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Abram, pt. 4 Abraham's Promised Seed Gen.16:1-6, Psalm 37:5

Larry Steers

Promises

In Genesis 15 Abraham entered into a covenant relationship with his God (v.18). Along with this relationship, he was promised that his seed would be given a vast area "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (v. 18). Earlier in the chapter Abraham was troubled because he was childless but "the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus" (v. 2) and would be his heir. God clearly promised that his heir would come from his own bowels (v. 4). As he looked at the stars which could not be numbered, he was reminded "So shall thy seed be" (v. 5). Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness (v. 6). Rooted in his soul was a promise from an unfailing God.

Yet, in chapter 16 he turns from the God who promised and hearkens to the voice of Sarah. Many a God-fearing Christian wife has been a spiritual help to her husband. However, here Sarah sets aside the promise of God and devises her own scheme.

Problem

Again, when Abraham departed from Ur of the Chaldees "Sarai was barren" (11:30). From Ur, they journeyed and sojourn in Haran, and on into the land still "Sarai Abraham's wife bare him no children" (16:1).

Yet God had promised him an heir. The implication was clear when he was leaving Ur, "I will make of thee a great nation" (12:2). This was even more specific as he entered the land "unto thy seed will I give this land" (13:17) and

was reiterated upon the departure of Lot (13:14-16).

Abraham received promises that were repeated, renewed, and enlarged.

Here are great and valuable lessons. Faith embraces the promise and confidently leaves the fulfillment with God. But, also, in the words of David "commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him: and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

Plan

Faith waits but the flesh plans. Sarai could have suggested to Abraham that up to Gen. 16 the mother of the seed was not named. Not until Gen. 17:16 and Gen. 18:10 was she specifically indicated as the mother of the promised seed. But she was Abram's wife.

Also to Sarai the bodily functions of reproduction of an 85 year old Abraham and herself at 75 had ceased. She had heard, for she was in the tent when the visitors appeared to Abraham and reminded him that "Sarah thy wife shall have a son" (18:10). Hearing this, Sarah laughed (18:12). It is abundantly clear she was convinced that God had failed them. Consequently, she devised a plan.

Hagar originated in Egypt. Abraham had journeyed to Egypt because of a famine. He fled the famine for Egypt and the world. When he exited Egypt Hagar came with him and became Sarah's handmaid. Today as well we must walk carefully. We will notice that a wrong step has eternal consequences.

A son born to Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, and fathered by Abraham would provide Abraham with an heir.

What a solemn danger both then and now to run ahead of God. Note that others have made the same error.

Rebecca favored Jacob and wanted him to have the blessing from his father. In God's time and in God's way, Jacob would have received what God purposed him to have. But her scheme of lies and deception (Gen. 27) dishonored God. Both paid a price when they

"Truths for our Day"

is a monthly publication that is freely available on the Internet and is intended to be a help to believers who appreciate the timeless truths of God's Word and who recognize the unchanging principles of God's will for His people. It is primarily intended to strengthen those who enjoy fellowship in local assemblies of believers who are gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

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did not commit their way unto the Lord. Rebecca never saw the son she loved again. Jacob never saw his mother and spent years in exile.

Even after spending forty years in the palace and being educated in all the learning of Egypt, Moses never forgot that the suffering slaves were his people. When he saw an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, "*one of his brethren*" (Ex. 2:11), he slew and buried the Egyptian, to discover that his act was known. Moving ahead of God's purposes, he would spend forty years in the wilderness.

Perplexity

Hagar had the son but at what a price! It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to continue a work rooted in the flesh. To maintain that work so often involves further fleshly practices.

