

Scripture Truth



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David and Goliath
A word to evangelists

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After when? The meaning of Revelation 4:1
Joseph Part 2: from prison to pre-eminence

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Walking by faith, not sight

Seldom since Constantine's edict of 313 AD legalising Christianity has 2 Corinthians 5:7 been more applicable, and more needed, than it is today, and to none more than to Christian young people at school, being relentlessly pounded by propaganda justifying and promoting lifestyles diametrically opposed to God's word. Indeed we all live in a world where "God is not in all their thoughts," and where questioning of the associated "modern lifestyles" is condemned as "abhorrent". The stony silence that often greets the confession of gospel Christianity can be unnerving.

But then we recollect this text, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." Paul wrote of the temptations to despair that he felt daily when "his" gospel was derided by unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:1,7 – 10). But against that he set the hope of resurrection. And indeed there will come a day when we will marvel at the shortness of our time of trial on earth and in these mortal bodies, compared with the eternity we are spending with the Saviour who gave His life for us. We will marvel at the poverty of man's thoughts, and at the weakness of his arguments against the Bible and the gospel, compared with the reality we are experiencing round the very throne of God.

We are already a resurrection people! (2 Corinthians 5:16-18) "We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen." The resurrection facts are the facts that made Paul walk by faith, not sight! And the same facts should propel our footsteps onward and upwards too.

Hallelujah!

THEO BALDERSTON

David and Goliath

Ian Britton

This fine article about the best-known fight in the Old Testament provides valuable insights into the contest between our Lord and Satan.

The story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17) might be the best-known story in the Old Testament, but it is not a guide to “slaying our own Goliaths,” as some would have it! As we shall see, this is not a story about how we can be the heroes in our own battles. It’s about how we need a champion to fight on our behalf! Some characteristics of Goliath teach us things about Satan, and some qualities of David point us towards Christ. As with all Bible “pictures” or “types” of the Lord Jesus, we must be careful not to press every detail of the original story into service. Nevertheless, used judiciously, remarkable lessons emerge from this story.

First a little bit of geography. Bethlehem, the home town of Jesse, David’s father, is about five or six miles south of Jerusalem. The valley of Elah, where the battle was fought, is about fifteen to twenty miles to the west, so about a day’s walk away, and much closer to the five main cities of the Philistines (cp. 1 Samuel 6:17). The Philistines had been fighting with Israel since the days of Joshua (Joshua 13:2-6), though there is mention of them as far back as Genesis 21:32.

So the enmity was of very long standing. On this occasion the battle was focussed on one individual, a giant called Goliath. It wasn’t unknown for disputes to be resolved by a fight between individual champions from each side, rather than by a full, pitched battle. The Philistines had picked for themselves a man over ten feet tall! His body was fully sheathed in a bronze coat of mail weighing around forty-five kilograms; his iron spearhead alone weighed about seven kilograms. He was clearly very big and very scary. Unsurprisingly, the Israelites were “dismayed and greatly afraid,” king Saul included (1 Samuel 17:11, NKJV), though he had been described elsewhere as being head and shoulders above the rest of Israel! (10:23)

And we, too, have a big, scary enemy who is far too powerful for ordinary men and women to defeat. His name is Satan, the enemy of God and of the entire human race; and he wishes to spoil anything and anyone that might bring honour and pleasure to God. In Revelation 9:11 Satan is called Abaddon or Apollyon, Hebrew and Greek words that both mean “destruction”.

It has been accurately said that God cares about human beings as individuals and loves us as such, but Satan sees people simply as cannon-fodder in his battle against God. Our sin, and the death that results from sin, give Satan a huge weapon to wield over us. But, as Hebrews 2:14 & 15 describe it, “[Christ] Himself... through death... destroy[ed] him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and release[d] those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Not only was Goliath frightening in appearance, he was also a proud, arrogant, and a violent man. He was proud of his abilities, and entirely confident of winning in any one-to-one combat. We know that pride is one of the chief characteristics of the devil – see Isaiah 14, where Isaiah moves seamlessly from describing the proud king of Babylon to depicting the devil himself as “Lucifer, son of the morning” who “said in his heart” that he would “exalt [his] throne above the stars of God,” and become like the Most High.” But he “shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit” (Isaiah 14:12-15).

Goliath’s arrogance was displayed in his attitude to David (1 Samuel 17:42); Satan’s arrogance was displayed in his offering to Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if the Lord would fall down and worship him. Offering the Maker of heaven and earth His own creation! If Satan can behave like that towards Christ, we can be pretty sure of the contempt in which he holds mere men and women!

Goliath’s violence was displayed in the blood-curdling threats with which he greeted David (17:44). Satan specialises in violence as well. On multiple occasions during the Lord’s life, he stirred up people to try and kill Him (e.g., Luke 4:28-30; John 8:59). The book of Revelation has some chilling descriptions of the violence that Satan and his accomplices will stir up in the future. It is not unreasonable to view the acts of violent oppressors and warlords today as being ultimately inspired by the devil. Consider Hitler.

We also see the enemy – Goliath and the Philistines – usurping power in what should have been the domain of God and His people, namely, in part of the land that God gave to Israel. Similarly, God had made both the world and the

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battle against God*

*Jehovah says, "I have seen the oppression
of My people. I know their sorrows.
So I have come down to deliver them."*

human race, that He placed in the world to care for it. But Satan came along in the Garden of Eden, corrupted the human race, and thereby brought God's curse on the physical world as well. Ever since then Satan has acted as the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) and the "god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan is a usurper in God's world, but one with a great deal of power, certainly much more than mere mortals can wield.

If there is a terrifying, boastful enemy and a frightened and cowering people, then the scene is set for a hero to come to the rescue! And just when we might have thought Israel's prospect to be hopeless, we are introduced to David. At first glance, he was an unlikely match for the giant Goliath. He was the youngest of eight brothers, a harp player, and the custodian of a small number of his father's sheep (1 Samuel 17:28) – not a very promising military champion! When Isaac Watts first published his hymn, "When I survey the wondrous cross," the second line of the first verse read, "Where the young Prince of Glory died." It was changed to avoid any apparent allusion to the recent death of the young heir to Queen Anne's throne, but the original did highlight the relative youthfulness of Jesus when He gave His life on the cross.

Notice that Goliath didn't just issue his challenge once; he repeated it twice a day for forty days (17:16). And our antagonist, Satan, is called "the serpent of old" in Revelation 20:2. But David was sent on an errand by his father to check on the welfare of his brothers, a mission he willingly undertook. It isn't difficult to see the parallels with the Lord Jesus who, at the request of His Father came to this world, initially to His own people, the Jews.

