

TIME SERIES NO.8



AN ABC  
MONOGRAPH

# FAITH

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## INTRODUCTION

**This monograph is No.8 in the present series. It is a sort of Aladdin's cave of full of bits to do with faith. If you rummage round you will find something to interest you that you can take away and use.**

**I met a man who fitted the description of an atheist very well. He was affable and a very pleasant conversationalist. When I suggested that the big bang and God's stretching out the heavens were two of a kind he agreed adding- "You don't need anything else. Time began with the bang." Then the old adage -"I don't need anything else(meaning 'God')" was tagged on. "I'mm!"**

**We *are* getting older. We *need* our daily bread and we had best avail ourselves of *life* when it is offered to us. The sort we have can be far fuller-abundant and eternal. I wouldn't miss it for anything- would you?**

**The good book says "*By faith we understand that the worlds were formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what is visible.*" That's where the 11 or so mentions of "God stretching out" the heavens comes in. That's**

where that other place-or better other *dimension-set* mathematicians speculate about comes in. Oh yes – science has lots of jig saw bits-but God has all the pieces in order and He speeds up our understanding by faith and scripture. Paul put it this way when a soldier contemplated suicide-he said “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!”

**Bob Coffey Westgate August 2013**

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## **BLIND FAITH**

In 1969 Eric Clapton’s Blues Rock Band set out with its single “Blind Faith” - its one and only number.

Faith in God may be widespread but faith in Jesus Christ as the heaven-sent Saviour of the world seems for some like a leap in the dark. David Lloyd George once said “Don’t be afraid to take a big step if one is indicated. You can’t cross a chasm in

two small jumps”. It is like that with Jesus. It is all or nothing. When the decisive moment comes and the Holy Spirit speaks is may be even now or never.

## **FAITH IS NOT PIE IN THE SKY WHEN YOU DIE**

There is a stylish idiom of Paul’s in the bible “Hope that is seen is not hope at all - but if we hope for *what we do not yet have* we wait for it patiently.”(Romans 8 .24-25). Faith in Jesus affords a hope of heaven. I hear someone interject “It’s pie in the sky when you die!” That is to say it is without evidence in the here and now. Even Jesus does not ask us to be that foolish. He gives every one who believes the Holy Spirit who comes to live with our spirits so that we have an altered God-conscious joy and peace and assurance that is exclusive to faith in Him. Spurgeon the puritan preacher who held Londoners spellbound in his day put it this way “A little faith will bring hour soul to heaven (cf the dying thief); great faith will bring heaven to your soul.” The corollary is that unqualified trust exercised continually will bring evidence in and around the man or woman of faith that the world cannot gainsay.

Abraham saved lot by prayer and angels visited Sodom to draw him out. Elijah raised the son of the widow of Zarephath. Moses with his rod did more

than the standard tricks of magicians - he opened the sea. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar his dream. Shadrach Meshech and Abednego walked out of a furnace of fire with garments unsinged.

But I hear someone respond. "Tall stories - fables how do we know? It's all in the past. God is dead." I must reply "Far from it!" I listened to Andrew Whyte of Baghdad speak of two persons the Lord raised to life quite recently. One was under the familiar 'white sheet' after being pronounced dead and was raised by the thrice pronouncing of the name of Jesus in Aramaic by her muslim husband who exercised faith in Jesus. The second was a child whose body was taken from a refrigeration unit in that hot land some time after his death. A group of Iraqi women prayed to Jesus for him and he revived.

But a final objector speaks out. These are second hand stories. Let me add one about David who currently runs a Christian Broadcasting programme. I met him at my market stall in Chesterfield where I was offering my Bible Commentary and other CD's for sale. He told me the stunning story of being attacked by several thugs - having his ears cut off and then buried by them . He died before rescuers reached him dug him out and again by the mercy of God he was given back his spirit like Lazarus and Jairus daughter. I stood by the man who showed me the

mended ears and where the iron came down on his head.

## **FAITH BRAVELY FACES SUFFERING AND PAIN**

Someone will say- why isn't everyone who dies raised up? Why do innocent children die? Why do bad things happen to good people?

One question at a time. People die because God said "The soul that sins will die" and all have sinned.

