the *Third Heaven* when there shall be "no more sea" — indicating that the "sea of nations" will cease to be. Jeremiah records the purpose of Yahweh in removing the nations: "I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee" (ch. 46:28). This is reiterated in Rev. 21:1, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; *and there was no more sea*". When there will no longer be nations upon the earth, there will no longer be mortals inhabiting the planet; instead there will be *one immortal race*, all children of faithful Abraham, with Christ as their head.

The reference to a *new heavens and earth* is appropriate, as the "former" heavens and earth have passed away. The translation of "first" in Rev. 21:1

is more correctly "former" as in v.4. It is not the first heaven (Mosaic) referred to, but the second (Millennial) heaven will then have passed by, and the new heaven ushered in is the *Third Heaven*.

#### The Apostle Paul Saw the Third Heaven

This new heaven will far exceed the order of the thousand years, for it will be a paradisiacal arena of unutterable joys, beauties and ecstasy, to which Paul alluded in 2Cor. 12:4. Is it any wonder that Yahweh then dwells with men? John's says: "I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God... and there shall be no more death... for the *former things are passed away*" (Rev. 21:3-4).

Now the great words can ring out: "*It is done!*" (Rev. 21:6). The *Alpha and Omega* has accomplished it. The Alpha Spirit began the work in a *week of days* (Gen. 2:2), and as the Omega he finished the *week of millennia*, a thousand year-day. Perfection will have arrived.

All will be perfectly placed to suit their position, and there will be no schism amongst this immortal society. They will have diversity of glory and organization, like the stars themselves, yet with a perfection of unity which we can but anticipate at the present.

#### No More Curse

The end of the Millennium will remove any curse upon the earth or its inhabitants. As Brother Thomas once observed: "What is a week's curse of seven thousand years compared with an eternity of blessedness to follow? The curse of this Millenniumary Week is a mere incident in the situation, turned to good account by the wisdom of Him who imposed it" (*Eureka*, vol. 5, p. 363).

— Stan Snow.

# Halley's Comet Revisited

*Illustration: From the surface of the Moon, the Sun is eclipsed by the Earth. Features such as the "diamond ring" can be seen in this photograph taken in flight from one of the U.S. Apollo Moon missions. From the moon, the sky appears black, unlike the view from the earth.*

**I**N *Logos*, June 1986, we penned an article upon Halley's Comet. Without being dogmatic we suggested that the Comet may be another of the remarkable signs mentioned by the Lord in Luke 21:25 when he declared: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars".

We certainly know that it is to signs in the *political heavens* that Bible students look, as the "shining light of prophecy" (2Pet. 1:19) for enlightenment. Jeremiah said: "Be not dismayed at the signs of the heaven" (Jer. 10:2. Comments by Brother Thomas in *Elpis Israel* (p. 387) on this subject are apt and accurate.

However, Gen. 1:14 informs us that the *lights* in the firmament shall "be for signs and for seasons and for days and years". It would appear that the saints can look to the literal heavenly bodies, as well as to the symbolic heavens for signs of the times.

### A Regular Visitor

It is now seven years since the last appearance of *Halley's Comet*, and a review, in retrospect, is appropriate. The comet appeared in February 1986. At that time we suggested in *Logos* a pattern in the appearances of the comet, in that many (perhaps all) of them heralded events that affect the elect of God. Sometimes it was natural

Israel that was affected, and sometimes spiritual Israel.

### A Herald of Significant Events?

Remarkably the comet appears several years (often it is four years) before significant prophetic developments.

*Halley's Comet*, named after the English scientist Edmond Halley, who calculated its orbit in the 17th century, visits our part of the Solar system every 76 years on average. The exact timing of the return is influenced by the planets which may be in the immediate vicinity at the comet's approach to the sun, their mass either accelerating or slowing the comet slightly, according to their position at the time.

The dates of these visits are extremely interesting.

*Halley's Comet* appeared over Jerusalem in AD66, and *four years later* the nation of Israel, the "elect of Yahweh", was dispersed by the Roman legions, introducing the "times of the Gentiles" in their latter stage.

Israel was dispersed for many centuries, and then, just prior to their regathering, the comet made another of its visits, in AD1910, and *four years later* in 1914, the First World War commenced a train of events, culminating in the expulsion of the Turks, and the opening of the way for Israel to return to the Land.