When David arrived at Elah he was able to hear first-hand the threats of Goliath. I am reminded of that lovely passage in Exodus 3:7,8, where Jehovah says, "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them." "I have seen," "I have heard," "I know," "I have come down." What a lovely set of statements, and how perfectly demonstrated by the Lord Jesus. In heaven He saw, heard, and knew our predicament, but

then He came down to earth. Like David, He saw and heard first-hand what the situation was and was prepared to do what was necessary to be a deliverer. It is rather ironic to hear young David reassuring the towering king Saul that everything will be fine, there is no need for fear, and that he, David, will go and fight the giant! (1 Samuel 17:33-37) Saul was not initially convinced but doesn't seem to have needed too much persuasion! Perhaps he was just pleased that he himself didn't have to go and fight! Refusing Saul's offer of armour and sword, David selected the unusual weapons of a staff, or stick, a sling and five stones, and set out to meet Goliath.,

Here, then, we have a picture of Christ undertaking to meet our enemy on our behalf. You may be familiar with the lines from Charles Gabriel's hymn that say,

“He took my sins and my sorrows,
He made them His very own.
He bore the burden to Calvary
and suffered and died alone.”

Those words are based on Isaiah 53, which describes, in advance, how Christ would take our guilt upon Himself, and take our place on the cross and in death.

The first thing that catches my attention regarding the actual encounter of David with Goliath is the way that David “hurried and ran” to meet the enemy (17:48). To my mind this echoes the readiness of the Lord Jesus to confront Satan for us. I'm not forgetting that in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed, “If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Matthew 26:39). Or the horror that the Lord felt when He contemplated what He was about to suffer. But nevertheless I see a willingness to meet the foe, and a readiness to stand in our place to save us. It is also relevant that David's fight with Goliath was down in the valley, in this case the literal Valley of Elah. When the Lord Jesus went to meet the foe, it was in, not just “the valley of the shadow of death” that Psalm 23 speaks about, but the valley of death itself.

David needed just one stone – perfectly aimed and totally effective – to fell Goliath (1 Samuel 17:48f). Hebrews 9:28 says, in contrast to the huge number of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, “Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.” Since David was not carrying a sword of his own, he took the big, heavy sword that was still lying in Goliath's sheath, and used that to cut off the giant's head. So Goliath was despatched using his own weapon! A hymn by Samuel Whitelock Gandy (1776–1851) contains the lines,

“By weakness and defeat,
He won the meed and crown.
Trod all our foes beneath His feet,
by being trodden down.
He Satan’s power laid low,
made sin, He sin o’erthrew.
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
and death by dying slew.”

As I have already noted, Satan’s great weapon against us is death. And it was by using this weapon that Jesus defeated Satan! It was by going, voluntarily, into death that Jesus took away our sins, destroyed the power of death that came from those sins, and rose triumphant, ready to give new life to those who will put their faith in Him. This was how Satan was defeated.

Goliath had promised that, if he was defeated, the Philistines would serve the Israelites (1 Samuel 17:9). Satan always has been a liar and a deceiver (cp. John 8:44; Revelation 12:9), so it should come as no surprise that the Philistines didn’t keep their side of the bargain! However, they were routed by Israel in a great victory as they ran away in terror after the death of their supposedly invincible champion. They still stuck around as a nation for some generations after this, and continued to be a thorn in the Israelites’ side. And we know that although Satan was thoroughly routed at Calvary, he has not just disappeared from the scene. He is still the enemy and accuser of God’s people today, and will remain active until his final judgement at the end of time (Revelation 20:7,10). But since Calvary Satan has been a fundamentally defeated foe, and we should rejoice in the great victory that Christ has won on our behalf; and look to Him to provide the strength for us to stand against the efforts of the enemy while He leaves us in this world.

Lord Jesus, we rejoice in the fact that although You “fought the fight alone”, Your conquest is ours. We had no hope of prevailing against Satan and no means of escape, so You came to our rescue. Keep us from thinking we can fight our own battles in our own strength, and teach us to keep looking to You, even as we do have to join the fight that will keep raging until Your return, Amen.

[Note. John Middleton of Hale, Merseyside (1578–1623), was measured to be 9 feet three inches tall. Goliath was a giant, but not out of the range of proven heights. He was a historical figure, not a fairy-tale giant. Ed.]

A word to evangelists

Charles Henry Mackintosh

This is not an evangelistic magazine, but it has erred under this editorship by too seldom encouraging believers to evangelize. It has tended to fall under the robust remonstrance of this first chapter of Mackintosh's Papers on Evangelization. The chapter also sheds an less-than-flattering light on those CHM was associated with.

I hope it may not be thought presumptuous of me to offer some advice and encouragement to all who participate, or have ever participated in the blessed work of preaching *the gospel of the grace of God*. I am, to a degree, aware of the difficulties and discouragements that confront every evangelist, whatever form his¹ evangelism may take and whatever his degree of gift for the work; and it is my heart's desire to hold up the hands and cheer the hearts of all who may be in danger of falling under the depressing power of these things. I increasingly feel the importance of an earnest and fervent gospel witness everywhere; and I greatly dread any falling off in this. We are imperatively called to "do the work of an evangelist," and not be moved from that work by any arguments or considerations whatsoever.

No-one should imagine that, by writing on this subject, I mean to detract in any way from the value of teaching or exhorting believers. Not at all. "These things you ought to have done, without leaving the other undone." I am not interested in comparing the work of the evangelist with that of the teacher, or exalting the former at the expense of the latter. Each has its own proper place and importance.

But is there not a danger, on the other hand, of the evangelist abandoning his own precious work in order to give himself to the work of teaching and lecturing? Is there not a danger of the evangelist becoming merged in the teacher? I fear there is; and this fear has moved me to write these few lines. I observe, with deep concern, that some who were once known amongst

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preacher of the gospel*

us as earnest and eminently successful evangelists are now almost wholly abandoning their work and becoming teachers and lecturers.

This is deplorable. *We really need evangelists.* A true evangelist is almost as great a rarity as a true pastor. Alas! how rare are both! The two are closely connected. The evangelist gathers the sheep; the pastor feeds and cares for them. The work of each lies very near the heart of Christ — the Divine Evangelist and Pastor; but it is with the former we are concerned here — to encourage him in his work, and to warn him against the temptation to turn aside from it. We cannot afford to lose a single ambassador just now, or to have a single preacher silent.

I am perfectly aware of the fact that there is in some quarters a strong tendency to throw cold water upon the work of evangelization. There is a sad lack of sympathy with the preacher of the gospel; and, as a necessary consequence, of active co-operation with him in his work. Further, there is a mode of speaking of gospel-preaching which seems to betray absence of sympathy with the heart of Him who wept over impenitent sinners, and who could say, at the very opening of His blessed ministry, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor” (Isaiah. 61; Luke 4:18ff). And again, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.” (Mark 1:38)

Our blessed Lord was a tireless preacher of the gospel, and everyone who is filled with His mind and spirit will take a lively interest in the work of all those who are seeking, however weakly, to do the same. This interest in evangelism will be displayed, not only by earnest prayer for the blessing of God upon the work, but also by diligent and persevering efforts to get immortal souls under the sound of the gospel.