Children die for a variety of reasons and these reasons are recorded on their death certificates. Where violence or inhumanity is involved ours is the crime. Where premature death is involved God who is judge of all the earth will do right concerning them.

## **THE BOUNDARY OF QUESTIONS**

As to good people Jesus said "There is none good but God alone" and Christ called those whom He called to live holy also to suffer persecution and that may entail suffering for His sake. Remember Job who came to the boundary of where a man can question God but avoided charging God with failing Him. Remember Jesus who being reviled reviled not again. Learn by this last question that finally sets the questioner in the position of laying a charge against one's maker. The earthly half

brother of Jesus once said “There is not a shadow as cast by turning with God.” His ways are perfect. The earth and the heavens are stacked with evidence of God’s majesty and daily care.

## **FAITH COMMUNICATES WITH TO GOD**

Millions pray to the Lord daily and never cease to do over long life times. The Lord for His part promises to hear and is ever faithful to listen and answer as a Father would His child.

A gentleman met me a few days back and said “I prayed most earnestly that I might help somebody with an addiction”. God sent me a man with a drug problem in the week and it happened so quick it was not till after he came that I remembered my prayer. God has said “Before they call I will answer and while they are still speaking I will hear”(Isaiah 65.24).

## **NOW WE ARE TALKING-ABOUT PRAYER!**

Someone who has recited prayers at bedtime or even in religious vigil might ask “Why do special things not happen for me?” That’s a good question.

**Take your bible and find some promises of a covenant keeping God.** Get on your knees before Him. Praise Him for what He has done for you. Humble your heart before him like the sinner in the temple. Renounce the devil and all his works,

*confess your sins and undertake to love your neighbour.* Then boldly ask the Lord for needs you most earnestly perceive. You may come to the point like Thomas where you can use Jesus promise “You may ask anything in my name, and I will do it” but you must remember that there Jesus spoke of great miracles wrought through the power of *the Holy Spirit whom we must learn to obey.* You may still use the promise *if you are agreeable that your life will be fruitful for Christ* by which you will be called to die to self. You will be wholly submissive to the Lord’s commands and remain constantly in His love and friendship. So there is no “asking game” - it is a vow and provision experience we are talking about - that is the atmosphere of supplication.

## **AN ODESSEY OF FAITH**

### **THE TEST OF LEAVING HOME AN KINDRED**

The life of Abraham father of the faithful is a veritable epic of events and turns on the exercise of faith in God. First God calls Abraham to leave the Chaldean city of Ur. The test was considerable. He was to go to a place not yet shown to him - his destination was unknown. The bible says he sought

a city whose builder and maker is God. God says “Come though you have to go alone”.

## **THE TEST OF THE WORLD AND THE FLESH**

Abraham had a strange sexual issue. His wife was a singularly attractive woman and as she was a close family member so he and she agreed to use their “brother-sister” relationship so that powerful rulers Abraham met would not arrange his death and take his wife. This may seem strange - but Abraham married the loveliest woman of the time and knew the corruption of the human heart. This little scheme saved Abraham not once or twice. God showed that by giving men who desired Sara scary dreams He would protect and deliver Abraham from kings who wanted Sara.

## **THE TEST OF SACRIFICING AN ONLY SON**

Abraham was tested by God in a rather complicated command “Take your son that you love to the first mountain I show you and offer there what I tell you or take your firstborn to the place I will show you and offer him there.” This test God Himself had already passed for in the covenant to save us from before the foundation of the world He determined upon giving Jesus to die. This test united God and His only begotten and Abraham and his children in covenant. As he

reached the place Isaac, his firstborn asked “Father where is the lamb!” Abraham had no sacrifice other than his son. The New Testament tells us He believed if God took his son in death He would raise him up to fulfil a promise God made that through him nations would be blessed. Abraham answered his son “God will Himself provide a lamb or God will provide himself as a lamb”. The complexity helps us today to understand How God arranged this plan to show how great the trust Abraham had and how great the sacrifice the Lord would one day make at Calvary - the very same mountain.

