

Beauties of the Truth

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Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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The Third Epistle of John

"The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth" (3 John 1).

This third epistle of John was written to a private individual as opposed to a church. It was probable that the family kept the epistle private until the death of Gaius. Only after that did it likely come to light as a product of the Apostle John.

It is first mentioned in the middle of the third century. The church at the time was extremely cautious about new writings purporting to be Apostolic. The concern was justified when we consider the astonishing number of apocryphal gospels, acts of apostles, and epistles, which were offered to the Church in the early stages of Christianity.

At least seventy-five gospels were offered to, and rejected by, the Church. Additional offerings included Acts of Peter and Acts of Paul, Third Epistle to the Corinthians, Epistle to the Laodiceans, Book of Enoch, etc. Some of these survive to the present day but are considered forgeries because of the sentiment, the style, and the doctrines they contain.

So strong was the suspicion of forgery the brethren of the third century had that the books of Second Peter, the second and third epistles of John, Jude, and even Revelation, were omitted when the Peshito Syriac version was made. These books have not been accepted into that version to the present day. That version is still in use in the Syrian Churches. The later Syriac version, made in 508 AD, corrected and included these as well as all the other canonical books of the New Testament.

It is good to note that all three of John's epistles were received by a significant number of early church writers and were included in most of the ancient manuscripts of the New Testament. Thus they were known and quoted at a very early period and have been received as genuine by the most respectable Greek and Latin church authorities.

The exact time in which this epistle was written is uncertain. However, it is generally supposed to have been written at Ephesus between 80 and 90 AD.

The epistle was addressed to a brother named Gaius of whom nothing more is mentioned in scripture. It is clear, however, that he was a man beloved of John.

VERSE-BY-VERSE CONSIDERATION

3 John 1 — "The elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth."

The term "elder" may have been an affectionate title given to John in his old age. It appears that he liked it, using it here to a personal friend. He described "Gaius" as "well-beloved" and adds, whom I "love" in the truth. This double use of the word love includes two variations of *agape*, one noun form and one verb form. *Agape* is the strongest of three biblical Greek words translated love.

WHO IS GAIUS?

Three persons of this name are elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament.

(1) Gaius, whom Paul in Romans 16:23 calls "his host," and whom he says in 1 Corinthians 1:15 that he baptized, residing at Corinth (compare Romans 16:23).

(2) Gaius of Macedonia, one of Paul's companions in travel, who was arrested by an excited mob at Ephesus, Acts 19:29.

(3) Gaius of Derbe, who went with Paul and Timothy into Asia, Acts 20:4.

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>The Third Epistle of John</i>	1
<i>Pictures of Jesus' Sacrifice</i>	4
<i>Queen Esther (continued)</i>	7
<i>God's Spirit Upon All Flesh</i>	8

BEAUTIES OF THE TRUTH is published as a service for brethren to stimulate their appreciation of the riches of God's Word. It is published free of charge. Subscriptions will be entered for all requestors. Address: Beauties of the Truth, 6748 Breckenridge, Lisle, IL 60532. Editorial Board: Brothers Richard Doctor (Managing Editor), O. B. Elbert, Adam Kopczyk, David Rice, Tom Ruggirello, and David Stein. Online at www.BeautiesoftheTruth.org.

Whether any of these individuals is referred to by John, cannot be determined with certainty.

It is clear that John had a great affection for Gaius as a personal friend. But note that his love was based on the truth, or perhaps was simply a true, authentic love. The lesson for us is that our love for fellow New Creatures is a very high form of love based on the truth. That is not to say it is devoid of emotion, simply that it is not based on emotion, but on the principles of God and a common bond in the truth.

3 John 2 — “Beloved, I wish (pray) above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”

It is tempting to apply this to the health of our body. But if we understand consecration, we know that it is the health of the New Creature that we should diligently care about. However, that priority does not mean that we give no consideration to the health of the body.