This is the way to help the evangelist, and this way lies open to every member of the church of God — man, woman, or child. In this way all can help forward the glorious work of evangelization. If each member of the assembly were to work diligently and prayerfully in this way, how different would it be with the Lord’s dear servants who are seeking to make known the unsearchable riches of Christ!

*Who was the first herald of salvation?
The LORD God Himself, in the garden of Eden*

But, sadly, it is often otherwise. How often we hear even those who have some reputation for intelligence and spirituality saying, when referring to meetings for gospel testimony, “Oh, I am not going there; it is only the gospel.” Think of that! “Only the gospel”! Put into other words, they might as well say, “It is only the heart of God — only the precious blood of Christ — only the glorious record of the Holy Spirit”!

This would be putting the thing plainly. Nothing is more sad than to hear professing Christians speak in this way. It proves too clearly that their souls are very far away from the heart of Jesus. We have invariably found that those who think and speak dismissively of the work of the evangelist are persons of very little spirituality; whereas, on the other hand, the most devoted, the most true-hearted, the best-taught saints of God, are always sure to take a deep interest in that work. How could it be otherwise? Does not the voice of Holy Scripture bear the clearest testimony to the fact of the interest of the Trinity in the work of the gospel? Most assuredly it does.

Who first preached the gospel? Who was the first herald of salvation? Who first announced the good news of the bruised Seed of the woman? The LORD God Himself, in the garden of Eden. This is a telling fact. And further, let us ask, who was the most earnest, laborious, and faithful preacher that ever trod this earth? The Son of God. And who has been preaching the gospel for the last eighteen centuries? The Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven.

*Who has been preaching the gospel
for the last eighteen centuries?
The Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven*

And so we find the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost all actually engaged in the work of evangelization; and if this is so, who are we to dare to belittle such a work? On the contrary, rather may our whole moral being instead be stirred by the power of the Spirit of God, so that we are able to add our fervent and deep Amens to those priceless words of inspiration, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:15)

On the other hand someone who has been engaged in the work of preaching the gospel might be reading these words, someone who is beginning to feel rather discouraged. Someone who has perhaps been called to preach in the same place for years, and feels burdened by the prospect of having to address the same audience, on the same subject, week after week, month after month, year after year. He may feel at a loss for something new, something fresh, some variety. He may sigh for some new place to evangelise, where the subjects which are familiar to him will be new to the people. Or, if this cannot be, he may feel led to substitute lectures and expositions for the fervent pointed, earnest preaching of the gospel.

If the previous paragraph has at all captured any readers’ feelings about their evangelism, we think it will greatly help him in his work to bear in mind that the one great theme of the true evangelist’s heart is Christ. The evangelist’s only power to unfold that theme is the Holy Ghost. The person to whom that theme is to be unfolded is a poor, lost sinner. Now, Christ is always new and fresh to the believer’s heart; the power of the Holy Ghost is always available and fresh; the soul’s condition and destiny ever intensely concerning.²

Furthermore, the evangelist needs to bear in mind, on every fresh occasion of rising to preach, that his unconverted hearers are, at heart, ignorant of the gospel, and so he should preach as though it were the first time they had ever heard the message, and the first time he had ever delivered it. For, be it remembered, the preaching of the gospel, in God’s estimation of the phrase, is not a mere barren statement of evangelical doctrine — a certain form of words enunciated over and over again in wearisome routine. Far, very far from it. The gospel is really the large, loving heart of God welling up and flowing forth toward the poor lost sinner in streams of life and salvation. It is the presentation of the atoning death and glorious resurrection of the Son of God; and all this in the present energy, glow, and freshness of the Holy Ghost, from the exhaustless mine of Holy Scripture.

*the preacher's object is to bring the Saviour and
the sinner together*

Moreover, the one absorbing object of the preacher is to win souls for Christ, to the glory of God. For this he labours and pleads; for this he prays, weeps, and agonises; for this he thunders, appeals, and grapples with the heart and conscience of his hearer. His object is not to teach doctrines, though doctrines may be taught; his object is not to expound Scripture, though Scripture may be expounded. These things lie within the range of the teacher or lecturer; but let it never be forgotten, the preacher's object is to bring the Saviour and the sinner together — to win souls to Christ. May God by His Spirit keep these things constantly before our hearts, so that we may have a deeper concern for the glorious work of evangelization!

We would, in conclusion, merely add a word of exhortation in reference to the Lord's Day evening. We would, in all affection, say to our beloved and honoured fellow-labourers, Seek to give that one hour to the great business of the soul's salvation. There are 168 hours in the week, and, surely, one hour is the least we may devote to this momentous work. It so happens that during that interesting hour we can get the ear of our fellow-sinner.³ Oh, let us use it to pour in the sweet story of God's free love and of Christ's full salvation.

Endnotes

1 CHM had *public* proclamation of the gospel to mixed audiences in view in this article; and this editor concurs that general Scriptural indications are that this is a work for Christian men. [Ed.]

2 Mackintosh had "interesting" here. He probably meant, "demanding the personal involvement of the preacher", following a now-obsolete meaning of the word. [Ed.]

3 It seems from this that in the 1860s the British public was accustomed to evangelistic services taking place on Lord's day evenings. Now that such halcyon days are extinct, the timing of any evangelistic event will be a matter for prayerful decision. I included the paragraph because of its general exhortation. [Ed.]

From C.H. Mackintosh, Papers on Evangelization [c.1869], reprinted in Miscellaneous Writings of C.H.M (London, five volumes, Morrish, n.d.), vol.3, 1st chapter; also available online at <https://www.stempublishing.com/>. Language updated.

Galatians 6:6-18

Theo Balderston

This is the final part of a series that commenced in the January, 2021 issue.

Paul had been deeply alarmed to learn that converts of his in the province of Galatia were deserting the simple gospel of justification by faith alone that he had proclaimed to them. They were being seduced by a “gospel” which taught that to be saved they must also enter “Israel” by accepting circumcision (chapter 1). He had spent his Letter showing them the fundamental error of this, such that those who accepted this teaching and never recanted could not be saved (5:3,4), and he showed them (5:13-6:5) a way of walking watchfully in the power of the Spirit that was better than any slavish observance of the Law (5:16 – 6:4). Now (6:6ff) he concludes his letter with various practical points they needed to be reminded of.