The repercussions here were terribly solemn:

1. Sarah not only lost her testimony and any respect Hagar may have had. "*Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap*" (Gal. 6:7).
2. Sarah attempted to transfer her wrong to Abraham, "*my wrong be upon thee*" (Gen. 16:5). Or "you are the cause for what I am suffering". What pathetic logic to blame another for our mistakes. Adam tried that. "*The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me*" (Gen. 3:17), which was really blaming God.
3. Abraham failed in surrendering headship to Sarah as Adam did likewise in the garden. Could we suggest that when Sarah presented her scheme to Abraham he should have responded "*I have a promise from God*".
4. Sarah's hardness in dealing with Hagar and Ishmael. Abraham capitulated again when he told Sarah "*thy maid is in thy hands*" (v. 6). The flesh dealing with the flesh can only plunge into deeper despair.
5. Sarah had to listen to the mockery of Ishmael (Gen. 21:9).
6. There is a sense in which Ishmael is still mocking. Every missile that landed in Israel had Ishmael inscribed on it.

Once more, how long-reaching and solemn it is when we cannot wait upon God patiently and "*commit our way unto Him*".

Patience

Consider how two momentous moments in the life of David exemplify the truth he wrote in Psalm 37.

Saul had been disqualified from continuing to reign and Samuel had anointed David with a horn of oil. Clearly the purpose of God was for David to occupy the throne; but he would be persecuted and flee as a fugitive from the wrath of Saul to the "wilderness of Engedi" (1 Sam. 24:3).

Saul, with three thousand chosen men out of Israel entered a cave and covered his feet not knowing that David and his men hid in the sides of the same cave. David's men urged him to seize the opportunity and dispatch Saul. While David removed a piece of Saul's garment as he slept, he would not put forth hand against the Lord's anointed (1 Sam. 24:10). He would wait for God's time.

Again, when Saul was sleeping in the wilderness of Ziph, David and Abishai quietly approached him. Abishai encouraged David "*God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee*" (1 Sam. 26:8). Once more David purposed in his heart to leave his ascendancy to the throne in the hands of God with the confidence that "*He will bring it to pass*". The truth of Psalm 37:5 was not only written by David but was exemplified in his life.

On the slopes of mount Gilboa Saul and his sons were slain by the Philistines. God most certainly brought David's ascension to the throne to pass.

Is there precious teaching in this for us? In the year 2020, have we lost confidence in our God to fulfill His promises and to carry on His work in His way, and not ours? The flesh can organize and scheme like Sarah, and Rachel, and run ahead of God like Moses. Paul would remind us "*We are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh*" (Rom. 8:12) with its devious methods.

Can we wait patiently upon our God like David? Have we waited and prayed, setting aside our purposes, looking for God to move and to fulfill His sovereign will?

In the past two hundred years, what has been referred to as times of revival, never has had its roots in the plans and schemes of men.

But such times of awakening and spiritual blessing sprang from the exercise of believers to gather to pray. They had no plans for great campaigns but were waiting on God, crying for the salvation of souls. The result was a mighty movement of the Holy Spirit.

The writer had the opportunity of sharing in a series of Gospel Meetings in Coleraine, Northern Ireland. While there I heard much about the 1859 revival and its influence on Northern Ireland. Then four relatively new converts met to pray for souls. They had no preconceived plans, but the Holy Spirit was at liberty to move in His way unhindered. Prayer was answered. Many were brought under the conviction of sin and saved. When prayers are being answered even Satan can't keep Christians from prayer meetings. Many more gathered to pray.

In closing, notice the Ephesian assembly as evaluated by the Lord in Rev. 2:1-7. Had we the opportunity to observe that assembly, we would have been impressed with the activity and evident organization. The gracious Lord commends their works and labors. But He reminds them "*thou hast left thy first love*" (Rev. 2:6). When stirring love to Christ is absent, our best plans will be shallow. When we have little room for the Holy Spirit, and our creative ingenuity dominates little of lasting value will be accomplished for God.

Christ's Love

Walter Scott

Christ's present and ceaseless love to the church (Eph. 5:25-27), and to every individual believer (Gal. 2:20), are assured facts. Some of us have drunk deeply of the cup of human sorrow, but in doing so, the fathomless love of Christ has been known in its depth and tenderness. Welcome the sorrow, then, for the love which accompanies it. Love mixes the cup and appoints the trial.

The Mountains of Scripture

Moriah: Abraham saw the provision

Alan Davidson

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Gen. 22:14.

