

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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Three Doves

"At the end of forty days ... Noah ... sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground" (Genesis 8:8,9).

This episode occurred late in the experience of the Flood. The ark had already come aground after 150 days of drifting. Seventy-four days later Noah had seen the "top of the mountains" in the distance, as the waters began to subside. Thereafter, he waited 40 days more, and then sent out two birds, a raven and a dove, in order to see if they could find some place to land, which would be some indication of progress in the receding of the waters.

The raven remained out, flying to and fro from the ark, but the dove returned to Noah, who waited seven days and sent out a dove again. This time the dove returned in the evening with an olive leaf plucked off in its beak, which was a sign of hope. Noah waited seven days more and sent the dove out again. This time it did not return, showing further progress.

The title of this article is "Thee Doves," but in fact it may have been a single dove sent out three times. The lesson however is of three releases of a dove. A dove is a clean bird, and represents the holy Spirit of God, as for example in Matthew 3:16 when the holy Spirit lighted upon Jesus "like a dove." We think in this experience of Noah, that we have a picture of three times God has sent forth His holy Spirit in the earth, in order to find those of faith in three different epochs — the time from Adam to Jesus (to call the Ancient Worthies), from Jesus to the Kingdom (to call the Church), and again during the Kingdom and forward (to develop the world).

The 40 days represent the test in Eden, as 40 often represents a time of testing, or trial. Adam and Eve failed that test, and thus the raven (an unclean bird) was sent out, symbolic of the curse upon mankind. But along with the curse, God began to move through His Spirit to prepare for better times. The first class called, from the time of Adam to the time of Jesus, was the class of Ancient Worthies. Abel, the son of Adam, was one of these, according to Paul's mention of Abel and his faith in Hebrews 11:4.

When Noah received the dove back into the ark, this indicates the end of this work of the holy Spirit. Noah waited for seven days before releasing the dove again. The next age in the Chart of the Ages, following the time of the Ancient Worthies, would be the Gospel Age, in which Jesus was developed as a New Creature, and subsequently from Pentecost onward, the saints are called to become members of the Church class.

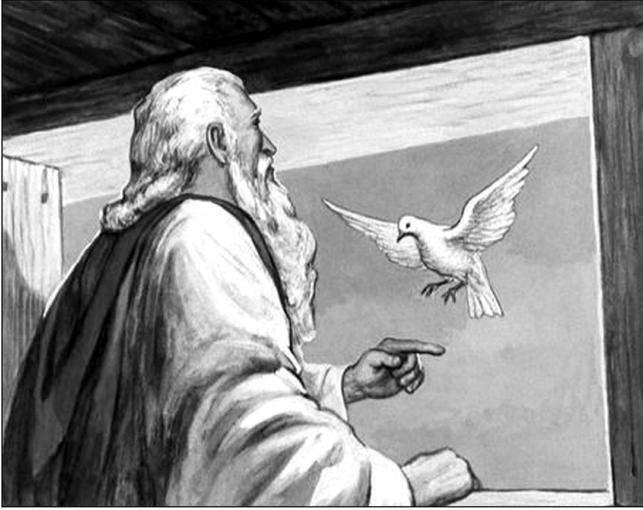
Jesus, and the Church, are developed as the spiritual seed of Abraham, to bless "all the families of the earth," in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant, that was sealed with God's oath (Hebrews 6:17, Genesis 26:3). The Hebrew word underlying the word "oath" in Genesis 26:3 is Strong's word 7621, *shebuwah*, which is past participle for Strong's 7650, "oath." That word is spelled with three Hebrew characters, the same letters used for Strong's 7651, *sheba*, seven. When one takes an oath, he "sevens" himself. That is, he obligates himself completely. The number seven, and the concept of completeness, as in completely obligated to an oath, are intertwined.

For this reason the number seven is connected with the taking of an oath, as demonstrated in Genesis 21:27-29, where seven ewe lambs stand as a witness of an agreement between Abraham and Abimelech. In the case of the Abrahamic Covenant, and its fulfillment, the number seven is frequently associated with it, as for example in the seven stages of the Gospel Age Church, or the seven millenniums taking us through the blessing of "all the families of the earth."

