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FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55: 1 0 FOR THE EATER

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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WHAT DOES EPIPHENEA MEAN?

There is a passage in Scripture which, when honestly translated and faithfully interpreted, tells us that we should live anticipating that happy expectation; and this event is then defined as being the favorable intervention (*epiphaneia*) of the glory of the great God, even our Savior Jesus Christ. See Titus 2:13. Thus, we are brought face--to-face with a vital matter that is an important part of the lives of all who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in this the dispensation of the grace of God.

The weak translation of this passage found in the *King James Version* has made it easy for superficial interpreters of the Word of God to say that this means the second coming of Christ; although about as many say that this is "the rapture," or the sudden removal of all living believers from the earth, an event they say is to occur seven years before His return. I believe that these are arbitrary opinions, not based upon any real facts of Scripture. To actually live looking for our sudden removal from this earth would result in a life so disordered and unreal that we would disgrace the great God Whom we claim to follow. We need to discover and know what this event is which we are to live anticipating.

It will be evident at once to the careful student that this matter can be settled only by a true understanding of the Greek word translated "appearing" in Titus 2: 13. As already noted this is the word *epiphaneia* (pronounced, *epi-FAN-ee-ah*), a word in regard to which there are many opinions. In order to free ourselves of this confusion, we will need to take this word in its unforced, natural meaning as used by the New Testament writers, then allow this basic meaning to guide us in dealing with every occurrence.

This word has an interesting history which is not difficult to trace. Its origin is found in the verb *phaino* (pronounced *FAH-ee-no*), which originally had to do with the action of throwing or shining light upon, and in course of time came to mean "to shine forth." By an easy transition this word was applied to the appearing of men and things; so, as a rule, when this word is found in the New Testament, it usually means "to appear." This will be seen in Matt. 1:20; 2:1; and 13:26. However, it should be noted that this is a later meaning of *phaino*, and when it began to be used this way, it did not lose its earlier meaning. This will be found in numerous occurrences where *phaino* means "to shine." See Matt. 24:21; John 1:5; 5:35; Phil. 2:15 and Rev. 1:16.

From the word *phaino* another word developed by the addition of the accelerative prefix *epi*. This is the verb *epiphaino* which is certainly a much stronger word. And in order to express this strength, it would be much better to use the words "blaze forth" in certain occurrences. This verb appears four times in the New Testament where it is very weakly translated and treated as if it meant the same as *phaino*. A concordance is given.

Luke 1 : 79-*to give light* to them that sit in darkness
Acts 27 :20-sun nor stars in many days *appeared*
Titus 2: 11 -bringeth salvation *hath appeared*
Titus 3 :4-love of God our Savior toward man *appeared*

From the above references it can be seen that some form of the idea, "to blaze forth," is in all these occurrences.

It is from the verb *epiphaino* that the noun *epiphaneia* developed. This is found six times in Scripture as follows:

2 Thess. 2 :8-with the *brightness* of His coming
1 Tim. 6: 14-the *appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ
2 Tim. 1: 10-the *appearing* of our Savior Jesus Christ
2 Tim. 4:1-at *His appearing* and *His* kingdom
2 *Tim.* 4:8-them also that love His *appearing*
Titus 2: 13-the *glorious appearing of the great God*

The inadequacy of the translations displayed above is apparent. They also treat *epiphaneia* as if it were derived from the verb *phaino*. It could be better translated "blazing forth" in each occurrence. However, it is evident from both New Testament and Classical Greek usage that this word was developed to express a very special idea, so much so, that it can be said that,

while *epiphaneia* means a "blazing forth," it always carries in it the idea of a favorable intervention.

This definition is not a private translation. The celebrated Herman Cremer (*Biblico-Theological Lexicon*) defines this word by using such phrases as, "the help-bringing appearing of the gods," "the manifestation of divine power and providence in extraordinary events," and "a miraculous interposition of God in behalf of His people." It is as Archbishop Trench says, "This grand word was constantly employed to set forth these gracious appearances of the higher Powers in aid of men."

A great body of evidence shows that this word was used to indicate a blazing forth or a breaking through in order to help, that is, a favorable intervention. In this definition we have a truth that will illuminate every passage in which this word occurs. If we use "blazing forth" to translate it, we must always think of a favorable intervention.

In the first occurrence of *epiphaneia* (2 Thess. 2:8), it is used with the word *parousia*; but we should not conclude that the *epiphaneia* of this passage and that of Titus 2:13 are the same. This tells us that the man of sin, that wicked one, will be destroyed by the blazing forth (favorable intervention) of His *parousia*. It is illogical to think that these two words are identical in meaning simply because they are found in the same sentence. The *parousia* of Christ is an *epiphaneia*, a breaking through, a blazing forth, a favorable intervention. Thus, there is nothing secret about His *parousia*. It is a blazing forth even as described in Matt. 24:27.

The most important occurrence of *epiphaneia* to the present day believer is the one found in Titus 2:13, where in the *King James Version* it reads: "**Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.**" In this the translators have treated the word *doxa* (glory) as if it were an adjective, which it is not. This alone changes the force and meaning of this declaration altogether, and since *epiphaneia* is weakly translated "appearing," we are left with very little of the great truth of the original. As already suggested this passage tells us that we are to live "anticipating that blessed expectation, even the blazing forth (favorable intervention) of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." Thus, we see that the "blessed expectation" is the blazing forth of His glory. All the emphasis here is on His "glory."

The word *glory* is a common one, especially in religious circles, where it is used as an utterance in moments of emotional ecstasy. Very few have any understanding of its actual meaning, or could define it if challenged to do *so*. John declares that the apostles beheld the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14). They could not give Him this glory or add to it, but they did behold it. The knowledge of it was made clear to them. There were many who beheld Him in person, but they saw nothing more than a carpenter's son who worked miracles (Matt. 13:55). His own apostles saw Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," and this was because the Father had revealed this unto them (Matt. 16: 17). The true glory of Jesus Christ is all that He is in the sight of God. It is what God thinks of Him, what He esteems and declares Him to be, not what man esteems Him to be.

We live in a time when Christ is veiled. There is yet to be an unveiling. The time may come at any moment when it will suddenly, dramatically, and divinely be made plain to every human being upon the earth, to the aborigines in the jungle and the professors and students in the great universities, exactly Who Christ is and What Christ is in the sight of God. The esteem in which God holds Him will be revealed. This is the knowledge that God will force upon every man, so much *so*, that it becomes the common knowledge (conscience) of the human race. This is what Paul is talking about when he speaks of "the blazing forth of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." This will be the *epiphaneia* of His glory. This is our blessed hope.

This is not His second coming. This is not the *epiphaneia* of His parousia. This is that great work which God is going to do when He again speaks from heaven and says of mankind, "Let there be light." This will fulfill His great promise made in Hab. 2:14; "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

Titus 2:13 is not the revelation of a secret, a truth that had never been declared before. It is identical with Isaiah 40:5: "**And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.**"

The *epiphaneia* (blazing forth) of His glory is the great foundation stone upon which God's government in the earth will be established. It is God's first act when He makes His move. May we live anticipating this. It could be at any moment.

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