This man of faith and separation first pitched his tent on a mountain east of Bethel (Gen. 12:8 - the first mention of the 'House of God'). His pilgrim vision looked down at the sand uncountable; he gazed up at the stars unsearchable; he passed the Oak at Moreh; he traversed the plain of Mamre and now he scales the peak of Moriah.

Abraham received the promise (Heb. 11:13), yet spent his life giving things up. He left Ur (the old life) and Terah (the old man); he parted with Lot (the worldly man) and Ishmael (the carnal man). The ascending experiences of Abraham in the path of faith led him into a life of sacrifice and surrender. He surrendered the advanced society of Mesopotamia, he gave the well-watered plain to the choice of Lot, he refused the riches of Sodom and he severed his natural attachment to Ishmael. Now, why should God request that he offer up his beloved son Isaac? Isaac was the link with the inheritance. He had waited twenty five years for his birth. Now God said, "...offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Gen. 22:2); it was a going into the unexplored. *"God did prove Abraham"* (Gen. 22:1); He was going out to the unexplained. *"He that received the promises offered up his only begotten son"* (Heb. 11:17); He was going up to the unexpected.

God said who - 'Isaac'. God told him what - 'a burnt offering'. God said where - 'Moriah'. Abraham knew when - 'three days journey'. God did not tell him why. Abraham rose early, they travelled a long day, two days, the third day came with no answer to **why**.

Trial for the believer may come unexpectedly. Suffering is the allotment of the choicest saint and is often unexplained. We may search in vain to find the answer to the 'why' question of trouble, testing, proving,

burden, care, sickness, sorrow, bereavement and the trial of our faith.

Faith can harmonize contradictions. Circumstances and happenings are not guidance. This test was contrary to the promise fulfilled in the birth of Isaac. The path of faith may lead into tribulations which we cannot explain, trials we do not expect and tests which if left to our own choice, we would not want to explore.

*"Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttle cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why
The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skilful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He had planned."*

Abraham was learning that the One who blesses is greater than the blessing which He bestows. The blessing was the seed, the son, the only son. The one whom Abraham loved must now offered as a burnt offering to God who had blessed him. Gen. 22 in the KJV is the first references in the Bible to 'love' and 'worship'. This chapter offers help in the sphere of our great weakness in worship. Our great blessings began with the forgiveness of sin and of the mercy of God's salvation. On the mountain top God wants us to rise even higher than our blessings and to enter into His thoughts about His Son. *"Thou hast not withheld (spared) thy son, thine only son from me."* (Gen. 22:12). *"He that spared not His own Son"* (Rom. 8:32). Our highest peak is to enter into something of the Father's thoughts concerning the Son. *"Blessed Lord our hearts would treasure all the Father's thoughts of Thee"*.

There was preparation before they scaled the mountain. The 'young men' like fleshly exercise and even gift need to be left behind. They also left behind 'the ass'. Natural stupidity and insensitive crudeness as to the physical wounds of the Lord Jesus often go beyond the dignified words of scripture. Let us worship God and remember His Son with the fragrance of Bible thought and language. They came directly to 'the place'. We meet expressly

to 'shew the Lord's death'. With the emblems before us of His body given and His blood shed, mention of the Lord's death should not become an appendix to the meeting.

Abraham upon Mount Moriah, in figure, entered into God's purposes of resurrection. (Heb. 11:19). We do not read again about Isaac until we are told about him receiving his bride. (Gen 24:67).

In these papers, as we meditate upon some of the Mountains of Scriptures, may we be closer drawn to the mind of God and to a more fragrant appreciation of His purposes for His Beloved Son.

Reverent Worship

Many of our popular songs and choruses in praise of Christ are hollow and unconvincing.

Some are even shocking in their amorous endearments, and strike a reverent soul as being a kind of flattery offered to One with whom neither composer nor singer is acquainted. The whole thing is in the mood of the love ditty, the only difference being the substitution of the name of Christ for that of the earthly lover. How different and how utterly wonderful are the emotions aroused by a true and Spirit-incited love for Christ. Such a love may rise to a degree of adoration almost beyond the power of the heart to endure, yet at the same time it will be serious, elevated, chaste and reverent. Christ can never be known without a sense of awe and fear accompanying the knowledge. He is the fairest among ten thousand, but He is also the Lord high and mighty. He is meek and lowly in heart, but He is also Lord and Christ who will surely come to be the judge of all men. No one who knows Him intimately can ever be flippant in His presence.