## **THE TEST OF WAR**

Abraham was tested again when the most powerful kings of the era attacked Sodom and took his nephew Lot and his wife among others as captives. Abraham who had a small citizen army set off with his men and defeated the greatest kings of the day.

## **THE TEST OF TITHING**

Abraham as he returned laden with spoil and exulting with joy in his great victory met Melchizadek - a king who had no earthly kingdom as yet - who had no earthly father or mother. This person brought him bread and wine. There is no better explanation of this meeting than that Abraham met the pre-existent Christ.

## **THE TEST OF PRAYER**

Abraham was visited by the Lord just before God judged Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham talked with the Lord and asked if God would spare the city even if there were only 10 righteous in it. The Lord said he would and set off to bring destruction by fire and brimstone to Sodom - but God in whom Abraham believed saved Lot and his family by sending angels to their home.

## **THE TEST OF BELIEVING IMPOSSIBLE THINGS**

Long ago Homer the blind poet of Greece wrote about Odysseus and his journey in faraway lands and islands and his interplay with the mythical gods of Greece. By contrast Abrahams's pilgrimage was with the living God Yahweh and his greatest triumph was to believe all the promises God made him. Think about the sheer scale of these promises.

- (i) I will make you a great nation
- (ii) In you all the families of earth will be blessed
- (iii) All the land you see I will give you and your seed for ever
- (iv) I am your shield and exceeding great reward
- (v) As the stars so shall your seed be
- (vi) In the 4<sup>th</sup> generation the (Israel) shall come here (Beersheba) again –i.e. after 400 years

- (vii) You will be a father of many nations
- (viii) I will give you and your seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession and be their God.
- (ix) Sarah at 99 shall have a child, when you are 100
- (x) Yahweh will provide (Jesus): in the mount of the Lord it will be seen (Calvary).
- (xi) The Lord will send his angel before you (Eliezer) and you shall take a wife for my son.
- (xii) And Abraham gave all he had to Isaac and gifts to his concubines and Abraham breathed out and died and was gathered to his peoples(cf NT “Abraham’s bosom - for he became patriarch of Sheol)

## **CHRISTIAN APOSTLES AND CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**

### **EXPLORERS AND EVANGELISTS**

Between them Cook and Da Gama, Cortez and Columbus discovered Australasia and north and south America. Yet was the conquest of these men not comparable with the submission to Christ obtained worldwide as the result of the heralding of their kingdom of Jesus Christ by the apostles.

The apostles were no great shakes in their own eyes. One (Paul) said he was “the chief of sinners”. On seven distinct occasions the Lord found His disciples deficient in faith literally “little faiths” failing in its exercise (Matt.6.30, 8.10, 8.26,14.31,16.8, 17.20, 21.21) yet did they rise to such heights of trust that they brought myriads in their age to Jesus’ feet. Faith is easily known because it expresses itself in love.

## **THEY DIVIDED THE WORLD AMONG THEM**

Yet through His example of loving others and His cross which was love’s epitome and by His Spirit which gave it poise and power Jesus Christ transformed these guys into a band of men who could win the world. It is thought that they took Jesus literally and set out deliberately to reach the whole earth. Thomas went east to India, Andrew died for the Lord going west to Greece, John taught in Asia Minor, Thaddeus went north to the steppes, and Peter went to Rome as did Paul who went on to Spain. Others as Matthew evangelized Syria and Mark and Barnabas perhaps heralded the Lord deep into Egypt’s Nile valley.

“These who have turned the world upside down are come here” said the senators of Thessalonica.(Acts 17.6).

The old world needed to be set right and it still does! Why so? Because in each new generation it turns away again to its old self-righteous and careless ways.

## **LIVING IN VICTORY**

“This is the victory that overcomes the world - even your faith” is a famous epigram in the teaching of John the divine. Mammon, lust, the pride of life whatever - these mountains will fall before faith in Jesus that expresses itself by love. Hatred persecution and opposition - these mountains are not impregnable before faith that expresses itself by love. China today is an example of this as was Enver Hozha’s Roumania earlier - that land that set out to be the first 100% atheist country. Corruption, drug abuse and fornication is another mountain range that can be leveled by faith working by love - that was proven by David Wilkerson working amongst the gangsters and druggies of New York.

