

Knowledge Shall Be Increased

***“Thou, O Daniel,
shut up the words,
and seal the book,
even to the time of
the end: many
shall run to and
fro, and knowledge
shall be
increased.”***

—Daniel 12:4

THE PROPHET DANIEL HAD

been instructed by God to seal up the meaning and interpretation of the wonderful ‘end time’ visions and prophecies that God had given to him. These blessed truths, that had been received and recorded by the prophet so long ago, were to be hidden and sealed from the worldly wise and curious seekers of knowledge until the closing times of the present Gospel Age. In due time, however, God’s eternal purpose would be realized in the revealing of his timely message to watchers who would be on hand at the end of this age, to understand the meaning of Daniel’s prophecy.

Further to the above instructions which were given to the prophet, we read, “He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” (vs. 9) This closing up and sealing of the visions became a reality throughout the long

intervening centuries, until it's meaning was revealed to those who were on hand to receive it during the latter part of the nineteenth century. This revealing coincided with the promised return of our Lord, and the subsequent blessing to the people of God during the harvest period and closing years of this Gospel Age. Knowledge of the truth of God's eternal purpose was a glorious message to the 'watchers,' and the study of these scriptures has taken on added dimension to those who have meditated upon their true meaning and purpose.

God's wondrous grace and providence to the little flock of his watchers was further manifest to John the revelator. The final message to the church is recorded by him in the message to the Laodicean church. He writes, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20) Thus was the "meat in due season" made available to the watchers.—Matt. 24:45

THE TIME OF THE END

In the early period of the nineteenth century, in the years following the French Revolution, the Bible began to come into general use for the first time. Although there had been much accomplished by energetic reformers over two centuries earlier, during the period of the Protestant Reformation, the work was greatly enlarged upon as a result of the increased level of freedom among the people. Various truths, that had remained hidden in God's Word for centuries, were rediscovered and meditated upon by the common people in their own languages. Many new translations of the Bible began to appear, and

the printing press made its availability widespread to a variety of new readers. It was not until the nineteenth century that there was any large degree of freedom for private and independent study of the Bible, and this freedom was particularly operative in the grass roots society of colonial America.

There were many students and exponents of the Word of God who lived during this time, but one in particular was William Miller. He was instrumental in bringing revived attention to the prophecies that pertained to the Second Advent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the 'time of the end.' His preaching became very popular and great numbers of people professed to follow Miller's teachings along these prophetic lines. He was particularly interested in Biblical time prophecies which he believed pointed to the exact day and hour in which our Lord Jesus would return to earth. He established a specific date and then proclaimed it widely. The date he believed would fulfill his predictions was 1844. But Jesus did not come as expected at that time, and there was great disappointment experienced by many of those who were convinced that his teachings had been true.

Although Miller had learned much from his studies in the Bible, and had faithfully proclaimed them, he did not understand the real meaning and purpose of Christ's return. His teachings continued to include some of the truth-beclouding traditions that had been carried over from the Dark Ages. This included the belief that Jesus would suddenly appear in the sky, take up his followers to himself and then set the earth on fire, thus making an end of human experience.

DISAPPOINTMENT AND RENEWED INTEREST

Although there had been bitter disappointment among Miller's followers resulting from his failed predictions concerning the year 1844, there came a renewed vigor and fresh searching of the Scriptures for better and more accurate information. He had truly sparked interest in the approaching time of the end prophecies, and the promised return of our Lord Jesus. It was during this time that Pastor Charles Russell, a Congregationalist, began to search the Scriptures in an endeavor to discover new and important truths which would prove the meaning and purpose of Christ's return. As a conscientious young man he acknowledged that one of the most blessed truths that the Bible study group in Allegheny had learned from these studies was the real purpose of Christ's return. They had concluded that it was not for the destruction of the earth and of the unbelieving human family as previously thought. They began to realize that God's ultimate design for mankind was the setting up of a kingdom of truth and righteousness over the whole earth, for the purpose of bringing the poor groaning creation back to relationship with God.

He came to understand that it was God's purpose to restore the human race to perfection as it was originally enjoyed by Adam, and he helped to clarify the doctrine of the ransom. It was discerned that the word ransom really implies a substitution, and that Jesus gave his perfect humanity as a substitute for the perfect life of Adam as Paul had said: "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (I Tim. 2:6) This, in turn, meant that Jesus could not be resurrected as a man. Therefore, his

Second Presence would not be as a man, but as a glorious Divine being invisible to human eyes.

Further light also revealed the hope of a great salvation which was being offered to the followers of Jesus during this present Gospel Age. The apostle explained this to the Corinthian brethren. "For he says, In a Season acceptable, I listened to thee, and in a Day of Salvation I assisted thee. Behold! now is a well-accepted Season; behold! now is a Day of salvation." (II Cor. 6:2, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) It was further seen that the heavenly hope implied much more than merely being saved out of a destroyed earth. It was now discerned that those who strive to make their "calling and election" sure, will receive an abundant entrance into the heavenly phase of Christ's kingdom. (II Pet. 1:10,11) They will reign with our Lord for a thousand years and share in the grand work of restoring the human family to life on the earth.—Rev. 20:4

THE DUE TIME

While it was seen that Christ would be engaged in the future work of restoration during the administration of his kingdom (Acts 3:19-21), the revealing of this precious truth also helped to bring into proper focus other important doctrines in the Bible. The Scriptures identify these wonderful truths as the "meat in due season" (Matt. 24:45), and are therefore especially applicable to those who are on hand during the closing years of this Gospel Age. Since our Lord's Second Presence, his people, the watchers, have now come to understand "present truth." (II Pet. 1:12) God's equitable plan of restoration and reconciliation will be made known to the whole

groaning creation under the administration of Christ's thousand-year kingdom.