A. W. Tozer

Titles of a Local Assembly: A Golden Lampstand

Rev. 1:13-16, 20; 2:5

Joel Portman

The golden lampstand in the tabernacle was a beautiful object that had an important function, and that was to illuminate the Holy Place where the priests continued the service of God for the people (Exo. 40:25), *"He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually"* (Lev. 24:4). It also had the purpose of displaying the glory and beauty of the table of shewbread *"And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table,"* (Exo. 40:24), where the 12 loaves lay in God's presence until being changed every week. It gave light to make visible the beauty of the veil and the inner covering of the edifice with all its intricate woven work of cherubim and various colors. Its functions were important and its light was essential.

Likewise, that lampstand illuminated itself, *"they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it"* (Exo. 25:37, Num. 8:2), for it was an object of beauty and glory. Beaten out of one lump of gold, a central stem with six branches, it contained various stages of the almond displayed in its bowls, knops, and flowers. Those lamps were replenished with pure olive oil each day, and the wicks had to be tended by the priests when they offered the morning and evening sacrifice. It was daily work that required their attention and care, for the lamps were to be burning and not allowed to go out, *"He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually."* (Lev. 24:2-4).

That beautiful lampstand had a practical purpose which we have noted. It also had an important symbolic aspect. It spoke, first of all, of the national testimony of the tribes united to Jehovah and the national responsibility to shed light in the world's darkness. While the lamps burned until the time of deportation, sadly Israel's spiritual function to be God's testimony in a dark world failed due to their lack of spiritual exercise.

Primarily, it is intended to be representative of Christ, the One in whom all Divine revelation and illumination are centered. He is the essence of all divine revelation since He is the light *"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not,"* *"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."* (Jn. 1:4-5, 9:5). It is a display of His glory in resurrection (almonds symbolize resurrection) and suggests His union with His people in the branches that were connected with the central shaft. However, we are not interested in a more complete discussion of the lampstand in the tabernacle, but it is the background of the principle of illumination by God in a dark world.

The Golden Lampstands

Turning from the Old Testament aspects of the lampstand found in Exodus 25:31-39 and Zech. 4:2, we want to consider the lampstands as we find them in Rev. 1. We know from Rev. 1:20 that the seven lampstands represent the seven churches to which the letter in Rev. 2-3 is addressed. So we have no difficulty identifying the golden lampstands.

They were not candlesticks, since candles were not used during this time. Also the expressions in Num. 8:2-3 make it clear that in the tabernacle, this piece of furniture had lamps, not candles. They were lamps that burned with a wick that had an end dipped into olive oil in the bowl. However, we note that attention is not directed toward the lamps; this passage is occupied with the lampstands that upheld those lamps. So we see that the lampstands suggest the primary responsibility of believers and an assembly to uphold and display the light of testimony that is important for God in this world, *"Ye are the light of the world", "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world",* (Matt. 5:14-16, Phil. 2:15). The lamps and the oil suggest the essential source of the light and that is the power of the Holy Spirit to disseminate truth in a world that dwells in spiritual darkness. For the light to shine, the bowls holding the oil, the olive oil, and fire are all

necessary. All are suggestive of the need for spiritual men and spiritual power to function to uphold the testimony of an assembly for the Lord. It isn't natural ability or human power that enables the light of testimony to shine. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit working through us that this is possible. Neither are assemblies called upon to originate truth, but they are responsible to uphold and manifest the truth. So we see that in the case of the seven churches, they were challenged by the Lord as to how they had fulfilled that calling. Some, like Ephesus, were careful to maintain correct doctrine but had lost their fervency for the Lord and the truth they upheld. As a result, that truth was a cold, doctrinal thing in their hands. Then, others had lost the truth in their practices, failing in separation and lacking to the extent of becoming dead and inactive altogether, as Sardis (3:1-3). How are we fulfilling this responsibility in assemblies today? Is there a zeal to uphold and manifest the truth of God faithfully to His honor and to stand against the erosion of truth in our world today? This is the responsibility of an assembly in its testimony. The world is a spiritually dark place, and those who dwell in darkness need the light.

