

BULLETIN

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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JUNE 2023

Updates from the Director

Summer is here and once again we are looking forward to our yearly conference, this year at the Crowne Plaza Aire hotel in Bloomington, Minnesota near the Twin Cities airport (see the flyer included with this Bulletin for details). This is our tenth yearly conference since David R. Hetteema was no longer able to act as Director. The yearly conferences have been a great joy to me to plan, to attend, and to speak at, and I would like to take a look back over our last ten years of conferences.

In 2013, I proposed a conference to The Word of Truth board. I was coming to the Glendale area to visit, and thought a conference while I was there would be a great thing. The ministry, largely led by my late friend Milton Hammond, agreed to host a conference, and so we held a day-and-a-half on "Dissecting the Kingdom and Examining Its Times and Epochs." It was held in Southern California at the ministry headquarters. It was the first chance for me and my cousin Andrew Brown to meet the rest of the ministry in person, and I believe it was a great joy on both sides.

In 2014, we proposed holding a conference instead in the Midwest, where many of those Andy and I have helped to encourage to become followers of the ministry are located. The California crowd were eager to meet our groups and families, and so a Sunday day and Monday afternoon/evening conference was planned on "What Happened After Acts 28:28—Considering God's Current Work." Many of our friends flew into Milwaukee to attend, and were pleased to meet those in the local group. I remember how amazed and happy Jane Hancock was to meet young families with children, as that was getting to be very rare in the ministry at the time. In 2015, we planned a Saturday and Sunday conference, which is the schedule we have

followed ever since. It was held at the same location in Milwaukee on "What Is Man? What Is His Destiny?"

In 2016, attempting not to burn out those who planned the Milwaukee conferences, we moved to the Twin Cities, Minnesota. We have alternated between Milwaukee and the Twin Cities ever since. That year our conference was about "Making Sense of Bible Prophecy." In 2017 we met again in Milwaukee and considered "Living Under God's Grace." We decided to shake things up a bit by making our sessions fifteen minutes shorter while adding two extra sessions a day, with one of them being a "question and answer" session on the final day. Those attending seemed to appreciate that format, and we have followed it ever since. In 2018 our conference in the Twin Cities was about "Characteristics of God." In 2019 in Milwaukee, we considered "The Premillennial Kingdom of God."

The upheavals of 2020 led us to decide that we needed to cancel our yearly conference. We did hold a one-day conference locally in the Twin Cities area, however, wherein we considered general "Truth From God's Word." These sessions were then posted on our YouTube channel for all those elsewhere who were unable to attend. In 2021 we were back in the Twin Cities for an official conference about "Understanding the Acts Period." 2022 marked our return to the Milwaukee area for "Difficult Passages Regarding Human Destiny."

This year's topic will be "Understanding the Gospel Period." I hope to see many of you in attendance. For those who cannot come, please pray for the conference, the speakers, and all who attend, that truth will go forth and that our Lord and Savior will be glorified.

Nathan C. Johnson

Sights and Sounds of the Gospel Period

By Lisa Massengill

When we read such passages as Matthew 15:30-31, about the healing of the multitude, and John 11, recounting the resurrection of Lazarus, we squint our eyes at the text with the effort of trying to imagine what the events of the gospel period actually looked like. Somehow, while merely reading about these events in black and white, it is difficult to fathom how sensational this time really was. Since we live in the Dispensation of Grace, with the increasing calamity and confusion we deal with daily, it is a challenge to visualize the magnitude of such tumultuous events as the crowds that followed Jesus, the sweeping mass of miracles he performed, or the uncanny events of his birth, life, and death.

In the Word of Truth Ministry audio message TL306, "Mark 1:16-2:20," Mr. Otis Q. Sellers emphasizes that the healing and resurrection miracles of Jesus were a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. Mr. Sellers adds that in Mark 2:14, Jesus *saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "follow me." So he arose and followed him...* (New King James Version throughout). Mr. Sellers teaches that the behavior Levi showed was very unusual. He points out what a sight it must have been to see this man stand up and leave his job, with the papers and money just sitting there, as he followed Jesus. Similar acts of submission were repeated and recorded many times in the gospels, and not just by the twelve disciples. These astounding acts were not repentance as sorrow for sins, as commonly believed, Mr. Sellers adds; but the Greek word for repentance, *metanoia*, actually means much more than being sorry; it is a mindset that can accommodate many acts of submission.

In Mark chapter 4, we hear a howling storm as Jesus rebukes the wind and sea. *On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the*

sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" (Mark 4:35-41). In his audio message number TL308, "Mark 4:26-5:20," Mr. Sellers says of this incident, "I think of the time when the Lord will again speak from heaven and say ... 'be still and know that I am God' ... (Ps. 46:10) Remember that the time is coming when his lightnings are going to enlighten the world."

If these miracles of the gospel period are not stunning enough, many events with angels are also recorded. Angels appeared to Mary at the news of Jesus' conception (Luke 1:26-38), his birth (Luke 2:8-14), his temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4:11), his resurrection (John 20:11-13), and his ascension (Acts chapter 1). At Christ's ascension, angels reprimanded the disciples for looking up, as if Jesus' ascensions and return to earth were commonplace: *Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:9-11).

Then the gospels also introduce us to a series of demon possessions! In the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke, demon possession is listed with other illnesses as if it had the frequency of the common cold. Here are the references:

Matthew: 4:24, 8:16-17, 8:28-34, 12:24-29, 15:22-28, 17:14-18

Mark: 1:32-34, 5:2-20, 7:24-30.