Presumably the Galatians had been neglectful about supporting full-time labourers in the Word (6:6-8): Paul here warns them of the solemn consequences of making concessions to the flesh (in this case, spending on themselves what should have been gifted to others). In 6:10 he more generally exhorts them to seek out ways to “do good to all, especially those who are of the household of faith.” How salutary that the epistle, composed above all to insist on the truth of justification by faith alone, should, near its conclusion, emphasise “doing good”! For all that Paul denounced “good works” *when done as contributing to our salvation*, he regarded good works, in those claiming to rest for their salvation on Christ’s finished work alone, as fruit that is vital evidence of the Spirit truly indwelling them.

It seems that at the start of 6:11 Paul took the quill out of the hand of the amanuensis in order to emphasise some points belonging to the main subject of his letter. (Why his handwriting was so big is a question that admits of various explanations). In verses 12 and 13 he diagnoses the motivations of the erroneous teachers who were trying to persuade them to be circumcised. The error of these law-teachers would have been error however upright their conduct. Not until this point in the Letter does he inform his dear readers of the double-standards practised by these

false teachers (6:13); and that their teachers' main motivation for forcing circumcision on his readers was to impress some Judaizing leaders elsewhere with their zeal. "Boasting in your flesh" means "boasting in the fact that they have persuaded you to become circumcised".

Paul regarded these teachers as "of the world," and therefore as teachers to whom believers should not be in bondage (see 4:3). Note that here "world" embraces observant Jews as well as pagan gentiles. The Lord was crucified due to an unholy compact between the Jewish commonwealth and the gentile "world" as represented by Pilate. (Not that this at all sanctions anti-semitism!) Paul took his place, in relation to "the world", where "the world" had placed Christ – on a cross (6:14) The "not" is a traditional Jewish reading; the standard Hebrew text omits it. See Darby note [Ed.].. He regarded the "Judaisers," whose influence he was here combatting, as men of that "world". He was certainly not interested in any approbation from *them*!

Fifteen centuries, or so, of "Christendom" – that strange dominion exercised by a version of Christianity forcibly imposed by rulers on their subjects – produced a western world which nominally contradicted the view of "the world" that Paul expressed in 6:14. I can still just remember the time when many people thought they were Christians because they lived "in a Christian country." The Lord Himself foretold this "kingdom" in His parables of the great tree and the leaven (Matthew 13:31-33, etc.). But whether clothed in nominally Christian garb, or nakedly pagan, "the world" is still "the world." Now "the world" is again sinking into paganism. Do we stand, as regards this "world", where Paul stood in Galatians 6:14? 6:15. This verse explains why Paul boasts in nothing in this world apart from the cross of Christ. More broadly, it sums up the basis of the whole letter. Firstly, the believer is "in Christ Jesus." This phrase occurs six times in this letter (also 2:4; 3:14; 3:26, 28; 5:6). Note that the phrase is not "in Jesus Christ". "In Christ Jesus" speaks of being "in" Him where He is now – exalted, and at the right hand of God. It speaks of a resurrection world that we belong to, by faith, through Christ's finished work and His resurrection. And in that world circumcision has no place – it belongs to a this-worldly order of things. Indeed, neither does uncircumcision have a place there – consider Romans 2:25-27; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians

2:7; 5:6; Colossians 3:11. The point of Paul's letter was not to glorify the gentile character of his converts. It was written to emphasise to them that they belonged to a new creation. This or similar thoughts have occurred throughout the letter – 1:4 (though reading “present evil age”); 2:20; 3:27f; (via its opposite) 4:3; 4:26. In short: circumcision, like the entire Law, belongs to the present age, but his converts already belong to a new creation. This is his most fundamental reason for objecting to their being circumcised.

6:16. Paul extends “peace and mercy” to all who walk by “this rule” – namely, the “rule” whereby our manner of life is fashioned by the fact that we already belong to the new creation where Christ is everything.

He also extends “peace and mercy” to “the Israel of God.” Many interpret the second “and” of this verse as meaning “even”; they understand “the Israel of God” as meaning “the church”, and the entire verse as meaning that the church is the realisation of God's hopes for Israel. But, since in every other of his fifteen employments of the word, “Israel,” in his Letters Paul plainly means persons naturally descended from Jacob, it would be gratuitous to read a different meaning into his mention of Israel in this verse. Others consider that Paul uses this phrase particularly to refer to converted Jews in the church. But, having just written Galatians 3:28, Paul would not have ended his letter by distinguishing Jews as a separate group in the church. Nor can the idea be entertained that in this gospel age God has been gathering believers into two separate groups, one of them being the church where new creation obliterates all national distinctions, the other, being some “Israel of God” unmentioned in the rest of the New Testament.

Rather, in this writer's view, Paul must by this phrase have been expressing his hopes for his nation in a time still future, by pronouncing peace on them proleptically. In this way he is declaring briefly that, much as he has denounced Judaism *as practised in the church*, this was not to be taken to imply that he believed his nation to have permanently forfeited all the blessing so richly promised it in the Old Testament. This brief phrase is the counterpart in Galatians of Romans 9 – 11. God had not cast away His people (Romans 11:1). To the objection that not a word has been previously mentioned concerning the hopes of Israel in this letter, the

reply is that an earlier mention of these hopes in this letter would have been an unnecessary complication of his simple and urgent argument that by no means ought they to listen to those who wanted them circumcised. But this omission in the body of the Letter does not mean he had never mentioned these hopes to the Galatians previously. Indeed it seems highly unlikely that he would not have mentioned the hopes of Israel to them. Here, at the end of his letter, he briefly encompasses this aspect of the redemptive work of the cross for completeness' sake.

6:17. Paul, too, had marks in *his* flesh – the result of the many lashings and of other injuries suffered in the service of the gospel (cp. 2 Corinthians 11:23ff). They were ugly, disfiguring marks, testimonies to pain suffered on behalf of the gospel. Let no-one, therefore, think that his old-creation flesh had been spared pain for the sake of Christ and His cross! Many missionaries, who have spent their lives for Christ in some – to them – alien environment, bear such painful marks in their bodily health too, as do not a few indigenous believers of non-Christian lands, due to maltreatment by their fellow-countrymen.

6:18. In all his letters except Romans Paul desires that the Lord's grace be with them. It may have been a "Christianisation" of a common conclusion of ancient letters. But it cannot have been a mere formality. In Galatia, the sense of the Lord's ever-present grace was especially needed by those who had been so recently terrorised by a group of self-styled Christian Judaizers. We are often, rightly but painfully, conscious of the deficiencies in our Christian lives. This is needful. But alongside it we need, equally, the ever-present consciousness of the Lord's unfailing grace, that welcomes us to each new day, that accompanies us to our school or workplace where we face the worries of our work and where we have to uphold Christ in work and word before pagan colleagues or classmates; that enables us to meet the demands and anxieties of making a loving but uncompromisingly Christian home for children who may be exposed to the horrors of the secular school; and grace that enables us, if older, to use the days of our retirement fruitfully for Him.