They were golden, and this indicates that every assembly is precious in God's sight, and that each is the result of a Divine work. We notice that sizes are not given in the description because size is of little importance to God. Small assemblies are just as precious to Him as those that may be larger. We should never denigrate smaller companies of the believers, for the same truth prevails and the same Lord is in their midst. Each one is the result of a work that the Holy Spirit has performed in which the gospel was proclaimed in His power, souls were saved, and were brought together by His influence to be guided and controlled by His work. Men may form a "church" with its organization and structure, but only the Holy Spirit can establish a true assembly that is according to God's will. Being golden, they also display the deity of Christ and, like the lampstand in the tabernacle, they function to magnify Him as the One who is in their midst. All these lampstands were arranged in relation to the risen Christ in their midst; exactly how they were arranged is

not stated, but regardless, they all were seen in a direct relationship with Him.

Noting their arrangement, we must emphasize that they were all separate and autonomous. Some men would like to create confederations of churches, or denominations, but the individual character of the lampstands indicates that the only link they have with each other is through the One who is in the midst. They stand related in that aspect so they are not isolated, but neither are they joined. The autonomy of a local assembly is important and must be maintained in practice. The practice of amalgamating and forming confederations of churches is entirely contrary to Scripture. But we also notice that they were joined in that they all identified with the same Lord and maintained the same doctrine that the apostles had delivered to them (1 Cor. 1:1-2, 11:2, 16, etc). The letter to the seven churches doesn't deal with them relative to each other; they are addressed by the Lord and held responsible for their actions regardless of other assemblies. This is a principle that guards an assembly against failures in others. Elders and local believers are directly responsible to the Lord for how they maintain and display the truth to honor Him. Each assembly had its own problems and conditions to deal with, so the Lord inspects each of them and gives advice or correction that is appropriate to each one. It's a natural tendency to form amalgamated groups and even a form of quasi-denominationalism is not God's mind for His people. The condition of the assembly where you and I are found cannot be blamed on what exists elsewhere. Each assembly stands before the Lord and has been given the spiritual power to rise above prevailing conditions seen elsewhere.

The description of the Lord shows that He is functioning as a High Priest and in a judicial character. The first work of the priesthood in Exodus was to order the lamps, *"Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD:"* (Exo. 27:21). Exo. 30:7-8 indicates that this function pertained to Aaron, at least at the beginning, so we find the Lord fulfilling that function in Rev. 1. Like Aaron, he is ordering the lamps, trimming the wicks by identifying their failures, and encouraging them to restore proper conditions that are suitable to

His presence. Just as Aaron was charged to make sure that the lamps burned continually, so the Lord is doing this work to preserve each testimony and to enable each assembly to continue in faithfulness to His Name. He cares about each one

In assembly gatherings, when Entertainment for the soul replaces Exposition of the word from the Spirit, Extinction of a scriptural testimony lies just around the corner.

Robert Surgenor

The Wrath of God pt 3 **A god of One's Own Imagination**

Robert Surgenor

In the two previous articles, we have considered political correctness, and how it is vehemently opposed to the gospel. We have considered faithful preachers, and the great need of such in our day. Then we looked at the various revelations of God's wrath, and the human instruments employed to carry it out in part 2 of this series, closing with the absolute supremacy of God. Closing the subject of God's wrath, let us now consider ourselves in relation to God. What is your knowledge of God? Perhaps your god is the god of your own imagination. You think this, or you think that, and from your imaginary thoughts you draw your own little picture of God. However, it matters little what you or I think. What matters is, what does God say? God informs us as to His being in His Holy Word, the Bible. Every thought of God that you have been reading in this booklet has not been what I think, or any church may think, but what God says. That's all that matters but what are many people hearing from pulpits today? They are being told of a god that doesn't exist; a god conceived from human thought. Sad, sad, indeed, for it spells eternal

wrath and doom at the end of one's earthly journey.