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Noah receiving a dove back again

In the case of Noah sending the doves, seven days preceded the second and third sendings, because these represent the Gospel Age and the Millennial Age respectively, during which the Abrahamic Covenant is effective first to the Church, and subsequently to the World.¹

THE SECOND SENDING

“And [Noah] stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.” This represents the work of God’s Spirit during the Gospel Age. At the “evening” or close of this age, hope is at hand for the establishment of God’s Kingdom for the blessing of all.

In Zechariah 14:4 this kingdom is represented by “mount of Olives.” The symbol of mountain represents a kingdom, and the connection to the olive tree, from which comes olive oil that produces light and nourishment, we have a symbol of the Millennial Kingdom and the blessings it will bring to mankind.

In this verse the mountains “shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.” These two parts of the mountain represent that the Kingdom of God will have two parts, one in heaven (north), and one in earth (south).

Ezekiel chapter 47 gives another symbolic vision representing the Kingdom, in which a river of life flows from Jerusalem, from the temple at Jerusalem, passing by the “south side of the altar” (verse 1), in order to express the fact that the blessings of redemption (represented by the altar) are to flow to the earthly kingdom (south). This chapter later explains that these waters flow further eastward, down to the Dead Sea, to refresh and enliven things there, symbolic of the river of life bringing blessings to the whole world formerly under the curse.

However, there is a natural obstacle that blocks any such flow of a river from Jerusalem, namely the Mount of Olives, which is directly east of Jerusalem. The symbolic split of this mountain mentioned in Zechariah 14:4 allows the water to reach those who need it most. So the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth (south), as distinguished from heaven (north), will allow the blessings to flow.²

THE THIRD SENDING

“And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more. And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry” (Genesis 8:12, 13).

This represents God’s Spirit poured upon “all flesh” (Joel 2:28). In this case the world will retain the Spirit of God thereafter. Verse 13 tells us that the waters were dried, thus the curse lifted, on the first day of the next new year, which is an appropriate time for a new age in God’s Plan to be represented as beginning. The Gospel Age also was depicted as beginning on the first day of a new year, in Exodus 40:2, 17, “It came to pass in the first month ... on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up,” and thus the atoning sacrifices of the Gospel Age could proceed.

THREE BROAD PERIODS OF TIME

Thus three broad periods of time in God’s Plan, totalling 7000 years, are depicted, in which God selects the Ancient Worthies, the Gospel Age Church, and the Millennial Age world of mankind. It appears that the same three periods are represented also in other items respecting the flood ordeal. That is the way God seems to have composed the Scriptures. A theme that is established in one picture, often is expanded upon by other experiences in the same area of scripture.

For example, Paul says that Hagar and Sarah represent covenants in the development of God’s Plan, Hagar the Law Covenant, Sarah the spiritual part of the Abrahamic Covenant, and to this we may add Abraham’s second wife, Keturah, as a picture of the earthly part of the Abrahamic Covenant operative in the Kingdom. Intertwined in the narratives are the stories of the children of Abraham, representing those developed under these various “mother” covenants. There are chapters and chapters of narrative that have these themes running through them, in one area of the Old Testament record.

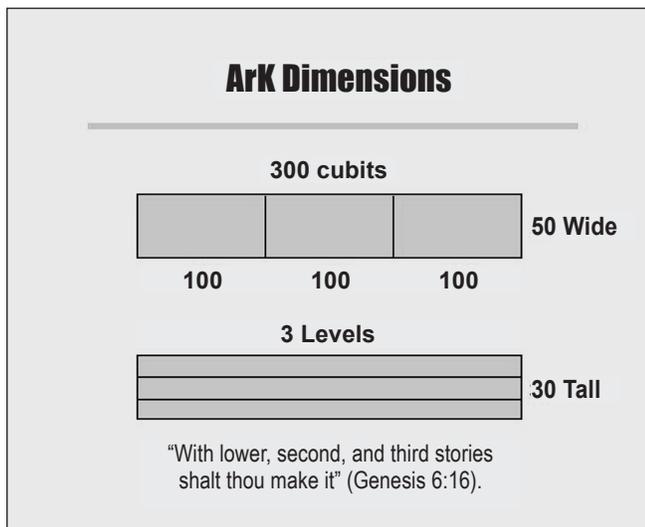
Elsewhere, in connection with Israel’s experience in the wilderness, we have a multitude of types that pertain to redemption and atonement. This is the theme running through much of the record of Leviticus. There is more than an isolated picture; there is a series of pictures

related thematically to flesh out various details about the Atonement work in God’s plan. So in the case also of the record of Noah’s experiences respecting the Flood. We examine some of these following.