Joseph

Part Two: from prison to pre-eminence

F.B. Hole

Hole's first [reprinted] article on Joseph appeared in the July, 2022 issue.

When he was about seventeen, Joseph had been granted two dreams prophetic of his future life (see Genesis 37). Chapter 40 records two other such dreams. They were not given to Joseph himself, yet in the providence of God they exercised a very distinct effect upon his future. Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker had both offended their lord. The nature of their offence is not stated, but bearing in mind the fact of Pharaoh being of an alien race and therefore likely to fear an attempt upon his life by poison, it is not surprising that the chief custodians of his drink and of his food had both fallen under suspicion. Pending a decision in the matter, they had been confined in the prison where Joseph also was detained due to the lies told by Potiphar's wife; and they were put in Joseph's charge (40:1-4; cp. 39:22). The first link in the divinely ordered chain of events was that Joseph should have been put in the place where the king's prisoners were detained (39:20). The second was that in due season these two men should be placed there too.

The third was that both men in one night should have peculiar dreams, yet marked by certain similarities, and that the effect on their minds should be such as to make their faces sad and attract the notice of Joseph. They felt that there must be a hidden meaning in their dreams and they desired an interpreter. Joseph offered to provide the divinely intended meaning of their dreams (40:5ff).

The butler told his dream. Its salient points were: (i) a vine that had three branches, which produced ripe grapes; (ii) that Pharaoh's cup was in the butler's hand so that he could press into it ripe grapes; and (iii) that the cup of grape juice passed into Pharaoh's hand. The interpretation was simple. Within three days Pharaoh would restore the butler to his place. Having declared this, Joseph very naturally asked the man to remember him when thus he was delivered, to the end that he [Joseph] might be taken out of prison.

Emboldened by the favourable interpretation of his colleague's dream, the baker told *his* dream (40:16f). Its salient points were: (i) that there were likewise three baskets of baked goods; (ii) that the baskets were on the baker's head; and (iii) that the baked goods were devoured by birds and never reached Pharaoh. Again the interpretation was simple. Within three days Pharaoh would lift up the baker's head, hanging him on a tree, so that the birds should devour his flesh. The baker's dream had an exactly opposite meaning to the butler's.

Events proved that Joseph's interpretations were given by God. Pharaoh's birthday was on the third day, and he acted as the dreams had indicated. Yet the chief butler, in his renewed prosperity, forgot about Joseph, and has become a standing monument of human ingratitude (40:23). Nevertheless, as we believe, the hand of God was over even this. Had the butler remembered Joseph, Joseph's deliverance from prison would have quickly happened – as the result of thankful and perhaps respectful human arrangement. But God intended to bring about Joseph's release by awakening the butler's memory in a far more striking way. And not merely to bring about Joseph's release, but also Joseph's exaltation. How God brought this to pass, chapter 41 reveals.

Again dreams enter into the story; this time Pharaoh's own. Pharaoh's dream was in duplicate. The general drift of both his dreams was the same, and the concurrence of both in one night was very impressive. The magicians and wise men of Egypt were helpless. Their evil trade depended upon their being able to prognosticate good things for the kings that they served (cp, I Kings 22:6f) – and obviously both Pharaoh's dreams (Genesis 41:1-7) portended some kind of evil.

In this predicament the memory of the chief butler revived and, remembering Joseph, he narrated to Pharaoh the wonderfully accurate way in which Joseph had interpreted both his dream and the chief baker's – no less than two years before (41:1). What a test those two years must have been for Joseph! No wonder it says of him in Psalm 105:19, "The word of the LORD tried him." The word of the LORD by his dreams had indicated his future glory, but how long he had to wait for it!

Now, however, his hour had struck. Desperately anxious to find out the meaning of his peculiar dreams, Pharaoh ordered Joseph to appear before

*God was revealing what He was about
to bring upon the land of Egypt*

him. Joseph's answer to Pharaoh's enquiry reveals his simple confidence in God. He disclaimed any power or wisdom in himself but declared that God would give an answer of peace (41:16). It is a mark of a true servant of God to say, "It is not in me." The same spirit we see in Paul, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Corinthians 3: 5).

Pharaoh, in recounting his dreams to Joseph, added one detail omitted in the earlier account. Having eaten the seven fat cattle, the seven lean ones were just as thin as they had been before. It is easy to see how this feature suited the interpretation which Joseph proceeded to give. The two dreams were but one in their significance, just as Joseph's two dreams had been one in their meaning.

Again the dreams were prophetic. God was revealing what He was about to bring upon the land of Egypt (41:25). First, seven years of very great abundance, but these to be followed by seven years of grievous dearth and famine, both depending upon the waters of the Nile. Moreover, the dream was doubled to Pharaoh that he might realize that the thing was determined beyond any hope of revocation, and God would shortly bring it to pass.

Joseph not only interpreted the dreams but he indicated to Pharaoh what should be done, since these things were impending. What was needed was the man of wisdom who should be entrusted with carrying them out. Joseph was really speaking on God's behalf and he indicated that, on the human side, all that was needed in the face of these acts of God, was A MAN (41:33).

As a ruler of men, Pharaoh had doubtless acquired a measure of discernment. and he at once saw in Joseph the man for this emergency. It was indeed the Spirit of God who was speaking and acting through Joseph, though Pharaoh, being an idolater, only thought of "the spirit of

the gods” (see Genesis 41:38, footnote). In result he straightway appointed Joseph as administrator of all Egypt with authority only second to his own. Once more, in verse 42, Joseph’s *hand* appears (see also 39:3,4,6,8,22). Its power and skill had been manifested in Potiphar’s house, in the ordinary affairs of life, and then, later, amid scenes of much humiliation, in the prison. Now, amid the splendour of the palace, the ring from the very hand of Pharaoh (doubtless carrying the great seal of the kingdom) was placed upon the hand of Joseph. Power of a practically autocratic nature was his. Step by step he had gone down into the valley of humiliation. Now at one mighty bound he had ascended from the prison up into power and glory.

The “typical” meaning of all this in relation to the Lord is very evident. In Philippians 2:5-8 we find detailed the downward steps of our blessed Lord, even to the death of the cross. But this is followed by a single, mighty, uplifting to the glory, where to Him every knee will have to bow. So, in Genesis 41:41-43, we see Joseph arrayed in fine linen, with a gold chain about his neck, in the second chariot of the kingdom; and “Bow the knee!” is the cry as he rides through the streets.

Moreover a new name is given to him, Zaphnath-paaneah, whose meanings are said to be “Revealer of secrets” in Hebrew, and, “Saviour of the world,” in Egyptian.¹ We may happily accept both, and see in this double meaning a further type of the One whom we adore. In Him both revelation and redemption have reached their climax and full accomplishment, to our eternal blessing. Then it was, while Joseph was thus separated from his brothers and exalted among the Gentiles, that a bride was given to him, and she was of Gentile stock. Two sons were born to him during the seven years of plenty before the years of famine came, and while he was employed in collecting and laying up the produce.