Faith mighty faith the promise sees  
And looks to God alone  
Laughs at impossibilities  
And cries “It shall be done”.

## **THE CATHEDRAL OF THE FAITHFUL**

## POETS CORNER

In Westminster Abbey we have poets corner and other sacred spots where the remains of the great and good lie interred.

There is a chapter dedicated to men and women whose faith in God never faltered. Their epitaphs make fascinating reading. Think of the deeds: offering a little lamb to God for the first time as Abel did, leaving earth and being taken away to heaven bodily as Enoch was, building the mightiest ship ever known as Noah did, heading out into the uncharted lands like Abraham, blessing his son as Isaac blessed Jacob –Israel's progenitor. Then there was Moses who chose to leave a palace and the rule of Egypt to suffer with Israel. There was Rahab who saved her Jericho family by faith. Think of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae and Samuel. Recall the Hebrew boys with whom the Lord walked in the fire and Daniel in the lion's den with that angel, the widow of Zarephath and the Shunammite who both received sons from the dead and the great prophets Elijah and Elisha that God used to help them - men who wandered about and lived in caves. Think of the great evangelical prophet Isaiah who was reputedly sawn in two by a sharp wooden saw and his predecessor Jeremiah who was mocked and put in prison. These were all believers *par excellence* and it was their faith that made their lives worth reporting.

## **FAITH GOES ALONG WITH GOD**

The writer of Hebrews tells us that faith in God enables us to understand that the world itself was completely equipped and furnished as God spoke its detail into existence. He tells us that faith itself is the groundwork or starting point of what we hope for and the proof or argument demanded and given of the unseen. In other words God is pleased to supply faith and people either want it or they don't. God counts it of the highest value and man in rejecting God rejects His great gift as well. This principle we must always keep in mind.

## **LUTHER**

### **RULES CEDE TO THE LEADING PRINCIPLE**

Rabbi Simlai - a 3<sup>rd</sup> century Jewish teacher reckoned that Moses gave us 365 prohibitions and 248 positive commands-613 in all. David's in Psalm 15 was 11; Isaiah settled for 6 in Isaiah33.14-15 and Micah rolled them into a triad (3) in Micah 6.8 but in his inspired summary Habakkuk rolled them into one in Habakkuk 2.4 - namely "The just shall live by faith". The prophet was harking back to what Paul calls Abraham's discovery "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15.6 and Romans 4.3).

## **JESUS' CLAIM UPON YOUR LOVE**

Our precious Lord brought into relief this vital stress on confidence - absolute love for and commitment to God's loving plan and covenant purpose. Jesus said "Whoever hears my word and believes in Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." And again the Lord said "This is the work of God to believe in the one He has sent"(Jn.6.29) And again Jesus said "Believe me when I say I am in the Father's circle and the Father is in my circle of being or believe me on the evidence" –the resurrection, the remitter of sin, the final judge.

## **"I CAN NO OTHER SO HELP ME GOD" - LUTHER**

Then after the dim religious light of centuries in 1517  
Martin

Luther wrote 95 theses and pinned them to the castle church door at Wittenburg. He set in train a course of events that shook the Church of those days to the core. It was a new dawn for the bible and the teaching of Christ. As a boy I read a thrilling 300 page book called "Our neighbour Martin Luther" written from the perspective of a few young neighbours the Schonberg-Cottas (the family were among the world's first printers) who watched the determined young monk that set their town talking and Germany itself singing his songs and believing his story of Jesus' free

forgiveness. Else and Fritz, children of the family, came to faith in the tidal wave of this popular reform movement.

## THE OLD AMERICAN RAILWAY

In 1861 the American railway had just begun  
In 1862 I found myself with nothing to do  
In 1863 the overseers accepted me  
In 1864 my hands & feet were sore  
In 1865 I found myself more dead than alive  
In 1866 I happened to tread on some dynamite sticks  
In 1867 I found myself on the way to heaven  
In 1868 I found myself at the Golden Gate  
In 1869 the chariot's silver wings were mine  
There are two things to conclude from this folk song of 19<sup>th</sup> century railroad connecting the cornfields of America to the cities of New England. The first is that the writer was well aware of the rigours and the dangers of being a railway worker. The second is that he knows about heaven and figures he is going to be taken there and have silver wings. This is not what one might call saving faith it is folksy dreamworld stuff. What is wanted is God given faith and faith in the atoning and redeeming act of Jesus Christ on the cross.