THE DIMENSIONS OF THE ARK

Genesis 6:15 says the ark was to be 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits tall. The length to width ratio is thus six to one, pointing to the six great thousand-year days while the world is subject to the curse, as represented by the flood waters.

The circumference of the ark would be 700 cubits, perhaps representing the whole circuit of the 7000 years of God’s Plan from the fall of Adam to the restoration of mankind. The 30 cubit height reminds us that the ark represents redemption (compare 1 Peter 3:20, 21), and 3, 30, 300, or 3000 is symbolic in scriptures of redemption (Jesus was in the grave for our sins for parts of three days, his life was valued at 30 pieces of silver, the price of the anointing for his death was 300 pence, and those redeemed at Pentecost numbered 3000 persons).



There were three levels to the ark (Genesis 6:16), depicting the **three periods** of time depicted by the sending out of the dove three times. And the floorplan of the ark shows the same. The 300 x 50 cubit floor plan of the ark could be divided into three areas of 100 x 50 each, which was the measure of the Court of the Tabernacle, which pictured Justification. So in the plan of God there are three periods of time in which God calls men and women of faith to Justification, the same **three periods** depicted in the sending out of the dove.

We mention in connection with these 100 x 50 cubit areas, that in 1 Kings 7:2, Solomon constructed “the house of the forest” of the same dimensions, 100 x 50 cubits. This house was built after Solomon completed the Temple, which took seven years, representing the saints who are built up a holy edifice to God during the seven stages of the Church. This house of the forest represents a blessed

condition for mankind, to be brought to them during the Kingdom. It was made of wood, which represents earthly life, but it was of cedar wood, a kind of wood that does not readily corrupt, thus representing everlasting earthly life. Mankind will be justified to God by faith and obedience, so that the dimensions here, matching those of the Court, are appropriate to the picture.

As with the ark, built to a height of 30 cubits, so with the house of the forest, “and the height thereof thirty cubits” (1 Kings 7:2). In this case there were not three stories, because this house represents only the Kingdom period, not three periods of time.

The ark represents Christ. The “pitch” (Genesis 6:14) that sealed the ark is from the Hebrew word *kopher*, Strong’s number 3724, the same word often rendered “ransom,” because the word means “to cover” and is sometimes used of “a redemption price.” (*Kopher* is the word used eight times for “ransom,” from Exodus 30:12 through Isaiah 43:3).³

Those baptized into Christ presently are delivered from the curse through the protection of the ark (1 Peter 3:21). This deliverance was “measured” by the space of 15 cubits, the height the waters rose upward on the side of the ark (Genesis 7:20). The same number appears in the house of the forest. In that edifice there were 15 supporting pillars inside the length of the house, in fact three rows of 15 pillars, connecting the thought of deliverance (15) with the thought of atonement (3). “It was covered with cedar above upon the beams, that lay on forty-five pillars, fifteen in a row” (1 Kings 7:3).

120 YEARS

Genesis 6:3 apparently was a warning God gave to Noah 120 years before the Flood itself fell upon the world. “Jehovah said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” Is there some special meaning in these 120 years?

Brethren have wondered if it might have a parallel to the “days of the son of man” and his parousia (Luke 17:26), and formerly considered whether from 1874, 120 years forward might bring us to the year 1994 with some meaning. Apparently this was not the point intended, for 1994 did not bring in the Kingdom. However, noticing that 40 years appears at times as a period of trial and testing in the Divine Plan, perhaps that is the key here. Mankind under sin and condemnation would endure **three periods** of testing and judgment, after which no longer would the Spirit of God “strive” with men.⁴

THREE PERIODS OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

It is readily apparent that the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant include the Gospel Age and the Millennial Age. In the first period the saints are developed with Christ as the choice seed of blessing, and in the second period



Sarah, overhearing the good news. She lived to the age of 127. The Abrahamic Covenant bears fruit in three periods, suggested by the 381 days (127 x 3) in Noah's time.

mankind is blessed through them. It is not as apparent that the time from Adam forward is part of this, but we suggest that it is. The selection and preparation of the Ancient Worthies was the first step in the program to bless the world in the future. In this way, though the calling of the Ancient Worthies began even before Abraham, the work had already commenced that was later expressed in God's covenant promise to Abraham.

