



WHEN Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.* 22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. 23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26 Jesus answered, *He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.* And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, *That thou doest, do quickly.* 28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. 29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. 30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: **AND IT WAS NIGHT.** (John 13:21-30)

Judas fled into an eternal night of darkness with his betrayal, never again beholding the sun of a glorious day. He went out immediately after receiving the sop and hearing the declaration of the Lord, *Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.* 22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? (Matt 26:21-22) Please notice each of the Apostles wondered if it were him. This shows our hearts are so flawed with sin we do not even know them ourselves. But God DOES. No man knew the answer to that question, "Is it I" but Judas, and well he knew it.

Darkness is the natural state of the unbeliever. Believing himself to be wise, he is made stupid. Darkness is also an absence of the Light of God's Word. Observe how it permeated the minds of men ere the coming of Emmanuel.

4 Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. 5 Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. 6 As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months. 7 Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. 8 Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to

raise up their mourning. 9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day. (Job 3:4-9)

26 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward. 27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks. 28 For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. (Psalm 18:26-28)

The darkness was so heavy one could cut it with a knife. Despite the torches of Light born by the prophets from Abel to Zacharias, the Light had finally been extinguished – it seemed, FOREVER! God had taught His people through long-suffering and patience. The Law was given as testimony of man's inability to be righteous in and of himself. Something far greater was needed to satisfy the righteous indignation of the Lord arising from our dreadful sins and shortcomings. Of course, God was not surprised at the Fall of Adam eastward in Eden. He was not surprised at the great wickedness of Noah's Day, nor of the pridefulness of desire of man to build a one-world government at Babel. Abraham was a man of faith, but even Abraham failed of righteousness despite his close walk with God. The Law and Commandments given to Moses on the heights of Sinai were first broken, *in toto*, by Moses himself. God was not surprised at this failure of character in Moses, either. It was all a part of His foreordained plan to draw men by the unbreakable cable of LOVE to Himself through the sacrificial death of His only Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the close of the age of the Kings, including the failures of Saul, David, and others, the people of God were demoralized. They were also in bondage now both to sin and to the despotic rule of Babylon. Cyrus the Great, an anointed and benevolent minister of God to free national Israel once more (as He had done in Egypt) from harsh alien bondage, rose to power and was empowered by God to defeat the mighty walls of Babylon and enter the city. There he met Daniel the prophet who revealed to the great King the parchments of Isaiah and others which prophesied specifically the triumph of Cyrus, and even called him by name two hundred years before his birth. This prompted Cyrus to issue a proclamation of prayer to the people of his conquered provinces:

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:1-4)

Still, being liberated from Babylon, national Israel could not prove faithful to God. Those among Israel who were believers of the Promise made to Abraham were a tiny remnant of what we could term 'Spiritual Israel' which exists today in those who believe in that Promised Seed of Abraham – the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's last torchlight of prophecy in the person of Malachi now stands up to utter the last Light and Hope of prophecy that would precede four hundred years of abject darkness and silence from the Throne of God. Having murdered and horribly mistreated the prophets across the ages of the Law and Prophets, God would now deprive the people of the voice of prophecy – for four hundred dark years. Imagine the darkness and despair of those who trusted in the secular power of Israel as one sand castle after another was washed away by the waning tides of unfaithfulness. Only those who KNEW God by heart, and believed all that He had promised for His people in a

Redeemer, were able to grasp the dimly lit cinders of hope in the devastation of the dreams of a corrupt Israel.

God promised His people to wait with patience as His Mighty Hand endeavored to fulfill the Promise made to Abraham. Patience is the fruit of Faith. God even promised to endow us with an altogether New Language (the Gospel): *9 For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.* (Zeph 3:9)

Though the shadows gather in ever-increasing darkness, the Promise of a Redeemer was closer now than ever before: *6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; 7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.* (Hag 2:6-7)

Zechariah prepares for the salient prophecies of Malachi in making a number of completely descriptive points concerning the coming Lord:

8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. (Zech 3:8)

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (Zech 9:9)

. . . . and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. (Zech 12:8) Of course, our Lord is called, in his Incarnated Body, the Son of David, but is truly God as well.

9 For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. (Zech 3:9) Jesus Christ is that Stone that the builders rejected, but has become the Chief Cornerstone!

12 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. 13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD. (Zech 11:12-13) This was the going price for a servant. (see Matthew 26:15 & 27:3-10)

. . . . and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. (Zech 12:10)

1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. (Zech 13:1) *34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.* (John 19:34) This was the Rock that was cleft by Moses at Mt. Horeb.

Now on the heels of this long and dark night of four hundred years comes the fulfillment of Malachi's prophetic utterance. *1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.* (Mal 3:1) (The ministry of John the Baptist here) For a fuller understanding, read all of Chapter 3. *1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under*

the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. 4 Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. 5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Mal 4:1-6)

. . . . weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” (Psalm 30:5)

How true! The long, dark night is coming to an end as God has prepared, from the Foundation of the World, a Great Light symbolized by a Star (literally as great Sun which every star is). That Star heralded the fulfillment of God’s promise and ended the silence of darkness. It was not seen by the royalty or priestly class of Israel, but by distant strangers of the East – the Magi of Persia. They sought, and found, the Promised Seed of Abraham. It was the promised Advent which we observe in the church – the Coming of the Promised Seed of Abraham symbolized in the Star of Bethlehem. The last word of the Old Testament is the Word ‘CURSE’ for the Law is a curse unto us; but the last Word of the New Testament is, *Even so, Come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. AMEN (Rev 22:21)*