

PILGRIMS AND STRANGERS

ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

INTRODUCTION

This series of three talks on Hebrews takes wing on the comparison of these last troublous days with those touching the Jewish people in AD 66-69 when in accordance with Luke 21.20 Jerusalem was surrounded with armies. While Vespasian withdrew to await developments in Rome after Gallus there was breathing space. Christians escaped to Pella in Decapolis. The Hebrew writer who has 22 “cheer ups” in his letter advises Jewish Christians to go without the camp-escape during the peaceful interlude the Lord has given.

TALK NO 1-Hebrews1

1. ENCOURAGEMENT TO DO HIS PERFECT WILL THE LIBERTY OF THE CHRISTIAN

I cannot claim to be particularly gifted in the music department. My attainments in pianoforte include a few scales fairyland, O God our Help and the Old Hundredth. In Song I once was co-opted to a male voice choir and “lente” was my motto. Anything seriously audible would have drawn the choirmaster’s attention. But in the choir I did love the piece “Who can cheer the heart like Jesus

By His presence all divine
True and tender pure and precious
O how blessed to call Him mine!”

This letter was written in a time of “austerity”-I hardly dare mention the word since Jeremiah was elected labor leader but scripture gives me warrant for Luke 21.25 “The nations shall be in distress with perplexity (aporeia).” Could it be as Tertullian stated that Barnabas outlived Paul and brought encouragement to the Jewish church at a time of deep austerity haunting poverty and national crisis of identity?

- (1) The liberty of freedom from guilt and the curse
- (2) The liberty of today-use it evangelise
- (3) The liberty of God’s sovereign intervention –cf. fragments. Cf. Out redemption. We need to talk much more about His coming.

TALK NO 2-Hebrews2

ENCOURAGEMENT TO BEAR THE BITTER SWEET OF THE CROSS -DISCIPLESHIP

Hebrews 2 begins merrily “Encourage one another as far along as it is called “Today”(2. 7-8). Barnabas may well have walked past the Mamartine prison where Peter & Paul had been held and alongside the Coliseum where they made sport of believers. He wrote this letter to console Jerusalem saints and advise them to up sticks as pilgrims and bound for Pella as the hostile gentile empire of Rome threatened to lay waste their place and nation within months.

(1) OURS IS A GREAT SALVATION

Do not neglect so great salvation”. It is great because it was presented by the Son of God and made good news by His atoning death and glorious resurrection

It is great because it was ratified by the apostolic ministry which showed its effectiveness among many nations through miracles, wonders and signs and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

(2) JESUS TASTED DEATH FOR EVERY MAN

This in Aramaic reads “Every man except God. This is backed by references from Ambrose –teacher of Augustine and Origen who read “Without God he suffered death”. There are two direct implications. In the death of Christ a gospel accessible to all was provided and second -- God did not self-destruct in the death of Christ but the reality of it was experienced in the “cup” by Christ in His humanity and its *bitter sweet* sensed by the Father in the divine soul. Isaiah says “He (the Father) grieved in putting Him to grief”-Isaiah 53.10 (A reflexive result clause). The pleasure of the Father in the death of Christ attaches to our Lord’s obedience and perfection and so God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. The QNOMA of the *one identifiable soul of God*- was both moved in silence and pleased in practice as the resurrection and ascension demonstrate.

(3) SATAN AND DEATH DISABLED

The writer is insistent that Christ has “made old (katargeo) or abrogate and cause to void abolish or bring to an end the one who has the power over death-even Satan”v.14.

Before that we read that He would “perfect Himself” in the Aramaic of v.10. The word GAMAR means “to perfect” or “put out all His

strength”. There is something equivalent to “the labours of Hercules” in Christ’s death. He brought many sons to Glory. He through death arrived at the throne to defend his church and disable Satan-to make his rumours and accusations ineffective. Christ by sharing the human form in its flesh and blood reality through death as man destroyed death for man. This taking our lowly form is emphatic and essential for our continuance. Death was not given *wholesale rule* over angels(Shalat) and their intimacy with God was greater as their distance from God is greater in their fall.

TALK NO 3-Hebrews 6 ENCOURAGEMENT TO FAITHFULNESS AMID APOSTACY i.e. PERSEVERANCE

Jesus said “He that denies me before men-him will I deny before my father and his angels” Luke 12.9

Paul Peter John and Jude each write on this subject. In his last letter Paul refers to those who have a form of godliness but deny its power” (2Tim3.5); Peter (who thrice denied) writes “some even deny the Lord that **bought them!**”(2Peter2.1); John writes “Whoso denies the Son – the same has not the Father” and has not the fundamentals or the reality (1`John2.23). Jude writes certain have crept in sideways turning grace into transformation to another faith i.e. topsy-turvy – to fornication or filth. (Jude 4). Mystery religions and trade guilds involved Christians who could be occasioned to deny the Lord by immorality or worship.

1. THE CROSS Learn from Jesus to hold our confidence firm to the end. Christ with openness and boldness and frank confession when reviled did not reply and confessed before Pilate and on the cross His faithfulness. One of the greatest lessons about God I have learned is that of the QNUMA-the single soul or heart or will or sensitivity of God. “I and the father are ONE. What I do my works are not mine but the Fathers’ My words are the Fathers. What the trinity asserts is that God has one soul or being and that Jesus has a separate spirit as has each of the Trinity and by this deep reality there is full interpersonal knowledge. So God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself and the Spirit declared aforetime by the prophets the death of Christ.

2. THE HOLY GHOST vv 7-13

In a fragment as the writer calls OT references from Psalm 85 7-11 he calls believers to “Be obedient to the Holy Ghost, don’t harden your

hearts. Don't become bitter, Don't test God, Don't fly in his face as they did 40 years; don't grieve the Spirit till he is laden with grief and exhausted over you PROSOCHTHIZO; don't err in heart from lack of study; watch lest an unbelieving heart develop; beware the deceit of sin till the very "bottom" or closing moments of the day; Don't succumb to unbelief"- cf. Thomas

PROVOKING or angering God is the ultimate rocky place. We need to stay where we cast our first anchor by the promise and oath of Christ. Hebrews 6.18-20 –we must have a definitive link to our Melchizedek. So the writer takes us to the throne-where we find mercy and grace.

3. THE THRONE

First, do not fail to respond to the evangelist v6.

Second, do not mistake the leisure of today for the need of eternal rest v7 Fragment Psalm 95 11 & Exodus34.14

Third, hold firm to confessing the name of Christ as Son of God

Fourth, do not fail to pray to carry off the great booty of God's kindness and favour each day in times of favour and devotion. It is not about trying to please God with expensive sacrifices-it is about relationship. It is not system –it is friendship with Jesus-fellowship.

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