Romans 12:3 — “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

Proverbs 14:30 — A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones (AV). “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones” (NIV). “It’s healthy to be content, but envy can eat you up” (Contemporary English Version).

3 John 3 — “For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.”

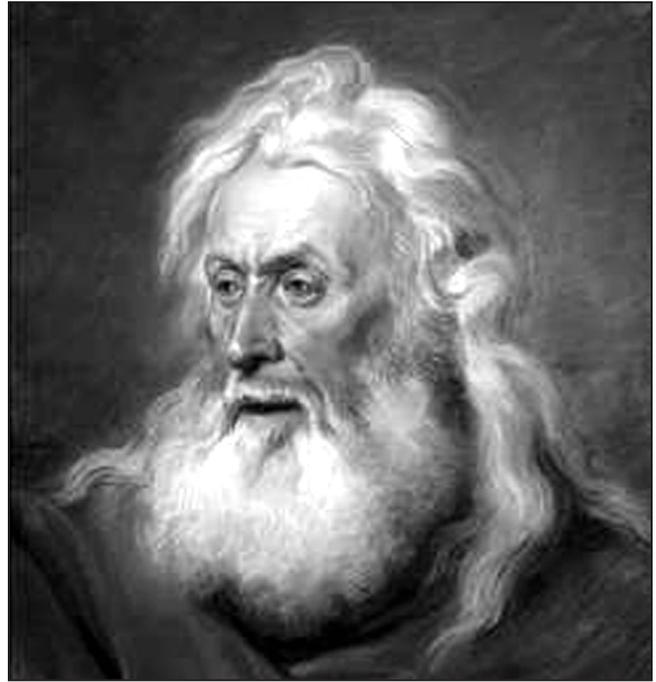
John was thrilled to hear how the truth was energizing and motivating this dear brother Gaius. It meant that he was growing more and more in the image of Christ. As we see one another growing in love, compassion, mercy, humility, piety, and all godly traits, we too ought to rejoice greatly. This is especially true when the growth is coming in the midst of great trial. The New Creature grows at the expense of the flesh.

3 John 4 — “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

This is the second time John used the expression “walk in truth.” The strong implication here is that of an active life concerning the truth. This suggests not simply a believing frame of mind, but a conviction that influences and guides every decision of life.

Someone once asked, “Are you in the truth or is the truth in you?” This emphasizes the importance of character growth rather than physical location. Notice also how thoroughly Jesus identified himself with the truth: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

We must similarly identify with the truth if we are to become copies of God’s dear Son. We need to check



The Aged Apostle John

ourselves frequently to see if we are consumed by the truth. It is that level of zeal that will mark the overcoming little flock.

3 John 5 — “Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers.”

What does John mean by “doest faithfully?” The answer can be as simple as showing love for others. God sets the greatest example by serving all of his creation. He is the Grand Creator and provides for all of his creation. And this is done out of love. “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16).

Gaius evidently was a wonderfully hospitable man desirous of serving the needs of others. When we show similar attitudes of mind, we become more like God. It again suggests that the essence of consecration is being in the service of others, knowing that it is not only God’s will, but it is what He also does! John indicates that our service is to be extended to **all**. This includes brethren and those of the world as we have opportunity. Paul wrote of the same principle in Galatians 6:10, “Therefore, then, as we have opportunity, may we work the good to all, and especially unto those of the household of the faith.”

3 John 6 — “Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well.”

The word “charity” here is once again *agape*! How the apostle loved this word and what it means! Brethren had returned to John with this glowing report of the love and hospitality of Gaius.

The phrase, “whom bringing forward, or having brought forward” refers to aid rendered to brethren in their journeys. This was done either by personally

accompanying them, by furnishing them the means for their journey, or by extending hospitality and entertaining them. It appears from the epistle that the “brethren and strangers” of verse 5 actually had been with him after they had been rejected by the church through the influence of Diotrefes, whom we will meet in a moment. These may have previously received the hospitality of Gaius, and that they had returned and related to John the honorable testimony to his hospitality

“After a godly sort” — as becomes those who worship the God of truth.