**Comets — These are the snows of yesteryear... waiting frozen in the interstellar dark. Out here trillions of orbiting snowbanks and icebergs are stored, gently suspended about the sun. They cruise no faster than a small propeller driven aircraft would, buzzing through the blue skies of far off earth. The slowness of their motion just balances the gravity of the distant sun, and, poised between feeble contending forces, they take millions of years to complete one orbit around that yellow point of light... These trillions of floating icebergs fill an immense volume of space... This cloud of icebergs has been carried with the sun on its motions through the Milky Way Galaxy**

— “Comet” by Carl Sagan  
and Ann Druyan.

#### A Pattern of Events

The author has observed a pattern in the visits of the comet. Take, for example, the birth of Christ, which some authorities calculate (allowing for the errors in the Gregorian calendar) to have been about BC7. According to the astronomer Carl Sagan, of the Cornell University, *Halley's Comet* appeared in BC11, which is just *four years* before Christ's birth.

We do not suggest that this was the Star of Bethlehem, but rather an harbinging, or a herald, of that great event which followed several years later. We certainly cannot be dogmatic upon these dates, but clearly, *Halley's Comet* did closely precede Christ's birth.

#### Halley's Comet and the Sixth Vial

The political River Euphrates began to “dry up” (Rev. 16:12) in AD1820, when the Turkish Empire began to decline. A significant event in the early days of that process of collapse, was the total defeat of the Turkish army on the Euphrates in AD1839.

Just *four years* before this, *Halley's Comet* had made an appearance in 1835. This was at the beginning of the Sixth Vial. As we have already stated, the next visit of the comet in 1910 was *four years* before the Great War, which more completely “dried up” the Turkish power, expelling them from Yahweh's land.

The next visit of the comet was in AD1986, when the world again gazed at it, and, realizing that we are still in the period of the Sixth Vial, we ponder over what this visit might portend. In *Logos* for June 1986, we ventured to suggest that: “in 1990, just four years from this visit in 1986, Russia might invade Istanbul, which would complete the work of the Sixth Vial that began in 1820”.

#### The Comet's Visit in Retrospect

Seven years have elapsed since 1986, and we ask, “what happened in 1990?” Clearly we can see now that it was not in God's timetable, to bring on the Gogian invasion at that time.

But it would seem that the significant event of the period following the comet, was the fall of communism in 1989/90. The fall of communism has allowed the *rapid spread of the influence of the Papacy* in Russia and throughout eastern Europe, in accordance with Bible prophecy. Whilst we were looking for a hastening of events, it now seems clear that God was using atheistic communism to slow down events until the time appointed (Psa. 102:13; Acts 17:31). With the departure of communism, events are now racing ahead to their predetermined end (Dan. 4:17).

How interesting it is to consider that Babylon, the enemy of God's people, held sway for *seventy years* in the days of the prophet Daniel, and the ungodly system of communism also lasted for *seventy years* from 1917 to 1987, when it began to crumble. With

the benefit of hindsight, we now see the brief seventy years of communist rule in Russia as but a passing phase in her thirteen centuries of existence. Throughout that history Russia has survived adverse events, always to arise more vigorous, active and expansive. So it will be again.

Although communism is a discredited system, Russia has not been neutralised and is yet destined to fulfil its prophetic role as the Gogian confederary (Ezek. 38:2).

#### Blessings or Curses

Another pattern can, we suggest, be discerned in the visits of *Halley's Comet* to earth. Take, as an example, the appearance in AD1607, which was followed *four years* later in 1611 by the publication of the Authorised Version of the Bible. This *blessing* for the saints was accompanied by the *Proclamation of Religious Liberty* for all sects in Germany, the announcement being made in 1609.

The next visit of the comet heralded a *curse* for the witnesses for Bible truth. It appeared in 1682, and three years later there occurred the *Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*. This revocation and change of policy by the authorities brought on the persecution of the Huguenots, resulting in the end of their witness. They were now finished as an effective opposition to the Papacy. This was "the death of the witnesses" (Rev. 11:7).

Sometimes these blessings and cursings alternate with appearances of *Halley's Comet*, for the next visit in 1759 was followed about four years later in 1764 by a blessing for the saints: the suppression of the Jesuits in France, Spain and in Italy (Naples).