## WANDERERS ARE NOT PILGRIMS

Some souls travel with a most curious spiritual portmanteau and imagine that because they enjoy a colourful mix of ideas that might be described as ingredients of a faith blancmange they can share in the great big party in heaven. A pinch of kindness and a handful of New Age ideas with a spoonful of mysticism, a sprinkling of good works and one visit to Church at Christmas mixed with a dusting of *doing nobody any harm* is the best blend to encourage Peter to open the golden gates of heaven. Others believe they can see afar to a point just ahead where Gautama Buddha's second turning of the wheel or Dharma, Krishna's karma gnana and bhakti and Mohammed's koranic blessings and the bible sayings of Jesus land the lot of us in paradise like birds of a feather. As we might say what happened to sin? Could this woolley thinking be a total illusion and ghastly mistake? I believe it is profoundly so. Jesus said "I am the way the truth and the life-noone comes to the Father except through me. Railway lines may seem to converge - but if they did the result would be disaster. Everyone owes their creation to Yahweh and without the Word of God(Jesus) nothing that is was made. Everyone will finally appear before Christ the judge to whom all judgment is given. All who are redeemed will be saved by his atoning sacrifice. All who have eternal life will be accorded the same by His indwelling Spirit sent by the Father and the Son. Four times over in the life of the Christian man the unique

work of Christ is exercised decisively and twice or thrice when they fall under divine conviction of conscience in the life of those who reject Christ.

## **FAITH WILL DO IT**

What is needed is total candour and utter simplicity. We need **life** and we need **love** and we need **liberty**. We need life that will extend beyond these 70 or more years. We need love that is stronger than death. We need liberty from the demons that deceive us, the sins that trip us and bind and hurt us and all the sorrows flesh is heir to. Life without Jesus is the stuff of the doldrums, a cocktail sure to deliver death and make us senseless to our doom, a night of pleasure and a morn of regret, a drudge's burden and a diary of future fear. You mean to tell me that if I deny myself and take up my cross and follow Jesus I will be saved! Yes I do – and on the authority of a perfect gentleman too!

## **FAITH-THE BIG PICTURE**

### **FAITH IN ACTION**

We need Faith. A black church congregation met to pray for rain after a sustained drought. The preacher looked severely at his flock and said “Brothers and sisters, you’ll knows why we is here. Now what I wants to know is *where is your umbrellas!*” James says “The persistent earnest prayers of a righteous

man avail much” and he goes on to quote the case of Elijah’s success in intercession after 3½ years of drought.

## **SAVING FAITH**

Faith is required for salvation. We need to be 100% sure of the object of our trust - the rock of our assurance of eternal life. When you negotiate a life assurance or a care insurance you are required to pay the stipulated fee. In a sense with God’s gift of eternal life you receive it simply by trusting the provider who died for you - but conditions apply. Dr. Archie

Fullerton, parishioner of mine with a wry sense of humour once expressed it in this way “*The entrance to salvation is free but the annual subscription is everything*”. Jesus said “He that will follow me must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me!”

**Forsaking All I take Him (F.A.I.T.H)** is the formula that works. It will have worked for worked beyond 1000 million souls (Revelation 5.11) and that is an underestimate but it is a statistic of undeniable significance. Paul wrote to Ephesus in words that will never be forgotten while the Church heralds Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Those words are “By grace you are saved through faith and that not of yourselves-it is the gift of God lest any man should boast”. Ask yourself “Have I been saved? Am I conscious of being saved from sins that could easily beset me? Am I sure that I have a place in heaven - a building of God when this

tabernacle of my present body dissolves? These questions you must quickly get answered with the utmost clarity and expedition or you are by default and maybe unawares spiritually bound for the unwanted destiny of the soul which is hell. Heaven is obtained through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ whose death for you and blood shed to atone for your sin becomes efficacious or remedial when you commit everything to Him as a repentant sinner and receive the Holy Spirit as a seal of a new and eternal relationship to the Lord.