"All of God's blessings come under the Abrahamic Covenant, either directly or indirectly" (Question Book, page 165, 1908).

In this case, the **three periods** referred to above are all included. With this in mind, let us notice the number of days collectively that Noah and his family were in the ark, and see how this number of days connects to three periods of activity in fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.

The rain that opened the flood began to fall on month 2, day 17 (Genesis 7:11). However, Noah and his family had entered the ark **six days** earlier, and the calendar day just mentioned was day "seven" of their experience. They left the ark the next year also in month 2, but day 27. Thus from the day the rain fell, to the day they left the ark, inclusively, was one year and 10 days. If we take the year length as 365 days (as suggested symbolically by Genesis 5:23), then we have a total of 6 plus 365 plus 10 = 381 days.

The year length of 365 days is of course the number used in our common calendar. The ancient Egyptian calendar is well known to have had this count also. It was 12 months of 30 days each, plus 5 intercalary days added before the next new year — 365 days total. Judging by Genesis 7:11, 24, 8:3, 4, we think this was the system used in the Flood narrative as well. In this case, the resulting 381 days would be correct.

The number 381 is three times 127. The latter number measured the lifespan of Sarah in years (Genesis 23:1). The record of her years is meaningful, for it seems Sarah is the only woman of the Old Testament whose death age is reported to us. Sarah, as the wife of Abraham, represents the covenant given to her husband. The same number,

127, appears again in Esther 1:1, linked to her narrative, Esther representing the Church class who is developed under the spiritual phase of that covenant.

Perhaps, therefore, the entire period within the ark — 3 x 127 days — is yet another way of depicting the **three periods** of time that operate in the Divine Plan. In **three periods** of time God draws people of faith, in fulfillment of his statement of purpose to Abraham, to bless "all the families of the earth."

— Br. David Rice

(1) An editor adds — The Jewish Age, Gospel Age, and Millennial Age are each typified by 7's: Jacob serving for his two wives, and Joseph's famine and plenty.

(2) An editor observes that without the splitting of the Mount of Olives, waters from Jerusalem would flow to the Kidron valley, diverting the flow southward, and from there other passages allow the flow to the Dead Sea. So the splitting of the Mount of Olives is not a natural requirement, even if it provides some nice symbolism.

(3) An editor comments as follows: *Kopher*, related to our word "cover," is properly "atonement." *Gaal* is the proper word for "ransom."

(4) An editor observes that Moses' life was composed of three periods of 40 years each, representing three ages. And that Saul, David, and Solomon reigned consecutively 40 years each, also representing three ages.

The Contest with Amalek (Exodus 17:8-16)

Exodus chapter 17 opens with the Israelites pitching their tents in Rephidim. Here they encountered another test of faith respecting their need for water (see Exodus 15:27 for an earlier one). They also they encountered another major threat: "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim" (verse 8).¹ The Amalekites were the aggressors. Amalek is later specifically mentioned in the *Book of the Wars of Jehovah* (Numbers 21:14, 24:20).²

ESAU'S HEREDITARY ENMITY

Esau hated Jacob, believing he had stolen the birthright and the blessing. Though the two reconciled later in their lives (Genesis 33:4), this attack on Israel may have been motivated by a hereditary enmity, a malice of history that ran in their blood. Amalek was the grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:12,16). Being related, we might have expected the Amalekites to have some pity for the Israelites. But it appears there was no family love. They viciously attacked the rear-guard of Israel at a time when the people were exhausted.

"Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were feeble behind

thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God” (Deuteronomy 25:17,18).

