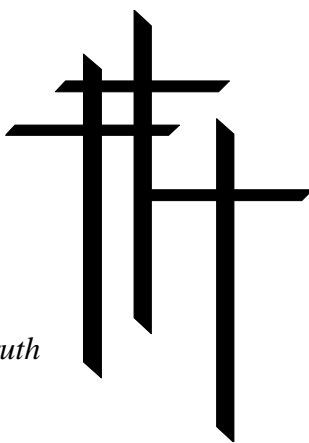


Timely Messenger

*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
Speaking the Truth in Love*



Volume 64 No. 5

May 2004

THE PROPHECY OF THE CHRIST

By Gregg Bing

Continued from last month

One of the most powerful testimonies to the authenticity of the Scriptures and to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of prophecy. The Old Testament Scriptures contain many prophecies about the nation of Israel, as well as the rise and fall of certain Gentile nations throughout history. However, the prophecies about “the Christ,” Israel’s promised Messiah, are of greatest importance. The Old Testament contains numerous

prophecies regarding His birth, His life, and His ministry, but the majority of the prophecies focus on Christ’s sufferings.

Sufferings of the Christ

The week before Jesus was crucified is commonly referred to as the “Passion Week.” The word *passion* refers to the time of Jesus’ sufferings (cf. Acts 1:3). This week began with Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, during which He was publicly proclaimed as the Son of David, Israel’s King (Luke

19:37-38). While people might have expected a king to enter the capital city in a grand and glorious procession, the prophet Zechariah was led of God to paint a very different picture of Israel’s coming King.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zech. 9:9)

This is how the Lord Jesus made His entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:1-11). Though it might have appeared, from this scene, that Jesus was about to become Israel’s King, it did not happen. The reason is given in Isaiah 53, which begins with these words:

“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has

no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” (Isa. 53:1-3)

While the crowds on that day were moved and excited about Jesus’ coming to Jerusalem, this excitement was due to the mighty works they had seen Him perform (Luke 19:37), particularly His raising of Lazarus (John 12:17-18). The majority of those in Israel viewed Jesus simply as a prophet (Matt. 16:13-4, 21:10-11); they did not recognize Him for who He truly was—the Son of God.

Even more significant was the reaction of the Jewish leaders to Jesus. They had rejected Him early in His ministry and “plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him” (Matt. 12:14). Their rejection of the Christ was

prophesied in the Old Testament.

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” (Psalm 118:22-23)

The Jewish leaders were worried over the crowd’s reaction to Jesus during His triumphal entry (John 12:19). Initially, they tried to “entangle Jesus in His talk” (Matt. 22:15) by confronting Him with a series of questions. When this failed, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people, assembled at the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, and “plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him” (Matt. 26:3-5). The problem was, they needed to do this out of the sight of the people, lest there be an uproar. The answer to their problem was provided in a way that they never expected.

Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus’ twelve apostles, “went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you

willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver” (Matt. 26:14-15). This may have amazed these rulers, but this, too, was prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures. The psalmist David wrote,

“Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” (Psalm 41:9)

While David may have written concerning his own friend, Ahithophel, who had betrayed him, the Holy Spirit spoke through David concerning Judas Iscariot (John 13:18). What is even more amazing is that the exact amount of money Judas would receive was foretold by the prophet Zechariah.

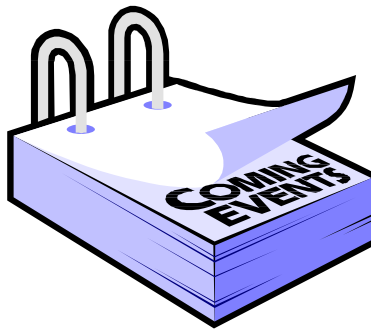
“Then I said to them, ‘If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.’ So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’—that

princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.” (Zech. 11:12-13)

Not only is the amount of the betrayal money foretold, but also what would eventually happen to the money. When Jesus was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin, Judas was “remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders” (Matt. 27:3). When they refused it, he threw the money down in the temple and went out and hanged himself. The chief priests reasoned that they could not keep the money in the temple treasury because it was “blood money,” so they took the pieces of silver and “bought with them the potter’s field to bury strangers in,” thus fulfilling Zechariah’s prophecy (Matt. 27:6-10).