## **ALL FOR JESUS**

Faith is required for holiness and victory and it leaves the door open to God's will day on day. His Holy Spirit would have all there is of you and exercise the prerogatives of Christ in you in all His fullness and He desires to steer your course to victory in the power of a new life. Many of the loveliest of God's saints have found that the Lord gives the first evidence of His entire possession at the door of the lips. Paul compares his speech as a persecutor to the breath of a dragon but when the Holy Spirit comes another voice - new and joyful, lovely as that of the angels of God on the morn of Christ's birth and mysterious as that on the day of Pentecost, is given. Leaving all on God's altar compares to Abraham's offering of Isaac - it is demanding. But the father of the faithful (cf. the "Odessey" chapter) knew that to go alone with God

was the way to glory and the eternal city - to go alone without God was the way to death.

All to Jesus I surrender  
All to him I fully give  
I will ever love and serve Him  
In His presence daily live  
I surrender all  
I surrender all  
All to thee my blessed Saviour  
I surrender all.

## **FRUITFUL**

You will know when your life is in the right place with God when you can love others truly, when you can pray fervently, when you can rejoice with others who are Christians and comfort them too. You will know it when you win where you formerly lost - when you gain ground where you previously stood still, when you become fruitful where your life was spiritually barren. Hurry to that place with God.

## **CLOSE TO THE SHEPHERD**

A dear friend Rev. Maynard James of the Church of the Nazarene who lived close to God used to say “I was born in the fire and not content with the smoke”.

His favourite lines in public prayer were,  
There is a place of quiet rest  
Near to the heart of God

A place where fears do not molest  
Near to the heart of God  
O Saviour dear Saviour draw me  
Near to the heart of God.

## **CHRIST IS VICTOR**

On the victory side, on the victory side  
No foe can haunt me, no fear can daunt me  
With Christ within we'll fight and win  
On the victory side.

Faith must have its object and that is the Victorious Lord. The Moravians who inspired Wesley had as their motto "*The Lamb has conquered*". I put it on my Bible Commentary disc because it is so very important. Our faith is in Jesus the first and the last. You need to be absolutely convinced of His victory over sin and Satan and death and hell and that through the cross a deadly blow has been dealt to all of these. Let me talk a little about each of these in turn.

## **WATERS FOR FAITH TO SWIM IN**

I want to finish this monograph by taking you out of the shallows of faith to waters to swim in. First let me point you to the book of *Hebrews* in the New Testament and then to the *Apocalypse* – the final book of the bible which is accompanied by the promise of a special blessing for the reader.

## **THE LEGEND OR KEY OF HEBREWS**

The book of Hebrews talks a lot about “perfection” and that perfection is found in Jesus Christ. He is Melchisadek(7.1-2) appearing incarnate now with Mary as His mother and God as His Father He died to atone and is priest for ever. In His perfect humanity He demonstrated perfect obedience and through the cross

1. He perfected the New Covenant (8.8-12)
2. He perfected the tabernacle of atonement at heaven’s throne – namely the mercy seat (9.20).
3. He perfected the church set apart in His will (10.16-18)
4. He perfected risen ones (12.23)
5. He perfected “the faith” as a body of truth (12.2).

There is much to digest slowly in the solid meat of Hebrews.

The writer is probably Barnabas as Tertullian says. He understandably speaks like Paul because for years they taught and worked together. He does, however persist in quoting the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) which Paul does not. Barnabas was from Cyprus and would be trained at Alexandria where the Greek biblical base was used in rabbinic training. Paul was trained by Gamaliel in Jerusalem in the original Hebrew medium.