It is thought provoking that this military aggression comes on the heels of Israel’s quarrel with Moses over his leadership (Exodus 17:2). Such times of national crisis can bring citizens together, and this attack was the first such crisis. Add to that the callous way Amalek attacked, from the rear, and against their “feeble” ones (Deuteronomy 25:18). This would have provoked the Israelites mightily, and motivated them to confront this dishonorable enemy on the field of battle.

Notably, Israel was not attacked until they had been refreshed with the waters at Horeb (Exodus 17:6). This indicates that Jehovah is always faithful in providing the necessary preparation for any battle that comes upon us. He never permits us to face an enemy without His training. We may reflect upon this respecting our early experiences following our consecration. After we came into the truth, after we consecrated, and after we were begotten of the holy Spirit that flows from the smitten rock, did we have an easy course? We certainly had the blessedness of fellowship in the truth, but even as babes, our loving Father is interested in our becoming full-grown.

Consequently, we began to have experiences that, though difficult in the flesh, contributed to our growth as new creatures. We began to engage the battle against our own flesh. This is the Amalekite within us. As the Amalekites attacked in a sudden and unexpected way, so too do battles with our sinful and imperfect flesh. We must engage Amalek; we must take a stand. But we are not alone. As our lesson continues, we see the help that our God provides.

THE BATTLE JOINED

“Moses said unto Joshua, ‘choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand’” (Exodus 17:9).

This is the first mention of Joshua in the Scriptures. We are told that he was a “young man” in this first year of the wilderness journey (Exodus 33:11). How old might he have been? Since manhood was reckoned at the age of thirty,³ we suppose Joshua was at least that old. He had already distinguished himself as Moses’ servant, so he was likely quite a bit older than thirty, but still considered young in comparison to the 80 year old Moses. Moses was God’s choice to lead Israel. He had God’s guidance and providence. Thus, we conclude that Joshua was also an excellent choice. He was in fact God’s choice, as testified later (Numbers 27:18).

Moses entrusted Joshua with leadership of the fighting men. He selected the soldiers and established the military protocols to fight against Amalek. They would have had a supply of weapons taken from the dead on the shores of the Red Sea.

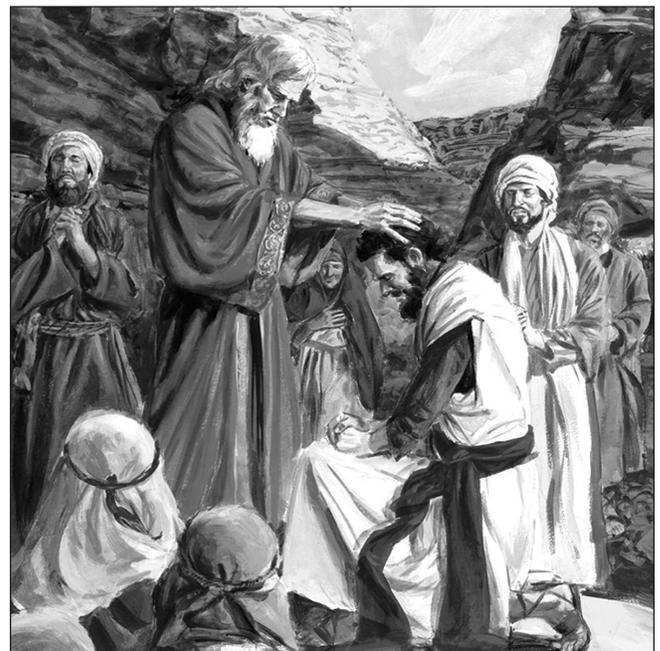
Remembering that Israel was recently released from Egyptian slavery, we might question the preparation of these men as soldiers. They were a people whose faith was questionable. They were traveling in a land they had never seen. They had women and children, herds and possessions. There was not a settled acceptance of Moses as their leader. They did not seek this battle, although it meant the survival of the entire nation. Nevertheless, however inadequate they were for war, they went forward under Joshua’s command. They had something no one in the world had — the continual manifest presence of their God Jehovah in the pillar of cloud and fire.

One other detail of note: when Moses used the rod to smite the rock and bring forth water, the rod was called his rod. “Jehovah said unto Moses, ‘pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go’” (Exodus 17:5). But when the rod was used in this conflict with Amalek, it was called “the rod of God.” Having been used once in a miracle, it now became a symbol of Jehovah’s power.