The names of the sons are significant. Manasseh means “Forgetting,” and Ephraim means “Fruitful.” The name of the elder was negative in its bearing: what Joseph could now forget was the callous rupturing of all his old family associations, as well as the toil and sorrow of his early years. The name of the younger had a more positive significance, commemorating the fruitfulness that was produced from Joseph’s former afflictions. And so it has been with our Lord Jesus, only in a far larger and more striking

“Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.”

way. His afflictions did not stop short of death itself, and out of His death springs eternal fruitfulness, as the Lord’s own words, in John 12: 24, declare. Moreover that fruitfulness at the present time is being produced mainly among the Gentiles, while His links with Israel as a nation are broken. In our chapter we see a typological forecasting of this great two-fold development. In Isaiah 49:6 (KJV, Darby Tr.) we have it prophetically announced: even if Israel were not² gathered, the Servant of the Lord would be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah, since the raising up of the tribes of Jacob was a small thing, and the Servant was to be a light to the Gentiles and God’s salvation to the ends of the earth. The historical fulfilment of both type and prophecy we find in the Acts of the Apostles.

The closing verses of Genesis 41 record the complete fulfilment of Pharaoh’s dream. The resultant famine was of exceptional severity, extending over the habitable earth. When the people cried to Pharaoh for relief, his reply was simple: “Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.” We are immediately reminded of the words spoken by the mother of our Lord on the occasion of His first miracle, “Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it” (John 2:5). Does a conscience-stricken sinner cry out today for salvation? The answer in three words is; “Go unto Jesus.” All God’s grace and bounty flows through Him.

The scene changes as we begin to read chapter 42, and we are carried back to Canaan, to Jacob and to Joseph’s brothers. Joseph was now highly exalted among the Gentiles. and acting as saviour of the world, and his brothers needed his bounty as much as anyone else. They had, however, by their own wicked actions, shattered all the links that once bound them

“Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it” (John 2:5).

to Joseph, and those links could not be rightly restored except by dealings severe and painful, yet calculated to work in them a real repentance. The terrible famine, whatever else it might do, was designed to play a part in bringing to pass that desirable end. All his brothers except Benjamin were dispatched by Jacob to buy corn in Egypt (42:1-3), and in result we begin to see the fulfilment of Joseph's dreams. Joseph was the governor, and the brothers bowed down before him with their faces to the earth. They did not know him, though he recognized *them*, and started at once to deal with them in such a way as to test them and arouse their consciences (42:6-8).

Accusing them of being spies, he drew forth from them the family details he wanted, including mention of Benjamin and of himself; for he was the one who "is not." How mistaken they were in this! They were eventually to discover that, on the contrary, Joseph "*is*," and that their very lives were in his hand. The careless world to-day acts as though Christ "is not". They have yet to learn that He is the Master of their lives, for He is the great "I AM." The men, however, were speaking the truth as far as they knew it, and their confession gave a good opportunity to put them to the test. Benjamin was a son of Rachel, as Joseph himself was, and therefore specially beloved by Jacob. Joseph would demand that Benjamin should be taken from his father's side, and until Benjamin was produced, one of them should be held as a hostage (42:8-24).

The point of this struck home to the brothers. They had robbed their father of Joseph, and now he is to be deprived of the younger son, on whom his affection was specially set. It stabbed their consciences into action, as we see in verses 21 and 22, and this was their first step in the right direction. Moreover it was the first indication to Joseph of a change taking place in them. He had spoken to them roughly, as indeed they deserved, and he understood their language, though they knew not the Egyptian dialect in which he spoke.

*The careless world to-day
acts as though Christ "is not".*

we may speak of Joseph as the man of the mighty hand and the tender heart

The effect upon Joseph of this first sign of repentance was very striking and beautiful. He turned from them and wept. They were evidently tears of thankfulness. Now we shall see, before we finish the story of Joseph, that no less than seven times is it recorded that he wept. Never once is it recorded that he wept for his own sorrows during the days of his affliction. Every occurrence was during the days of his glory, and was an expression of his love and interest in others. His tears were not of the merely sentimental kind, as verse 24 shows. He did not allow his deep feelings to hinder his further action, still of a severe nature, inasmuch as he had Simeon bound as a prisoner before their eyes. The workings of conscience, which lead to repentance, had only just begun and that work needed to be greatly deepened. Thus it is that God deals with us. He permits His hand of chastisement to be heavy upon us until the work is carried to a completion. Then afterward the blessing is reached.

We think, then, that we may speak of Joseph as the man of the mighty hand and the tender heart. The power of his hand is emphasized in the earlier part of his history: the tenderness of his heart in the later part. But in both he is a fitting type of the Lord Jesus, in whom power and grace are perfectly blended, though not expressed in just the same order. His grace came fully into manifestation at His first advent, and of that grace we have received abundantly. We must wait until His second advent for the full display of His power.

Endnotes

1 Josephus gives the former; Isidore of Seville the latter. Modern scholars seem less certain of either.

2 The “not” is a traditional Jewish reading; the standard Hebrew text omits it. See Darby note [Ed.].

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After when?

The meaning of Revelation 4:1

Theo Balderston

“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this” [better, “these things”] (NKJV).

The short answer to the question in the title is that the “things” referred to near the end of Revelation 4:1 will be “things” that happen after the epoch of the letters to the seven churches has closed. It is the task of this article to demonstrate this.

The dominant British protestant interpretation of Revelation until the nineteenth century, however, regarded not only the seven letters of chapters two and three, but also Revelation chapters six to eighteen as a “history in advance” of that epoch. Its doyen was Joseph Mede (1586 – 1639) in his *Key of the Revelation Searched and Demonstrated* (1627). For example, he connected the opening of the first seal (Revelation 6:1ff) to the initial going-forth of the gospel; the sixth trumpet (Revelation 9:13ff) to the protracted Turkish annexation of the Byzantine empire; and the sixth bowl (or, “vial”) of 16:12ff to the collapse of the Turkish empire, an event that in 1627 was still in the far future. One of the last, and most thorough, expositions of this “protestant” or “historical” interpretation was E.B. Elliott’s *Horae Apocalypticæ* (1844).¹ (Much of William Kelly’s *Lectures on Revelation* [1860], was designed to refute Elliott.)

But as time went on the main lines of the “historical interpretation” became sidelines of international politics. One could not keep adjusting this interpretation to include new international issues and new powers, without discrediting it as prophecy.