Leaving such matter aside as incidental observe that Barnabas (as I am in the habit of designating the author) uses the word TELEIOS (“perfect”- cf. Jesus words “It is finished”) of five things. *First* the New Covenant in the blood of Christ and through His obedience to death on the cross leads to the sole God-given basis in all the world for redemption - this as Paul also argues in Romans 5 is the sole basis for salvation and divine approval. Our salvation is paid for. *Second*, observe that though for a little while the cross was the “mercy seat” whilst the Lord was dying there and shedding His precious blood - hence the dying thief found forgiveness there and it was offered to those who nailed our Lord there and if to them to all who would repent and confess Him as Lord. But now in glory the mercy seat is the throne of God where Jesus Christ sits in person. The ultimate completion of all things in heaven’s dimension is paid for and even now exists in the form of the New Jerusalem and the throne of the Lamb. *Third*, notice that those God sets apart are completed not just in number but in holiness through the cross. The obedience of the cross demands the obedience of the Christian and the resurrection and coming of the Holy ghost enables it. As my document “POSSE NON PECCARE” argues “It is possible to walk with God with a perfect heart”. If David so walked and Abraham so walked the will of God is that you so walk too -that will is our entire sanctification. Paul

taught those he brought to faith this truth as a fundamental as we read in 1Thessalonians 3.13, 4.3-4 and 4.23. Our holy living is desired, required and paid for. *Fourth* as we learn from Matthew that many saints arose bodily after Jesus' death and went with Him after His resurrection. The implications for the completion of saints in the work of the cross are clear. The theory of an "intermediate state" is not taught in scripture but receiving our body from heaven and possessing a "building of God" when this tabernacle of flesh falls down is taught. Redemption and "out-redemption" are paid for. Heaven is not a two stage process of awaking . *Fifth* "the faith" is completed. The last book of scripture is written and the Spirit dwells with God's people to teach the truth concordant with scripture. The fundamentals of creation, the fall, prophetic judgement and wrath, divine mercy and salvation, the church and her ministry, the baptism and anointing of the Holy Spirit, the glory of the rapture and return of Christ, the millennium and the new heaven and earth when everything is made new are in their entirety in the book. "The faith" that Christ taught was paid for and sealed in His blood. The book of Hebrews is essential scripture reminding us of the expansive effect and all encompassing reach of the cross and of the first principles of faith.

## **THE LEGEND OR KEY OF THE APOCALYPSE**

John the divine used the same device in the gospel under his name as in the “unveiling” or Apocalypse. The book is abstruse but its central intent is to teach and reveal not to confuse and conceal.

I dare to take you this way because a person’s view of the last things is a clue to a their concept of God and His will and word. As Karl Barth said

“eschatology”(the study of the last things” is not a footnote). So seek the blessing that goes with this book - the blessing of framing the picture of the gospel and setting “Grace” in the context and all the luminosity of the Glory of God as prophecy declares it must shine.

But, you will ask, what about that key? Quite! Well thumb through John 2.12,3.22,5.1,6.1,7.1- 19.28, 19.38, 21.1 and Apocalypse 1.19,4.1,7.1,7.9, 15.5, 17.19 19.1 and understand from what you read that both the gospel and the apocalypse are in sequence and that both during the earthly ministry of Christ publishing the grace of God and the sovereign exercise of wrath in judgement a mighty kaleidoscope of fast moving events is presented. In the first instance we learn that over 3 ½ years the Gospel witness is presented in Israel and climaxes in the death of Christ and the commission of Peter to be replicated in the Church as herald the Lord’s message and in the second we see that over 7 years of tribulation divine judgments fall on man climaxing in the Bema and White Throne and a New Heaven and

Earth. Both books feature the “Lamb” (the first in His humiliation and the second in His glorification. Viewing the “Lamb” in the apocalypse we learn truths fundamental to *the glory of God and faith*.

## **FAITH THAT IS GOING PLACES**

There is an old story from the early days of the cotton fields of America. A humble Christian slave of those times who helped his master prepared his considerable luggage for a holiday remarked, “Is Massa going to heaven?” His master responded “Of course!” The gentleman cotton picker replied “Massa no going for he has made no preparation!” It behoves us who are going to heaven to think a little about it. Indeed we could do no better than meditate on one or other of the seven sequences of the Apocalypse daily. That would equip us better for the place to which we are going. In *Sequence 1* 1.19 we see the Lord Jesus as sovereign (the Greek word PANTOCRATOR in its original Sanscrit means “victor”). You must not fail to notice that Christ is in the business of rewarding “overcomers” or victors- hence holiness, hence service. Heaven is exultant in the worship of the victorious LAMB. ***No instructed Christian can be without holiness teaching.*** *Sequence 2* 4.1-6.17) moves to the central issue is the unsealing of history’s last events and again with the utter magnificence of Aslan Christ as victor unseals the book. The seals loose the 4 horsemen who ride out amid tumultuous