This is the second time Moses’ rod is called “the rod of God.” “Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand” (Exodus 4:20).

THE ARMS OF MOSES

The battle with Amalek was joined but the results were mixed. As Moses held up his arms, Israel prevailed, and when he let them down Amalek prevailed. This raises some questions. Was the blessing of Jehovah merely a function of Moses’ arms? It may seem strange. Yet the strangeness of God’s action may indicate a lack of understanding His wisdom.



Moses chose Joshua to lead Israel in this battle.

Jehovah calls his worshippers to remember this principle. God operates on a much higher level than us. He often has things in mind to teach and instruct which may not be apparent at the time. Consider what Jehovah told Isaiah: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8). So, we may surmise with confidence that this episode has some higher lessons. For the ancient Israelites, this was a test of faith.

Aaron and Hur, recognizing the nature of the problem, came up with a solution. “Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun” (Exodus 17:12).

The fighting men of Israel could look up on the ridge of the hill and see Moses, Aaron, and Hur standing there. As they fought on, they were encouraged by the presence of these leaders. The enemy could see this also, and we surmise they were dejected by it.

Thus, were Moses’ hands and arms suspended until sunset. How many hours this was we are not informed but we might infer that it was an entire day. The result was a victorious outcome for Israel. “Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword” (Exodus 17:13).

No further details are provided, but Amalek finally gave up and retreated. “Jehovah said unto Moses, ‘write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven’” (Exodus 17:14).

JEHOVAH IS MY BANNER

Jehovah did not intend to destroy Amalek at this time. Amalek would survive for a while. However, we have a prophecy of Amalek’s future doom ordained of God. Moses was told to “rehearse it in the ears of Joshua.” Clearly, Jehovah had some future thing in mind for Joshua who was to play a role in destroying Amalek.

At the conclusion of the battle with the Amalekites “Moses built an altar and called the name of it, Jehovah-nissi; And he said, ‘Jehovah hath sworn: Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation’” (Exodus 17:15). Altars were built not only for sacrifice to God, but also for memorials. Moses built this altar just for that reason, to commemorate the deliverance Jehovah God had given Israel in this war with Amalek.

Jehovah-nissi means “Jehovah is my banner.” We may see in this a picture of our own battle against our sinful flesh. To help us in this battle we have Jesus, as the antitypical Moses, and the power of God to guide him. As Moses grew fatigued he began to drop his arms. In the reality, Jesus never tires in his ability to help. Since the weariness in Moses’ arms cannot picture any weakness



Moses, with his arms supported

in our Lord, it must show our **own experience**. Our **degree of trust** in Jesus may vary from time to time. We sometimes look to Jesus for help and the help comes from our faithful Lord. But, at other times we may trust in our own strength, or other untrustworthy sources. At those times our sinful flesh gains an advantage, and we spiritually drop our arms..

In the picture, Aaron and Hur helped hold up Moses’ arms by supporting them on each side. Perhaps these two men represent two resources of strength in our own battle with sin. This is what we bring in our hearts to the battle. Aaron means “High, Elevated, Exalted.” Hur means “Noble.” When we look at Jesus’ own victory in his obedience under great duress, we have an example of what he brought to the battle. The Apostle Paul wrote: “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity” (Hebrews 1:9).

Jesus possessed these two necessary qualities for victory, the love of righteousness and the hatred of iniquity. We must also have these helps or we will never be victorious in our battle with the flesh. These two characteristics give us strength to continue in the narrow way. They must be present together. It is easier to love righteousness than to hate iniquity. It may be that one of the grievous faults of the Great Company is an insufficient hatred of iniquity. The sinful allures of this world appeal to the flesh. Giving in to its appeal is a compromise that gives the flesh an upper hand in the battle. Gratifying the flesh is a defeat. Even more sobering is that if we give ourselves over to the flesh, we will die the second death. “If you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:13, NIV).

Accordingly, in our battle with the flesh we have on our side the providence of God and His promises to help in every time of need (Hebrews 4:16). The Israelites on the field of battle could look up on the hill and see Moses holding the rod of God between his two uplifted hands. The image would be one of the cross! As soldiers of

Christ, we can look to the cross of Jesus and gain much needed strength and encouragement.