3 John 7 — “Because that for his name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.”

The thought here is a little vague, but we surmise that these brethren, in the service of preaching the gospel of truth, were prudent in not taking anything from the Gentiles for their work. Rather, they depended on the assistance of the local church. This circumspection avoided any reproach to come upon the Gospel.

This was the practice of the Apostle Paul as well — to preach the word without charge and work to pay his own way. However, he did accept the charity of the brethren while not asking for it.

3 John 8 — “We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.”

John here endorses this idea that we should be charitable towards others, especially those laboring in the work of the Gospel. Not all of us have the same opportunities in spreading the truth. But we all can contribute toward the effort. This is not limited to the giving of monetary contributions. Something available to everyone is the opportunity to pray for those who are more heavily involved in specific ministries. God counts us a “fellow-helper” when we contribute in any way.

3 John 9 — “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrefes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”

Note John’s faithfulness to the church in his writing to them with apostolic counsel. Not only had he worked and taught among the brethren for decades, but in his old age took the time to write to them as well with exhortations for their faith.

Next we have a record of a specific individual elder in the church who had succumbed to a prideful spirit. We might say that here is a case of the spirit of Babylon in the early church.

The single word rendered “who loveth to have the pre-eminence,” *philoproteuon*, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means simply, “who loves to be first.” We can immediately see the destructive influence of pride. It is divisive!

“A false witness who doth breathe out lies — And one sending forth contentions between brethren” (Proverbs 6:19). “And I call upon you, brethren, to mark those who

the divisions and the stumbling-blocks, contrary to the teaching that ye did learn, are causing, and turn ye away from them” (Romans 16:17).

3 John 10 — “Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”

The apostle is expressing some anger at this situation. It is hard to conceive of any individual who could be so opposed to the dear Apostle John and do the thing Diotrefes did in the church. But this is just what the poison of pride does. We see a similar spirit in the Scribes and Pharisees and what they did to Jesus. Again pride of position moved men to commit evil deeds. We must guard ourselves against this terrible characteristic and extinguish even its small initial symptoms.

John was evidently still capable of travel, which is one reason why scholars place the timing of this epistle between 80 and 90 AD. The Apostle intended to set things right if he was able to travel and confront Diotrefes publicly, as he wanted. We do not have any record indicating that John ever got there.

3 John 11 — “Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”

This is wonderful counsel! We are to recognize good wherever it is and endorse it. It is a mark of those who worship God and should certainly be a deeply ingrained character trait in the little flock. “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, When it is in the power of thy hand to do it” (Proverbs 3:27, American Standard Version).

John also comments on the opposite trait and notes that the doing of evil constitutes blindness with respect to God. It also might explain how the prideful do not seem to be able to see what they are.

3 John 12 — “Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.”

Here we have a contrast to Diotrefes with another brother named Demetrius. How appropriate for the apostle to recognize his good report. Our service in the truth and for the truth will be recognized by the measure of blessing we are to others. Demetrius was clearly



Youthful John

this kind of brother. Of course, the highest commendation we can receive would be from the Lord himself. We should each long to hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

3 John 13 — “I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:”

One can sense John’s constraint as he writes. He had such passion and loving affection for Gaius and the brethren. He laments that all cannot be expressed in writing.

3 John 14 — “But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.”

John intended this brief letter to be just a teaser to his coming to Gaius for personal and intimate fellowship in the truth. How well we know the pleasure and blessing of being with those of like precious faith is.

We have in this brief letter another wonderful glimpse into the character and personality of the Apostle John. Though short, it has several wonderful lessons for us and through it we are encouraged for the daily challenges in our own Christian walk. So we conclude, as did John, with the words “Peace be to thee!”