So, if the thesis that Revelation chapters six to eighteen foreshadow the Christian era were to be maintained, it would have to be on the basis of a much looser relationship between John’s visions and the actual history of that era. These visions would have to be treated as a sort of dramatic impression, rather than a detailed foretelling, of the Christian era. This is how the “idealist” interpretation seems to have emerged as the dominant evangelical interpretation of Revelation in the twentieth century.

But any attempt to apply chapters six to eighteen of Revelation to the Christian era, even if only in a rather general way, runs into certain serious problems. Firstly, only naturalistic interpretations can be allowed even of visions of supernatural events

in chapters eight and sixteen, since these interpretations have to respect the limits of natural disaster during the Christian era to date. For example Hendricksen (pp.161f)) interprets the first four “trumpet” judgments in Revelation 16 vaguely, as God’s judgments throughout the Christian era. Wilcock (pp. 88, 92) interprets them as disasters in this age that warn the ungodly.

In defence of this, so-called “idealist,” interpretation of Revelation it might be replied that the actualities of David’s deliverances were a lot more prosaic than as poetically portrayed in Psalm 18, and that therefore the interpretation of the trumpet and bowl judgments may legitimately “naturalise” the seemingly supernatural accounts in Revelation. But two points undermine such a defence. Firstly, the very fact that the first four “seal” judgments (but not the sixth) are all naturalistic in their description, in contrast to the first four “trumpet” and first four “bowl” judgments, argues that Revelation itself distinguishes between “naturalistic” and “super-naturalistic” judgments, and implies that both sorts will happen. Secondly, the similarity between the effect of the snapping of the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12ff) and the Lord’s words in Matthew 24:29ff raises the question whether His words are likewise to be deconstructed naturalistically.

“Idealists” end up with consistent vagueness (see examples above) in their attempt to apply Revelation chapters six to eighteen to the sweep of Christian history. But vagueness will not do. These seal, trumpet, and bowl judgements all serve as heralds of the judgmental coming of Christ: wars, and calamities that recur throughout human history, both before and after Pentecost, cannot serve as such heralds.

And there is certainly one glaring tension (to put it politely) between the suite of “seal”, “trumpet” and “bowl” judgments and actual Christian history. The visions start with war (6:4, 8). But Christian history started with over three centuries of public peace (*public peace* is to be distinguished from the ever-present threat of *persecution*). Such peace was without precedent in the pre-Christian centuries. The Roman peace was remarkable, but there is nothing in Revelation chapters six to eighteen that corresponds to it.

So much for the general “fit” between Revelation chapters six onwards and the

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actualities of Christian history. A particular difficulty arises in relation to the two beasts of chapters 13 and 14. Hendricksen explains the first beast as “the persecuting power of Satan operating in and through the nations of this world and their governments”, the second beast as “the false religions and philosophies of this world” (p.144); similarly Wilcock (pp. 122–128). The difficulty with this (very twentieth-century) interpretation is that, through most of Christian history till recently, most Christians have lived under professedly *Christian* governments. Neither of the above-mentioned commentators mentioned this. Their protestant predecessors would of course have had no difficulty in identifying the “second beast” with Roman Catholicism. But what about the first beast? Did the kings of medieval Christendom demand that their subjects worship *them*, and the devil (cp. 13:4)? They certainly persecuted Wycliffe and Huss, but in order to enforce *Roman-Catholic* worship.

Following this, a third, more general, point should be repeated here: the “idealist” interpretation exaggerates the exposure to state persecution of most Christians through most of the Christian era. The already-mentioned William Hendriksen wrote that “the immediate occasion of Revelation was the affliction to which the Church was subjected in the days of the apostle John” [because this] “is typical of the persecution which true believers must endure throughout the dispensation” (pp. 7–10). However the intensity of persecution of saints in Revelation far exceeds that experienced by most believers – up to the mid-twentieth century, at any rate. These three points – the compulsion upon “idealists” to find naturalistic interpretations of events which Revelation portrays as beyond nature, the impossibility of finding concrete correspondences between the specific “seal”, “trumpet” and “bowl” judgments and events peculiar to the Christian era, and the need to exaggerate the exposure of believers to state persecution throughout the Christian era – these three points rule out the interpretation of the second “after these things” of Revelation 4:1 as meaning “during the entire Christian epoch.”

In any case all attempts to fit the prophetic chapters of Revelation to the Christian era run up against the distinction in 1:19 and 4:1 between “the things that are” and “the things that shall be after these things.” Hendricksen (p. 58) connects the “things that are” to the seven churches throughout history, and “the things that shall be after these things” to “the events that would happen throughout the entire future...,” thus eroding the distinction between the two epochs evidently intended in 1:19. Revelation 4:1 certainly caused difficulties for the “historical school.” John Brown’s *Self-Interpreting Bible* (1778) simply ignores Revelation 4:1, and *Matthew Henry’s Bible* (this part composed in the early nineteenth century) confines itself to the platitude that only God can reveal the future.

Some “idealist” interpreters claim that John deployed an esoteric (i.e., secret)

understanding of “after these things” in 1:19 and 4:1 (second occurrence only!) wherein “after these things” actually meant “now”. One could understand this in relation to their understanding of *Daniel*, if there had been a suitable *meta tauta* (“after these things”) in Daniel (there isn’t), and if some first-century believers had held “inaugurated eschatology” views. But would this entail that when listeners in the seven churches heard *John’s* “after these things” they understood *him* to be using this phrase to mean “things that are already happening”? Why would John not have written “now” if that was what he meant? The problem of assuming that John was using esoteric language was mentioned in an earlier article.¹ Therefore I consider that John used “after these things” with its ordinary meaning in mind as encountered throughout the Septuagint (i.e., the ancient Greek version of the Old-Testament and Apocrypha), a translation that would ring in the ears of John’s readers, mainly ex-synagogue attenders.

Aided by a helpful concordance to the Septuagint, two translations of it, and two editions of the Greek text, I identified 107 occurrences of *meta tauta* (i.e., “after these things”) in the Septuagint, and found translations for 103 of these. In ten of these 103 occurrences no preceding events can be identified. In these cases *meta tauta* can be translated “in the future” or “later”. But there are only ten of them. In ninety-one occurrences antecedent events could readily be identified in the near context of the *meta tauta*. In these ninety-one the translation “after these things” is called for. And all the other occurrences of “after these things” in the book of Revelation itself support the inference that in 4:1 the phrase implies an antecedent event (7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1; 20:3). In fact so do all other occurrences of the phrase in the New Testament, except perhaps Acts 15:6.

An irrefutable example of “after these things” implying an antecedent event is Revelation 4:1 (1st occurrence). Surely no-one would wish to deny that the event antecedent to this “after these things” is the vision in which the Lord had just dictated the contents of the seven letters to John. It would be most unlikely, then, that the second “after these things” in the same verse is not also to be construed as implying some definite antecedent event (despite the many commentators and translations who prefer the vagueness of “later” or “in the future”). Why would John use “after these things” in one sense at the beginning of the verse and in a different sense at the end?