Luke: 9:37-42, 11:14-23.

In Mark 1:23-26, we can feel the sheer force that the motion of Christ's righteousness itself had in the gospel period. In his *Precepts* article titled, "Demons and Lepers, Mark 1 Part 3," Nathan C. Johnson provides us with commentary for verses 25-26: *And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, "Let us alone;*

what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.” And Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Hold thy peace, and come out of him.” And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. Nathan’s commentary under verse 25 helps us free ourselves from fear: “When the Kingdom comes, the power of Satan will be overcome completely by the Lord, just as this unclean spirit was overcome.” And commenting on verse 26: “What a wonderful truth it is to realize that our Lord has power to protect us from all forms of spiritual wickedness! Realizing this, we do not have to live in superstitious fear (today), as so many do who do not have this wonderful assurance.”

In Nathan C. Johnson’s teachings of John chapter 16 we can see how some gospel events are predicted in other parts of the Bible. In his *Precepts* Audio website, # PA473, titled “Psalm 36:1-37:11,” 3/12/23, Nathan provides details about how the passages below reflect each other.

In Psalms we have the following passages predicting events in the early days of the Kingdom of God: *There the workers of iniquity have fallen; they have been cast down and are not able to rise (Ps. 36:12). But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly they shall be wounded. So He will make them stumble over their own tongue; all who see them shall flee away (Ps. 64:7-8). But the wicked shall perish; and the enemies of the LORD, like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away (Ps. 37:20).*

To help us understand these passages, Nathan teaches us that John 16:7-11 gives us a full description of this arrow mentioned above: “*Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*”

As Jesus himself stressed in Mark 1:38-39, he came to teach. *But He said to them, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.” And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting*

out demons. He frequently taught in parables. In the following passage we see Jesus’ powerful metaphor for the increasing righteousness and knowledge of God that will manifest in the Kingdom. Mr. Sellers said he feels this is the most important parable recorded. *Another parable He put forth to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” (Matt. 13:31-32)*

In his *Precepts* website, in the two-part commentary, “The Death of Lazarus,” and “When Lazarus was Raised,” Book Studies, John, and John 11 Part 3, 8/6/2008, Nathan emphasizes, “This is the seventh and greatest of all the signs that our Lord committed. ... This sign is the climax of all the signs, and should prove to us more than any other that He was indeed ... the Christ, the Son of God.”

After he quotes verse 40, which says: *Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”* Nathan states, “What then did He mean that if she believed she would see the glory of God? I believe that He was referring to those earlier statements He had made about Himself...that He is the resurrection and the life.” He then ties John 11:40 with II Corinthians 4:6, which says, *For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

May we all diligently seek this knowledge and this light. Please join us at the Summer Word of Truth Conference as we learn more about the exciting gospel period and piece together the motion, color, sounds, and activity that characterized the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. And let us pray and praise God together for our hope, the Lord’s plans for our resurrection on this earth, which he so generously described in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5 through 7).

*“Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5).*

And reflecting Jesus’ words:

*But the meek shall inherit the earth,
and shall delight themselves in the
abundance of peace (Ps. 37:11).*

Divine Intervention Promised

By Otis Q. Sellers

We have a definite promise from God that *when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him* (Isa. 59:19). The result of this divine invasion of the earth by the Spirit of God will be that men will fear the Name of the Lord from the west to the east.

If there ever were a time in human history when the enemies of truth, righteousness, and Godliness have come in like a flood, it is the time in which we now live. In view of this abounding iniquity, those who believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God have every right to believe that God will intervene, inject Himself into the flow of history, and turn that flow unto Himself. This is our hope; this is our only hope; this is the last best hope of mankind. God will not fail. He will do what He has promised.

One of the great lost truths of the Bible is that God has the most definite plans to invade the earth by His Spirit, to occupy the earth by His Spirit, and to establish and maintain His order upon the earth by means of His Spirit. The first of these is declared in Isaiah 59:19. The second is stated in Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17. The third is declared in John 16:7-8.

All this is accomplished through Jesus Christ during His present session at the right hand of God in heaven. His enemies become His footstool while He is there (Heb. 1:13). It is the Spirit of the Lord that lifts up a standard against the forces of evil. This

is done by a word from the Lord in heaven that in substance declared to all wicked men, "*Stop — you shall go no further*" (2 Tim. 3:9). God has promised to break the strength of evil and wicked men (Ps. 10:15), and to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end (Ps. 7:9). These are remarkable promises, and it is a tragedy that very few know anything about them.

The promise of God that He will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17) is one so great that it staggers the imagination. Very few who claim to believe what God says are able to bring themselves to believe this specific statement. Nevertheless, this is the way that God will invade the earth by His Spirit and occupy the earth by His Spirit. When this promise becomes a reality, then the great promise of Christ will also become a reality in the earth: that the Spirit of God, acting as an Advocate (one positioned alongside to advise), will make the facts known to the world in regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-8). It is then that a man will hear a voice behind him saying, "*This is the way, walk ye in it,*" when he turns to the right hand, and when he turns to the left (Isa. 30:21).

We can only pity those who see no work of God ahead for mankind except the blackness of tribulation and an imaginary Armageddon. God has made great and wonderful promises. These will be fulfilled to the letter.