The Old Testament Scriptures also prophesied how Jesus would die. Being a Jew, and being con-

(Continued on page 6)



July 5-9, 2004

Family Bible Camp

Our Family Bible Camp will be held at North Texas Baptist Conference Center (Camp Copass) in Denton, Texas on July 5-9, 2004.

This camp is for all ages with separate classes for preschoolers (ages 0-5), pre-juniors (ages 6-8), juniors (ages 9-12), young people (ages 13 through college age), and adults. Children under 9 years of age must stay with a parent or guardian.

The theme this year is: “To Know the Love of Christ.” See the registration and information form included in this issue for more information. **Deadline** for turning in registration forms is **Sunday, June 20, 2004.**

Timely Messenger

Published monthly by:

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Gregg Bing — Editor

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11:00 AM Morning Worship
6:00 PM Evening Worship

Mid-Week Services:

Tues. 10:00 AM Ladies Class
Wed. 7:00 PM Bible Study

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*Thanks for your help
in this matter!*

AN INFORMAL SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A Dispensational Approach

By R. B. Shiflet

II PETER

I. INTRODUCTION 1:1

A. The Author

1. A Servant
2. An Apostle

B. The Addressees

II. INVOCATION 1:2-4

III. IDEAL SPIRITUAL LIVING 1:5-7 (continued)

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” (2 Peter 1:5-7)

The next word in the list of spiritual characteristics is “patience.” Strong defines the word as “constancy, steadfastness; the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.” William Barclay describes it as “the courageous acceptance of everything that life can do to us and the transmuting of even the worst event into another step on the upward way.”

Next, we are to add “godliness” or “God-likeness.” Some versions translate it as “piety.” The word “piety,” however, is often used negatively as something that is hypocritical. The Pharisees had a pseudo-piety. Many Christian groups are “proud of their humility” and fancy themselves to be very pious. The word used by Peter indicates a two-way meaning. It is loyalty to God, first of all, and then loyalty to family and country. We used to sing a chorus in our camps:

*Putting God first in my life every day;
Taking His Word as my guide on life's way.
Yielded and living in His blest control;
So shall my life be a blessing to all.*

That is Biblical godliness.

Next comes “brotherly kindness” or brotherly love. The Greek word gives us our word “Philadelphia,” “the city of brotherly love.” “Phileo” is family love—love for brother or sister. “Adelphos” is brother. Early in Christian history this word came to be used to describe the loving relationship between brothers and sisters in Christ. A church without this is a church in constant turmoil, with no valid witness.

Finally, there is “charity” from “agape,” God’s kind of love that expects nothing in return. It is love for the unlovely. This is the greatest challenge of all. It is easy to love those who love us, but God’s desire is that we, His redeemed children, love the down and out, unlovely people.

One of the greatest examples of this virtue that I have ever seen was exemplified by a couple who visited our church many years ago. Their lovely young daughter had been brutally assaulted and murdered. When the criminal who did this was apprehended and sentenced to prison, the couple went to great effort to get permission from the state to visit this man. The authorities, expecting their motive to be revenge, were most reluctant to grant permission. They finally received the state’s approval and went to this man’s cell regularly to witness to him—to assure him that they were praying for him and desiring to see him receive Christ as Savior. At first, he was angry, bitter and rude to them, but they kept going. I am not sure that the man ever received Christ, but I am quite sure that this agape love is rare indeed. I am not at all sure that I could do what they did.

(To Be Continued)

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

(Continued from page 3)
demned by the Jews, it might be expected that Jesus' death would be by stoning, the Jews' method of capital punishment (Lev. 20:2). However, the 22nd Psalm, which was written about 1000 years before Christ was born, gives a vivid picture of His death by crucifixion. The psalm begins with the words: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" These were the very words Jesus cried out while in agony on the cross. He was not simply quoting Psalm 22:1; He was fulfilling God's prophecy.

Consider the detailed description of Jesus' death foretold in this 22nd Psalm. It describes the ridicule and scorn Jesus experienced from those who stood and watched Him die.