events over against which the martyrs scream out to God “Until when O despot of all, O Holy One, O Faithful One will you delay judgement.” Thereafter the sun is darkened and the moon becomes as blood, and kings and rulers run for refuge to rock caves amid a long predicted shaking of the earth. ***No instructed Christian is fully taught who does not understand that tribulation lies ahead.*** In *Sequence 3* 7.1-7.8 the long awaited conversion of Israel proper is heralded by 144,000 absolutely dedicated Jews who follow the lamb. ***No Christian is identified fully with the purpose of God in history until he or she accepts that the nation of Israel will be saved*** at the return of Christ and become most significant in the end times. *Sequence 4* 7.9-15.4 features the awesome ½ hour silence in heaven and trumpet sounds marking among other things the death of one 3<sup>rd</sup> of earth’s people and the activity of a great latter day eagle (America?) and the “snuffing out of Egypt”- dramatic events still future. A great *locust with tail stings* war masterminded by Abaddon then rages with the death of 1½ billion persons. Amid all this the “angel of the Lord” swears “No delay” “No history” of the common era remains. Then comes the little scroll with its bitter message that it is not finished yet. Even in these darkest days the gospel is known. Europe is afflicted. The beast imposes his 666 number and binds buyers and sellers. ***No instructed Christian can believe we are headed for peace on earth while man***

***governs. Sequence 5 15.5-17.18*** The beast, false prophet and dragon (Satan) prepare for a final war with Israel (& God). God for His part has prepared 7 vials or bowls of wrath with sores and sea contamination and finally dries up the Euphrates (which may be a reference to the end of a conflict there). At vial 3 an angel proclaims **“You are just in these judgements for they have shed the blood of your prophets”**. The vials are for the most part targeted judgments though the last speaks of the fall of numerous cities, the disappearance of all islands and huge hailstones from the sky and the battle of Armageddon. ***Every instructed Christian must recognize God is a God of justice and though He is patient He will judge the nations. The judgement of nations climaxes under Christ at His coming***

***Sequence 6 18.1 - 18.24*** is short and sweet - it comprises the fall of Babylon and the end of Satan’s empire. ***No instructed Christian can be unaware that Satan is prince of the power of the air and will fall from heaven finally and set up a short-lived empire that falls as Christ returns fulfilling Daniel’s “rock cut without hands” prophecy.***

***Sequence 7 19.1 - 22.21*** In this final sequence we have Christ’s return and the millennium followed by the Great White Throne assize or Last Judgment and the New Jerusalem and a New Heaven and Earth. ***No instructed Christian can be unaware of the millennium judgement of the wicked or the complete***

*new start God plans with another earth and heaven.*

So as Christians we have to believe that God has a grand plan for the world that He has made. I have taken you to this last book of the bible to look over the precipice of judgement and to realize that significant elements of vital doctrine enshrined in the divine plan to glorify Christ as Lord and Judge are affirmed in the Apocalypse. Like Booth you can recognize the plight of man without God and set out to “build a rescue hut within a yard of Hell” as that saint of God put it.

Jesus pronounced again and again in the Apocalypse “I am coming quickly”. There can be no doubt the Lord is coming soon for His church (EKKLESIA – “the called out ones”) in the rapture. In the light of that we need to be saved, we need to be holy, we need to serve God in reaching others and we need to be ready for His appearing. Nothing but Faith in the Victorious one who is the Lord of scripture is sufficient for the things that must soon come to pass.

“Christ is coming let creation  
From her groans and travail cease  
Let the glorious proclamation  
Hoe restore and faith increase!.

Long thy people have been pining  
For thy peace and rest and Thee  
Soon in heavenly glory shining  
Their restorer they shall see

Christ is coming! Christ is coming!  
Haste the joyous jubilee

**MARANATHA**

*Scribbler's jottings*

*Westgate Late Summer 2013*