— Br. David Stein

Pictures of Jesus’ Sacrifice

“All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

There are so many prophecies that were fulfilled in the final days and hours of Jesus life. What is interesting to consider is the question: What did Jesus know about his sacrificial death ahead of time? We suggest that he knew every detail of what would happen to him from his knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. We do not discount supernatural revelation in any way. However, when prophecies provide such detail we have no doubt that our Lord was able to derive much if not most of what he knew from scripture. What follows is a quick survey of what Jesus knew and where he got the information from.

Of course he understood that he had come to earth as a man in order to suffer and die. Revelation 13:8, “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” 1 Peter 1:19, 20, “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

Ephesians 1:4, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” Acts 3:18, “But



La Pietà, Michelangelo

those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.”

WHAT JESUS KNEW ABOUT HIS DEATH

● **THE YEAR**, from Daniel 9:25-27. “From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

The word to restore and build Jerusalem went forth in 455 BC. “And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and

if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time" (Nehemiah 2:1-6).

69 weeks x 7 = 483 days. Using a day for a year in prophecy, 483 days = 483 years. 483 + 455 BC = 29 AD. Half the week = 3½ years. Thus Jesus died in 33 AD — 29 AD plus 3½ years.

● **THE MONTH** — Nisan, the Day the 14th — from Exodus 12:2-6. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening."

● **THE HOUR** — 3 pm — from Exodus 12:6. "between the [two] evenings" — between the first evening, the beginning of the descent of the sun at 12 noon, and the second evening, the setting of the sun at 6 pm.

● **CRUCIFIXION** would be the manner of his death. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13). "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14). "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12: 32,33).

Deuteronomy 21:22,23 — "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all

night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

This is an interesting text. The standard mode of executing criminals in ancient Israel was stoning. But if the crime was especially heinous, then the condemned was first stoned and then hanged on a tree to show that he was cursed by God.

Joshua 8:29, "And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day." Joshua 10:26, "And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening."

Crucifixion as the Romans later developed it was unknown at the time of the Law. Living as Jesus was under the control of the Romans whose primary method of execution was crucifixion, he would have been able to link the Deuteronomy text with the reality of his situation and anticipate that his mode of death would be crucifixion.

● **DEHYDRATION** would accompany his death. Exodus 12:9, "Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof." Notice that water was specifically forbidden in the preparation of the lamb. Jesus, typical of a crucifixion victim, was lethally dehydrated. The sweating from the pain, the swelling and inflammation of the wounds accompanied by fever and blood loss, all contributed to severe dehydration.

Jesus himself said in John 19:28, "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." Psalm 69:21, "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." It is likely that the dehydration was the final element in producing death.

● **HIS BONES** would not be broken. Exodus 12:46, "In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof." Numbers 9:12, "They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it." Psalm 34:20, "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken." John 19:36, "For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."

● **TIME ON THE CROSS** — That he would be on the cross from 9 am to his death at 3 pm. The Morning and Evening Sacrifice were two sacrifices that were offered each day. The Morning Sacrifice was offered about 9 am in the morning and the Evening Sacrifice was offered at 3 pm in the afternoon.



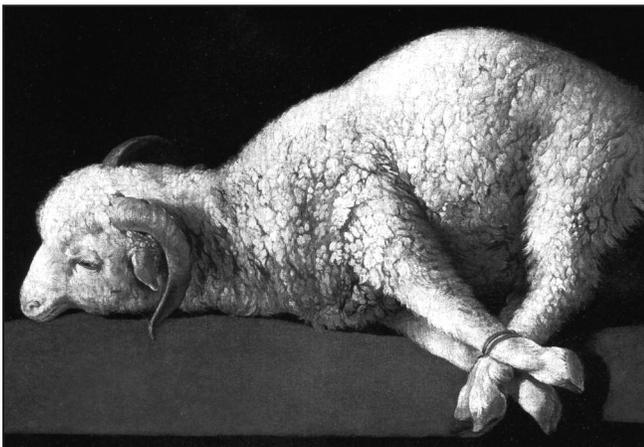
Jesus, our Teacher

Exodus 29:38-42, “Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even [between the evenings]: And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee.”