AMALEK — AN APPLICATION TO SATAN

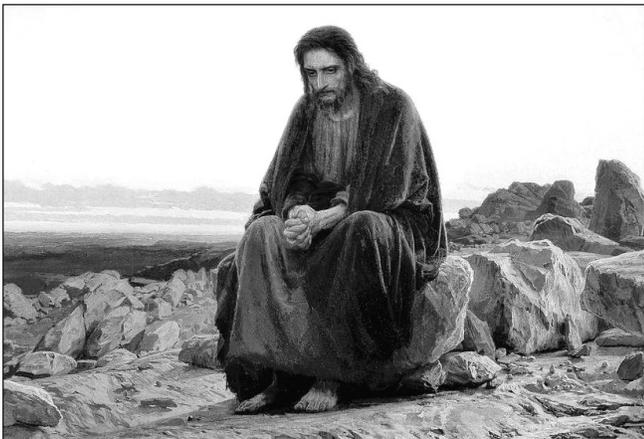
Amalek was not destroyed on that day of battle. Though Jehovah cursed them to be annihilated later, they survived as a people past that first battle. So it is for us. Though we defeat Amalek of the flesh today, it will come back to battle us tomorrow. We must continue our battle with the flesh until our victory at the end of our fleshly lives.

There is an additional lesson regarding the unusual curse that Jehovah placed on the Amalekites. It was unusual in that it specified their future destruction. Their destruction was not accomplished until the days of King Saul and King David. In this longer view of Amalek, we see an application to Satan.

Most scholars regard the origin of the name Amalek to be unknown, although some Jewish rabbinical interpretations define it as “a people who lick (blood).”⁴ This is not a very complimentary name, but it seems consistent with Jewish tradition, that Amalek represents “pure evil.”⁵ The application to Satan is clear.

“In regard to the name Amalek, *malek* means ‘king’ in the Hebrew. With the addition of the letter ‘a,’ the meaning becomes ‘a false king.’ It is like the names Christ and Antichrist, the true Christ and the false Christ, respectively. Hence the contrast is between a true king and a false, opposing, or pseudo king. Satan has been allowed to be the god of this world by usurpation — not by divine sanction, but by divine permission — for a specified time period.”⁶

As a type of Satan, the attack on the weakest of the Israelites demonstrates Satan’s tactics against the consecrated. He focuses on those who are weak in faith and doctrine. Even with our Lord Jesus, Satan waited until near the end of Jesus’ 40 days in the wilderness, thinking the time without food would weaken his resolve. He is the “roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Amalek came upon Israel after learning of their strife and thirst.⁷



Jesus resisted the adversary, even after 40 days of fasting.

Satan is doomed for destruction at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:10). His penultimate defeat at the end of the Gospel age is perhaps suggested by the ending of Israel’s battle with Amalek at the “going down of the sun,” the setting of the Sun of the Gospel Age.

EACH VICTORY TO BE CELEBRATED

Each victory of our Christian walk may be celebrated as a victory from Jehovah. The altar that Moses built by God’s instruction was a memorial of the victory over Amalek at the hands of Jehovah. The name given to the altar, “Jehovah is my banner,” suggests the appropriateness of remembering **each victory** over the flesh that Jehovah gives us. This deeply engrains our relationship with God and with Jesus with the confidence that they love us and exceedingly care about our welfare. This deepened faith will serve us well in all future encounters with the flesh and sin.

— Br. David Stein

(1) This account skips two other stops that Israel made in their wilderness trek, namely Dophkah and Alush. “They journeyed from the wilderness of Sin and encamped in Dophkah. And they journeyed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. And they journeyed from Alush, and encamped in Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink” (Numbers 33:12-14). The place name *Dophkah* means “a knocking.” The meaning of *Alush* is “a mingling together” or “a crowd of men.”

(2) This book is one of many references to books and writings that have been lost to history.

(3) In order to serve as a priest, a Levite must be 30 years old (Numbers 4:3). Also, Jesus himself did not begin his ministry until he was 30 years old and would be accepted as a man of the Jews (Luke 3:23).