Following this alternating principle, we observe that the appearance of the comet in 1910 heralded a blessing soon to come to natural Israel, God's Elect, in the opening of Palestine following



A drawing of Halley's Comet over Jerusalem in AD66. From Lubienietski's *Historia Universalis Romulum Cometarum*, 1966.

the Great War. Therefore we may expect a curse to follow the next appearance in 1986.

What has occurred? The fall of communism and the consequent rapid rise of the Papacy throughout Europe. The escalation of the Papal power is in the category of a curse to the Elect of Yahweh, for both natural and spiritual Israel.

Not that we have anything to fear, for the times of the downtreading of the "Holy City" (the saints) was for 42 months (1260 years, Rev. 11:2), and this period of Papal oppression of the saints terminated with the Pope's loss of temporal power in 1870. We shall always have *individual* tribulation, however (Acts 14:22), but we also have the Name of Yahweh as a "strong tower" into which the "righteous runneth and is safe" (Prov. 18:10).

#### In Conclusion

To summarize, we reproduce from *Logos*, June 1986, the chart showing the interesting correlation of the appearances of *Halley's Comet*, and the



significant events that followed. Doubtless the list is not exhaustive, and diligent Bible students may find more correlations.

However, sufficient has been written in this series over the last ten months, to illustrate that “the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork” (Psa.

19:1). Again: “when I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars... what is man that Thou art mindful of him?” (Psa. 8:3-4).

In the final book of Scripture is the exhortation: “Blessed is he that *watcheth and keepeth his garments*” (Rev. 16:15). “Even so. Come Lord Jesus” (ch. 22:20). — *Stan Snow*.

**At the time of the original article on Halley's Comet, Brother H. P. Mansfield commented:** We do not believe that the prediction of the Lord recorded in Lk. 21:25 relates to *Halley's Comet*, but to the political signs in the civil and ecclesiastical orders among men. *Halley's Comet* has been appearing throughout time, whereas Christ's prophecy has relation to only these times. The “signs and seasons” of Gen. 1:14 has relation to the placing of the sun and moon in their respective positions as foreshadowing the manifestation of Christ as the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the world; and the formation of the ecclesia as the result of the shining forth of the “sun” on the fourth millennial day of one thousand years. As the Sun (the Lord) was designed to rule the “day” (Mal. 4:1-2), so the Moon (the ecclesia) rules the “night” (Jn. 9:4), in the sense that “all things are for the sake” of the redeemed. It will be noted that the stars are excluded from any relation to the “signs and seasons” as expressed in Gen. 1:14 (see v. 16). Jeremiah exhorted: “Be not dismayed at the signs of heaven” (ch. 10:2), implying that the signs to heed are those that take place on earth. Nevertheless there is undoubtedly a time-table for the accomplishment of the divine purpose, and perhaps the appearances of *Halley's Comet* have relation thereto. We submit this interesting article for the consideration of readers. Our prayer is that the time of the Lord's coming may conform to that suggested by Brother Snow.

### HALLEY'S COMET — SIGN FOR GOD'S WITNESSES

#### *Comet's Visits*

#### *Times of Israel*

AD66: Over Jerusalem .....AD70: Dispersion of Israel.

1910 .....1914: World War freed Jerusalem from the Turks.

#### *Comet's Visits*

#### *Times of the Gentiles*

1378 .....1380: Wycliff against Roman Catholic doctrines; and his English New Testament.

1531 .....1534: Jesuits founded; Papal power abrogated in England.

1538: English Bible enjoined in England.

1539: Dissolution of monasteries in England.

1607 .....1609: Religious liberty for all sects in Germany.

1611: Authorised Version of the Bible.

1682 .....1685: Revocation of *Edict of Nantes*, Huguenots finished as an opposition to the Papacy; “Death of the witnesses” (Rev. 11:7).

1759 .....1764: Jesuits suppressed in France, Spain and Italy.

1835 .....1839: Total defeat of Turkish army on the Euphrates (6th vial).

1910 .....1914: Turks driven from Holy Land: “Drying Euphrates” (6th vial)

1986 .....1990: Collapse of Communism, and rise of the papal influence in Russia.

#### *Other Appearances*

BC11 .....BC7: Birth of Christ.

AD451 .....AD455: Sacking of Rome by Genseric and Vandals; Attila and the Huns (Rev. 8:8-10).