Numbers 28:3-8, “And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the LORD; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even [between the evenings]; And a tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat offering, mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil. It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in Mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine¹ to be poured unto the LORD for a drink offering. And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meat offering of the morning, and as the drink offering thereof, thou shalt offer it, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.”

R2953 — “The day was again divided into two equal portions, from the rising of the sun until noon was the morning, and after that, until the sun had gone down, was the evening. ... Again, the morning and the evening were divided each into two equal parts, for the regulation of the morning and evening sacrifices and prayers.

“The morning sacrifice and prayer was allowed to be offered at any time between the rising of the sun and the third hour, i.e., 9 a.m., and the evening sacrifice and prayer



Jesus is the Lamb of God for the sin of the world.

... at any time during the first evening. Hebrew, *erev katon*, the short or lesser evening, i.e., from noon until ninth hour, or 3 p.m.; and from that time until sun setting, is called in the Hebrew *erev gadol*, i.e., the greater evening. It was between these two evenings the paschal lamb was to be slain, and so was Jesus, the antitype, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world as recorded.”

Note: a tenth deal of flour = 1 omer — The Body of Christ.² 1/4 hin of olive oil = the holy Spirit. 1/4 hin of wine = joy, it makes glad the heart of man The addition of Bread and Wine connects quite dramatically with the Memorial Service instituted by the Lord!

● **HIS GARMENTS** would be taken. Psalm 22:18, “They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” Matthew 27:35, “And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.”

Probably many other prophecies fill in the experiences of Jesus even more. The awesome conclusion we draw is that Jesus not only knew the nature and details of what he was to undergo, but was in control of everything, carefully managing his ministry up to the point of his arrest, then submitting to the inevitable and prophesied string of events leading to his crucifixion. To know this and yet to voluntarily and with joy go through it, testifies to Jesus’ love and devotion to his Heavenly Father.

The Apostle Paul identifies Jesus as our High Priest. As such we conclude with one more fulfillment of prophecy. John 19:23, “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.”

This is included for a very significant reason. In the Old Testament, the garment of the high priest was made of linen and had to be without seam. Exodus 39:27, “And they made coats of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons.” This was the symbol of the total purity of the sacrificing high priest. Jesus Christ fulfilled to the very letter the symbol of the high priest by wearing the sacrificing garments of his priesthood. So, Jesus fulfilled a beautiful type of the great high priest, **our high priest** and example of total consecration to Jehovah’s will.

— Br. David Stein

(1) Philippians 2:17, “Nay! if I am even to be poured out as a drink offering, upon the sacrifice and public ministry of your faith, I rejoice” (Rotherham). “Nay, even if my life is being poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I rejoice” (Weymouth). “Even if my life is to be poured out as a libation as you offer your faith in a service of sacrifice to God, I am glad” (Goodspeed).

(2) One Omer is exactly what the Israelites gathered in manna each day (except for day six, when they gathered two omers for the 6th and 7th days). Jesus identified himself as the heavenly manna, the bread from heaven, in John 6:51.

Queen Esther

“Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her” (Esther 2:15) (Continued from the September, 2014 issue).

The first part of this article suggested that Queen Esther, renowned for her beauty, is a picture of the Church class, which will be renowned for beauty of character. That Xerxes, the king, was a picture of our Lord Jesus.

That the 127 provinces of the king's domain remind us of the 127 years of Sarah's lifespan, connecting Sarah, a picture of the spiritual part of the Abrahamic Covenant, to the development of the Bride class.¹

That the 180 day feast that opens the Book of Esther represents in various ways the preparation for the Gospel Age calling of the saints. The subsequent Grecian campaign of King Xerxes represents the advance of our King Jesus, gathering disciples from the Gentile world. Following is the continuation and conclusion.