(4) Wikipedia, “Amalek.”

(5) <https://hebrew4christians.com/Scripture/Parashah/Summaries/Tetzaveh/Amalek/amalek.html>

(6) Frank Shallieu, *The Book of Exodus* (1989-1991 Study), page 99.

(7) A. Cohen, *The Five Books of Moses*, Soncino Press, London (1983).

Summer and Winter

A Meaning to the Seasons

Ezra and Nehemiah served about 80 to 100 years after the return of Israel from Babylon. Their work was to refurbish the Temple at Jerusalem, and restore the walls of the city.

Br. Ryan Hangs observed that **Nehemiah 6:15**, and **Ezra 6:15**, refer to the completion of the Wall of Jerusalem, and of the Temple at Jerusalem, respectively. The Wall of Jerusalem in Revelation measured 144 cubits, and is commonly seen as a picture of the Church in glory (Revelation 21:17). From this we gather that Nehemiah completing the walls of Jerusalem is a picture of the same.



Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem

The Temple also represents the Church, “Ye ... as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5). So that the completed work of Ezra would also picture the time when the Church is complete in glory.

Therefore, when the restorative work of these two Godly men was completed, in both cases we have pictures that take us to the completion of the Church in glory, at the end of the Gospel Age Harvest.

A DISTINCTION?

However, Br. Hangs wondered if there might be some contrast in the meaning of each picture. Are they merely repetitive, or may there be a subtle distinction?

He observed that **Nehemiah** 6:15 refers to the 6th month, which is the end of summer. And that **Ezra** 6:15 refers to the 12th month, which is the end of winter. If the harvest is the summer time, then the Church is completed at the end of summer — and as per Matthew 24:20, the Great Company will be remain for a time, into the winter period, before they are all gathered up.

A familiar text that speaks of this difference in completing the Church, and the Great Company, is Jeremiah 8:20. “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” This is widely considered to reflect the thoughts of the Great Company class after the Church has been taken — the Elisha class remaining after the Elijah class has gone.

Perhaps this contrast is reflected also in a comparison of **Nehemiah**’s completed work, with **Ezra**’s completed work. **Nehemiah**, completing of the walls of Jerusalem at the end of the summer, takes us to the completion of the Church. But **Ezra**, completing the Temple at the end of the winter, takes us to the completion of the Great Company class as well.

It may be an intended contrast. However, we seem to need some further point in the contrast, a second witness, that we are following the meaning correctly. There is an additional observation that is helpful here.

THE LEVITES

In the book of **Nehemiah**, the subject of the wall is referred to also in chapter 12. “At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgiving, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps” (Nehemiah 12:27). Here the Levites are still in need of gathering, after the Church (the wall) is complete.

The Levites, in the time of the Kingdom, are often considered to represent the Great Company class. An example of this is the passage in Numbers 8:6-19. Here the Levites were to first wash their garments, and then be given to the priesthood, “to Aaron and to his sons” (verse 19), to assist the priests in their duties. This reminds us of Revelation 7:14, which speaks of the Great Company class having “washed their robes” in order to be useful servants in glory, to assist the Church class.

At the dedication of the walls in **Nehemiah**, the Levites are yet to be gathered together — picturing the final gathering of the Great Company class, after the Church is complete. Then they can participate, “to keep the dedication with gladness” (Nehemiah 12:27).

This gathering of the Levites reminds us of **Esther** 2:19. Following Esther (the Church) going into the presence of the king (Jesus), in Esther 2:16, verse 19 then says, “the virgins were gathered together the second time.” This gathering of the virgins refers to the gathering of the Great Company, after the Bride class is in glory.

In **Ezra**, it is different. When the Temple was restored and ready, then Ezra 6:18-20 says: “They set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem ... (20) For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure.”

By this time, at the end of winter, both classes are in glory. The priests represent the Church, and the Levites represent the Great Company.

— *From Correspondence with Br. Ryan Hangs*

Financial Report

5,376.22	Balance January 1, 2019
1,885.74	Donations
-2,728.12	Expenses
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4,533.84	Balance January 1, 2020
623	Mail subscribers, Email subscribers 356