The idea of human restoration on earth had previously been suggested by some, but this great truth had never been clearly understood by the Lord's people until the end time of this age. When it had thus been realized, the 'meat in due season' brought harmony to the entire Word of God, and those who understood it could no longer keep it secret.

During this time, God had providentially raised up his servant, Bro. Russell, and the other watchers, to make known these unlocked secrets of the Word of Truth. Enthused with love for the Lord, he had the message printed and delivered to churches throughout the United States as "Food for Thinking Christians." Thus the meat in due season began to be proclaimed far and wide throughout the country. As time went on, the hearts of thousands were caused to rejoice. Whether accepted or rejected, the importance of this harvest message was recognized by many. The fact that all mankind were to have an opportunity to be restored to human perfection was almost too good to be true.

CHRIST'S PRESENCE RECOGNIZED

As we give closer consideration to these facts, and realize that a group of faithful watchers were given meat in due season, the implication is that the Lord's Second Presence [Greek, *parousia*], must have also then begun, for this was to be one of the first evidences of his return. The fact of Christ's presence was manifest to the watchers by the revealing of precious truth concerning the long-hidden Divine plan of the ages.

The presence of Christ has not yet been made known to the world in general. The appreciation of this blessing will ultimately be manifest to all mankind. Paul said, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing [Greek, *epiphania*—manifestation] of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13) The watchers have appreciated the meaning of this text as the manifestation of present Truth to them in the closing years of this present Gospel Age.

The Prophet Isaiah, writing under inspiration of the Holy Spirit many centuries ago, points to the glorious and blessed time when God's purpose for his earthly creation will be made known. He writes, "The LORD hath made bare [uncovered] his holy arm [Christ] in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."—Isa. 52:10

The unhampered reign of sin, violence, and evil has always been a severe test upon the people of God, but in our modern-day world God continues to allow his name and eternal purpose to be blasphemed while his own people suffer. The apostle's assurance was that this would not continue forever, that Christ would be revealed in power and great glory to the world. In the exercise of his great power, all evil will be destroyed, and the willingly obedient will be brought back to righteousness.

The presence of Christ will be revealed to the world under severe circumstances. Daniel described the end of this age as a "time of trouble." "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there

was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” (Dan. 12:1) We are witnesses to the increasing level of violence that was foretold to precede the setting up of Christ’s kingdom on earth.

A DAY OF JUDGMENT

Peter describes this time as a “day of judgment” over an ungodly world. He also uses fire as a symbol, even as Paul had done. “The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” (II Pet. 3:7) ‘Fire’ is used to describe the destruction of evil, but Peter adds, “Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (vs. 8) He then assures us that God is longsuffering. “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”—vs. 9

Thus we see that Christ will be revealed to the world in what is symbolically described as “flaming fire.” This fire points to God’s zeal against Satan’s unrighteous rule over the affairs of earth. “If, indeed, our glad tidings be veiled, they have been veiled to those who are perishing; to those unbelievers, whose minds the God of this age blinded, in order that they might not see clearly the effulgence of the glad tidings of the glory of the Anointed one, who is the likeness of God.”—II Cor. 4:3,4, *WED*

THE FIRE OF GOD'S JEALOUSY

The Prophet Zephaniah adds dimension to the eternal purpose of God in connection with the human family. "Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." (Zeph. 3:8) Although 'fire' is used to describe the destruction of all unrighteousness, Zephaniah explains the ultimate outcome of the fire of God's jealousy. He adds, "Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent."—vs. 9

When the present order of selfishness and unrighteousness has been taken away, the whole human creation will be lifted up, and will learn the meaning and purpose of our Lord's return and presence. The Apostle Paul wrote, "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [Greek, *apokalupsis*] from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."—II Thess. 1:7,8

Jesus tells about the work that will be done in the kingdom. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come,

ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”—Matt. 25:31-34

Matthew's account describes the time when our Lord, together with his glorified church, will reign over the nations. The separating and judging work will require the entire Millennial Age (the 1,000 years) to accomplish. The whole world will thus be tested and dealt with in a righteous manner, and all will be given opportunity to be brought to a full and clear knowledge of the Truth. Those who have the Lord's spirit, and who are meek, teachable, and willing to be led in the way of Truth, are described as sheep. These, we believe, will be the majority, and will 'inherit the kingdom'—eternal human life. Others, who are self-willed, stubborn, possessing goatlike characteristics, and who display no desire to live righteously, will be deemed unworthy of life, and die the Second Death—eternal destruction.

THE WHOLE CREATION WAITS

The human family will be uplifted and blessed by the administration of Christ's kingdom, which is now near at hand. "The anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves,

waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”—Rom. 8:19-23, *New American Standard Version*

Let us rejoice that while as yet Christ’s presence is known only by the few, we know that in God’s due time it will also be manifested to the whole world of mankind, including the countless numbers of those who yet wait in their graves. “It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; . . . we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salva-tion.”—Isa. 25:9