VASHTI

Esther chapter one, verses 9 and forward, recount the experience with Vashti, predecessor in the office Esther would later hold. The king while merry with wine called for her in order to display her beauty to his gathered hosts. Perhaps we can sympathize with Vashti in the situation. Her modesty was at peril, in a literal sense. However, the spiritual picture is the essence for us. We suggest that Vashti represents the nation of Israel, called upon to show the beauty of character that should have been developed. But at the necessary moment, Israel failed to display this beauty. Vashti was deposed, as Israel was deposed from the chief honor, and the calling went out kingdom wide for all who wished to try for the position. This shows how the high calling went out worldwide to constitute the heavenly companion for our Lord Jesus.

All of this occurred in the third² year of Ahasuerus (Esther 1:3). But queen Esther did not come into the presence of the king until his seventh year (Esther 2:16). The four years intervening was the period of Xerxes' abortive conquest of Greece. In picture, these four years represent the period of trial, testing, and development of the Church. Elsewhere the Gospel Age is represented as 40 years (the wilderness wandering), or as 400 years (the affliction of Abraham's seed, Genesis 15:13).

Coming into the presence of the king in his seventh year perhaps indicates that members of the Church class enter the presence of the king during the seventh “year,” or stage, of the Gospel Age, the period we often refer to as Laodicea. The 10th month of the 7th year reflects the same numbers in this picture of the end of the Gospel Age, as appears in Ezekiel 40:1, when a vision of the Millennial Kingdom was given to Ezekiel, namely the 10th day of the 7th month.

PREPARATION

Esther was being prepared for a full year (Esther 2:12). This reminds us that the Gospel Age, its teachings, and accoutrements, is represented by the sun (Revelation 12:1, Matthew 13:43), and one year is the period of the solar circuit. This was separated into six months of treatment with “oil of myrrh” and six months with “sweet odours” (Esther 2:12). These six months reminds us that our development is still within the period of sin and death abroad in the world. The oil of myrrh represents the holy Spirit, whose work with us in this age involves suffering and sacrifice (thus myrrh). The perfumes represent the sweet graces of the spirit that should accompany us everywhere we go.

On occasion we observe even brethren disposed to a surly, sour, critical, complaining disposition. No doubt these human weaknesses are traceable to elements of the fallen nature, and Jesus is understanding. But this is not the Christian spirit. We often wonder how this is considered at all compatible with the “sweet odours” that we are intended to reflect to others. Possibly some consider the Christian faith to call upon them to earnestly content, and this is misconstrued to being earnestly contentious, or earnestly opposing whatever they may not deem a proper view, or a proper person. However, this is inappropriate and deleterious. It is very different than the sweet odours apparent in the ministry of our master.

GIFTS

Esther 2:18 says that upon the selection of Esther, “the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast.” We suggest that the princes here indicate that when the church is complete the Ancient Worthies will be honored by a resurrection. The servants may picture the Great Company. If this is correct, then it may support a common view, but one we have long wondered about, namely that Revelation 19:9, “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb,” may refer to the Great Company class. Esther 2:18 continues, “and he [the king] made a release to the provinces.” Evidently this refers to releasing the world from the curse as the Kingdom opens.

MORDECAI, HEGAI, BIGTHAN, AND TERESH

Mordecai was an older cousin of Esther, sufficiently older to have raised Esther, who was otherwise without parents in her growing years (Esther 2:7). Mordecai seems to us to represent the Ancient Worthies, our older cousin whose testimonies help shape our life of faith, even though we are called to a superior position, as was Esther.

Hegai, keeper of the women who provided for their needs and refinements, seems to us to represent the holy Spirit (Esther 2:8,15).