All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 'He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!'" (Psalm 22:7-8 with Matt. 27:43)

Psalm 22 details the physical effects of crucifixion: the tremendous thirst, the bones out of joint from hanging on the cross, the stress upon the heart, and the draining of all strength from the body.

"I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death." (Psalm 22:14-15)

Psalm 22 specifically states that His hands and His feet would be pierced.

"For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet." (Psalm 22:16)

This is a significant detail, for sometimes those crucified had their hands and feet tied to the cross.

Psalm 22 prophesies what the soldiers would do

at the foot of the cross.

"They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." (Psalm 22:18)

They "cast lots" for His clothing because Jesus' tunic was "without seam, woven from the top in one piece." To avoid tearing it, the soldiers chose to cast lots for it (John 19:23-24). Detailed prophecies, such as this, provide clear evidence of the truth of the Scriptures.

The 53rd chapter of Isaiah also prophesies about Christ's sufferings, focusing more on the reason why Jesus had to suffer and die—for our sins!

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us

all.” (Isa. 53:5-6)

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, ... My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.” (Isa. 53:10-11)

There are many more prophecies concerning the sufferings of the Christ, too many to mention them all, but consider the following: “He opened not His mouth” (Isa. 53:7 with Matt. 26:63). “He was numbered with the transgressors” (Isa. 53:12 with Matt. 27:38). “They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (Psalm 69:21 with John 19:28-29). “He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken” (Psalm 34:20 with John 19:33,36). “Him, whom they pierced” (Zech. 12:10 with John 19:34,37). “They made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death” (Isa. 53:9 with Matt. 27:57-60). Finally, the prophecy of the

resurrection of the Christ: “For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10 with Acts 2:30-31).

Even from this small sample of Old Testament prophecies, it is evident that the Bible is the Word of God, and that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Yet, the majority of the Jews of Jesus’ day rejected Him, just as they do today; and not just the Jews, but the Gentiles as well. The majority of the people of the world today continue to reject this wonderful truth. Why? Because they do not believe what God says. They willfully reject this truth, being disobedient to the Word (cf. 1 Pet. 2:8).

It’s not that people cannot believe, but that they will not. There are those who believe the Word today and are saved by that faith (Rom. 10:17). There were those who believed in Jesus’ day. When Andrew met Jesus, he returned to his brother, Simon Peter, and declared, “We have found the Messiah” (John 1:41). How did Andrew

know this? From the Scriptures! When Philip brought news of Jesus to his friend, Nathaniel, he said, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote: Jesus of Nazareth” (John 1:45). When Nathaniel met Jesus for himself, he declared, “You are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel” (John 1:49).

What about you? Do you believe? Having read the Scriptures and seen the evidence, do you believe that the Bible truly is the Word of God? Do you believe that Jesus of Nazareth, the One who is revealed in this Book, is the Christ, the Son of God? Do you believe that He came to this earth as a Man and died on the cross of Calvary for your sins? Do you believe that He rose from the dead after three days and ever lives to make intercession for you? Do you believe that He is the Way and that no one comes to the Father except through Him? The evidence is there—in the Scriptures. Believe the truth and be saved from your sins.

BIBLE STUDY BOOKS

The following Bible study materials are available free of charge for your personal use or for use in teaching a Bible class.

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- Past Pentecost to Paul
- Points to Ponder
- The Ages
- Saved by Grace
- Ministry of the Church
- The Perfect Will of God
- Once in a Lifetime
- Fellowship in Christ
- Hidden in God
- Thoughts on Vision
- Spiritual Fitness
- What Saith the Scripture
(Set of 6 Diff. Tracts)

by Mrs. Charles Wages

- Seasons
- Spiritual Thoughts for Young Minds
- A Man Named Paul
- Studies for Women

by R.B. Shiflet

- Informal Study: Philippians
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- The Lord's Supper

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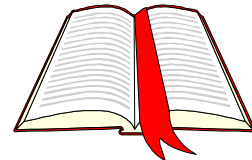
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by Gregg Bing

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- For God So Loved the World
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