In Thessalonica, the people worshiped various gods, but when the gospel was preached to them, we read that they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thes. 1:9). This is the same God who bears witness of Himself in the Old Testament. *"But the LORD is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation (anger)"* (Jer. 10:10). The apostle John exclaims *"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life"* (1Jn. 5:20).

God's Longsuffering

God is righteous in His wrath, yet on the other hand, He *"is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pet. 3:9). How does sinful man treat this grace? The answer was written over three thousand years ago. Notice. *"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil"* (Eccl. 8:11). The solemn fact remains, *"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil"* (Eccl. 12:14). The Lord Jesus speaks similar words. *"I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"* (Matt. 12:36).

The effects of God's Wrath

In Deuteronomy 32, God speaks of Israel as Jeshurun, a poetical name meaning "upright and righteous." That's what they should have been, but sadly, they were not. They forsook God and lightly esteemed Him. They provoked Him to anger going after strange gods, and sacrificed unto devils. They forgot God who formed them, and provoked Him to anger with their vanities, and when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them. Notice the effects of His wrath upon them. *"For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall*

consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend Mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs ...To Me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" (Deut. 32:23-25, 35). There you have a true picture of God's holiness in action.

The Sour Grapes of Our Day

Having said this, what about our day? Look at Israel. God spoke of them as being a vine. *"Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land"* (Ps. 80:8-9). Later, God says of them *"Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?"* (Jer 2:21). Instead of bringing forth luscious grapes, they produced sour grapes. In other words, God got nothing from them that pleased Him. Compare our nation to this, and there is a remarkable similarity. This country was founded by God-fearing men, on the principles found in God's word. Today, humanistic and liberal ideologies reign. In the past 46 years, 46,413,319 babies have been legally murdered in their mother's womb, homosexuality (sodomy) is now legal, and in some places, it is a criminal offense to publicly cry out against it. Divorce rates top 52% of all marriages, convicted murderers are not all put to death, pornography prevails in various mediums, and public schools teach evolution. We are a nation of sour grapes. The Holy Scriptures have been replaced with the unholy sports page. Men are lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God.

What about God? He is observing all of this. *"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He pondereth all his goings. The eyes of the LORD are in every place,*

beholding the evil and the good” (Prov. 5:21; 15:3). “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb 4:13). The grim result is, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Rom. 12:19).

The Rapture and The Tribulation

The payday of God’s vengeance on this earth is fast approaching, but the rapture of His Church will take place first, and we, the redeemed of the Lord, shall be saved from the great tribulation that awaits this world. Paul relates to this in writing to the Thessalonian saints reminding them how they *“turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1Thes. 1:9-10).*

The beginning of that day of wrath is recorded in Revelation 6. In this “day of the Lord,” the heavens and earth will experience tremendous upheavals. There will be total devastation of everything that is considered normal. Men’s hearts will fail them for fear. Wars and famine will abound. Society and commerce will crumble. Plagues of various types will be sent to destroy human life, and in a period of three and one half years, over two-thirds of this world’s population will perish. In 2019, the world’s population surpassed 7.7 billion. During the day of God’s wrath, over 5 billion people will perish. That amounts to an average of 6 million every day! The present rate is 150,000. People will be crying out *“to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:16-17).* The catastrophic events that will take place will be greater than any event this world has ever experienced. Paul writes of it in 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10. *“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished*

with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

How wonderful to be saved! *“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Rom. 5:8-9).* Believers will be saved from the coming wrath of God on earth. *“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes. 5:9).* We will also be saved from an eternal incarceration in the lake of fire. It is interesting how closely linked His love and His wrath are mentioned in these two verses. His love - an attribute, His wrath - an action.

As we draw this “eye-opening” booklet to a close, God wants you to remember this. *“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 5-7).* Why such punishment? Why such wrath? Simply because He is HOLY, HOLY, HOLY! *“But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (1 Pet. 1:15-16).*

Two things are required of a well: it must not freeze in winter, it must not run dry in summer. Two things are required of piety: it must not be chilled by adversity, and it must not wither with prosperity.

Panin