Esther 2:19 then speaks of a gathering of virgins “the second time.” The first gathering was in search for the

queen of the harem, and Esther secured that place. The second gathering, after Esther has been ushered into the presence of the king, perhaps represents the final gathering of the Great Company. About this time the Ancient Worthies will be raised. They are mentioned also, symbolically, in verse 19, “Mordecai sat in the king’s gate.”

The following four verses speak of a sedition by two of the king’s chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh. These should have been on the side of the king, but instead they were found to be opposers of the king. When they were seen for what they were, they were summarily executed, and Mordecai was involved in their undoing.

At about this time Revelation shows us that there will be a final judgment of two systems that are ostensibly on the side of our great King. They are “Christian” institutions in name, but in fact they are not working in concert with the program of Christ to establish his Kingdom. These systems are represented by the Beast and False Prophet of Revelation — Papacy, and the Church of England with her protestant allies. Revelation 19:20 tells us that they are summarily executed as systems. “The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet ... these both were cast alive into a lake of fire.”

That leaves one major foe to deal with — the Dragon. Revelation chapter 20 shows what becomes of him. He is shrouded in the darkness of the pit, and then disposed of as an enemy of the people of God. Haman represents the dragon, Satan, in his plot to thwart the establishment of Christ’s kingdom at Israel. Haman plotted to destroy Mordecai together with the Israelites. That narrative is recorded in chapters 3 through 9. Ultimately Haman was shrouded in darkness (Esther 7:8), and subsequently disposed of (Esther 7:10). The dragon of Revelation has 10 horns, and Haman had 10 sons, all disposed of (Esther 9:10).

THE CLOSING CHAPTER

Esther 10:1 says that then “the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea.” So



Esther and Mordecai

Jesus will receive the tribute of the entire world during the Millennium. “Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.” The Ancient Worthies will be covered with honor

as the early representatives of the Great King. Peace and fortune will attend all.

— Br. David Rice

(1) 127 is also the sum of 100 and 27. Both of these numbers are exponentials. 100 is frequently taken to be the number of Jesus — it is also 10 squared. 27 is equal to 3 cubed. Putting it together as a further symbol of the high calling: Jesus (100) is the source of our redemption (3), yet redemption to not merely eternal life, but the very highest form of life, namely a divine nature of immortality (27, 3 cubed). Thus 27 is an emphasis of the pinnacle of redemption all based upon Jesus and following his footsteps — $27 + 100 = 127$. (Editor).

(2) Jesus was three days in the grave, his price was 30 pieces of silver, Mary anointed him with 300 pence of oil, at Pentecost the church swelled to 3000. All these “three” numbers, of whatever magnitude, pertain to redemption. Perhaps this is because there are three parties involved in the work of atonement — God, man, and Jesus the reconciler in between.

God’s Spirit Upon All Flesh

“I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28).

After Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, on Pentecost the Apostle Peter quoted Joel 2:28-32 to open up the Gospel Age for the church. However, in Acts 2:17 he reverses the sequence of two clauses, implying the sequence is not important. (Perhaps to draw more attention to clauses that introduce the new state of affairs.) The following is suggested concerning phrases pertaining to the Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial Ages:

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh [Gospel and Millennial Ages together]; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [Gospel Age], your old men shall dream dreams [prior to the Gospel Age], your young men shall see visions [understand visions, and probably proclaim them in the Gospel Age]: (29) and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit [to include Gentiles in the Gospel Age].

“(30) And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke [Gospel Age]. (31) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrifying day of Jehovah cometh [end of “the last day” of the Gospel Age]. (32) And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered [Gospel and Millennial Ages]; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape [resurrection of the faithful church, and deliverance of fleshly Israel, at Armageddon], as Jehovah hath said, and among¹ the remnant those whom Jehovah doth call [great multitude?]” (Joel 2:28-32 RVIC).

— Br. James Parkinson

(1) Or, in the remnant whom Jehovah doth call.