If the event antecedent to the first “after these things” in Revelation 4:1 was the *vision* John had just experienced of the Lord dictating the seven letters, what antecedent event(s) might be intended as precursors of “the things that must take place after these things” at the end of the same verse?” The answer is surely also obvious and close by in the text, namely, the actual *happenings* in the seven churches, as described in the seven letters. The twofold occurrence of *meta tauta*

in the verse is a careful, construction, balancing visions of happenings against actual happenings. It not just a clumsy sentence of John's!

Next, a further question arises, essential to the interpretation of Revelation. Are the "events antecedent" to the second "after these things" of 4:1 (i.e. the happenings in the seven churches) to be understood as *continuing* during this second "after these things" period, or as having *ceased* before it? This is to ask, "Will there still be churches answering to what is said of the seven churches in Revelation throughout the epoch of the visions from Revelation 6 onwards?" This was Hendricksen's view, and it is the view of the "idealist" interpretation of Revelation generally.

Analogy with the first "after these things" in 4:1 suggests not. John was not still hearing the dictation of the seven letters (chapters 2 & 3) while he was being summoned up into heaven to witness other visions! Analogy would therefore suggest that the happenings antecedent to the second "after these things" in 4:1 did not become contemporary with them either.

Indeed all other occurrences of "after these things" (*meta tauta*) in Revelation clearly mean that the "things preceding" have finished before the "after these things" event occurs. The same is true for the entire New Testament, except for the unclear Acts 15:6. It is only in the Septuagint that we meet up with occurrences of "after these things" where the antecedent events are still occurring during the "after these things" period. But I found only eight such events (Genesis 15:14; Exod. 3:20; Iesous [Joshua] 6:13; 24:6; 2 Reigns [2 Samuel] 10:1; 1 Supplements [Chronicles] 19:1; 2 Supplements [Chronicles] 20:35; 32:23). There are also ten occurrences in which it is unclear whether or not the antecedent events had ceased before the "after these things" period, and ten where the antecedent event is not mentioned. But there are seventy-five occurrences of "after these things" where the antecedent "things" had clearly ceased before the "after these things" period commenced. These seventy-five are therefore "the norm".

In summary: study of the occurrences of *meta tauta* ("after these things") in New Testament and Septuagint indicates that when this phrase occurs in these books there is normally an account of the antecedent events close by, and normally these antecedent events have already stopped happening. Applying this to second occurrence of *meta tauta* in Revelation 4: 1 suggests (1) that the "events preceding" were the manifold happenings in the seven churches, and (2) that these happenings will have ceased before the "things after these things" (i.e., the "things" from 6:1 on) commence. This is also how "after these things" would normally be understood in English – "after these things" is *not* the same as "during and after these things"! Admittedly the Septuagintal support for this interpretation is not one hundred percent, but it would be up to those who rejecting the inferences

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drawn here to come up with a very strong argument for rejecting both it and the near-one-hundred percent New-Testament evidence.

Finally, how is it that the happenings in the seven churches will have ceased before the onset of the events of 6:1 onwards? The “shortlys” and “quicklys” of the book of Revelation tell us. According to Revelation 1:1 and 22:6 these judgmental events will “shortly take place.” *And, equally*, the Lord is also coming “shortly / quickly” for the readers of the Book and their listeners, including ourselves if we have believed in Him (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20). The “shortlys” (or, “quicklys”) pertaining to the commencement of the judgements from chapter six onwards, and the “shortlys / quicklys” pertaining to the Lord’s coming, are surely to be treated as one and the same time-period, so that the Lord’s coming for believers of the present epoch will coincide with the abrupt start of the judgments described in chapters six to sixteen. The present is not the day of God’s judgments in the earth through which its inhabitants will learn righteousness (Isaiah 26:9). This is, in a unique sense, the day of His grace, the gospel day, the day in which the Lord did not come to judge the world, but to save it (John 12:47). The “after these things” of Revelation 1:19 and 4:1 (second occurrence) are the grim events spelled out in chapter six onwards, judgmental events foreign to the present time, events which will warn of the imminent glorious, judgmental coming of the Lord with the sharp sword going out of His mouth (19:11ff). During this present gospel era the “after-these-things” epoch, as described in Revelation 6:1 onwards, is always “quickly” about to come to pass.

Many will wonder at the attention paid here to the precise meaning of Revelation 4:1. But if our greatest desire is to see the Lord’s face, these things will matter.

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My heart is fixed

My heart is fixed, eternal God,
fixed on Thee;
and my eternal choice is made:
Christ for me!
He is my Prophet, Priest, and King,
who did for me salvation bring,
and while I've breath I mean to sing,
Christ for me!

In Him I see the Godhead shine –
Christ for me!
He is the Majesty divine –
Christ for me!
The Father's well-belovèd Son,
Co-partner of His royal throne,
Who did for human guilt atone:
Christ for me!

In pining sickness and in health,
Christ for me!
In deepest poverty or wealth,
Christ for me!
And on that all-important day,
When I the trumpet call obey,
And rise from this dark world away:
Christ for me!

Richard Jukes, 1804-67

When Angels Sat Down

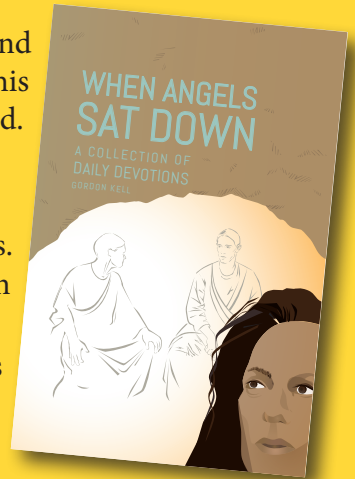
When Angels Sat Down is Gordon Kell's second book of daily devotions. The first book in this series, *Footsteps in the Snow* was well received. Here are some reader reviews:

"Thank you so much for ... your daily posts. What a help and encouragement they have been throughout this challenging year!

"How often the message every morning has been so appropriate to the difficulties which we have been experiencing."

"Thank you for your encouraging and sometimes challenging words... So often, they were just what we needed to hear that day!"

"The ministry the Lord has given you during this past year has drawn us closer to the Lord and to one another."



Some of our customers also bought *Footsteps in the Snow* to give to interested non-Christian friends and contacts.

Like its predecessor, *When Angels Sat Down* is designed to be read day by day over a three-month period. It contains a mixture of self-contained single articles and mini-series on Bible subjects and characters. This makes it an ideal coffee-table publication.

Please pray that *When Angels Sat Down* will prove an encouragement to Christians and in outreach.

It is priced at £8.99 plus postage. To order, please email: scripturetruth@compuserve.com or phone (mornings) or write to STP. Details are on the inside of the front cover.