

You're of no earthly value unless you're...

Heavenly Minded

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In this issue...

Look on Him and Live Happy Hour Preparing the Way for Gog-Magog

Dear Friends,

It was Peter who upon witnessing the power of Christ in a miraculous haul of fish said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" How often and relentlessly does our enemy seek to make us think that we must say the same thing. It is all an ugly attempt to magnify our sin above our Lord, to diminish in our minds His love and grace. Never, never tell the Lord to depart. It's true – you are a miserable sinner, but you have a truly masterful Savior. What He asks is that we die to self. Generally, this 'martyrdom' comes day by day as we deal with our sin-nature. It raises its nasty countenance and we sometimes just really blow it. But repentance goes hand in hand with humility and as one wise pastor said, 'There's no humility without humiliation.' "A true servant of Jesus Christ is one who is willing to experience martyrdom for the reality of the gospel of God. When a moral person is confronted with contempt, immorality, disloyalty, or dishonesty, he is so repulsed by the offense that he turns away and in despair closes his heart to the offender. But the miracle of the redemptive reality of God is that the worst and the vilest offender can never exhaust the depths of His love. Paul did not say that God separated him to show what a wonderful man He could make of him, but "to reveal His Son in me . . ." (Oswald Chambers)

In Christ's Love, John and Darlene Dickey



For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 1Cor 1:26

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Rom 11:29

Art: Fishers of Men by Simon Dewey

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Look On Him and Live!

The confusion was driving him nuts. His whole life had been spent pursuing the wisdom of the elders and the knowledge of the scriptures. He knew the traditions better than most Pharisees. In fact, he was known as the teacher of Israel. And for most of his life, he'd been quite confident about his knowledge.

But then came this itinerant rabbi doing these truly amazing signs. He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, new limbs to the lame. Demons even fled at his word. Yet it was his word that troubled Nicodemus. His teachings confused him for though the signs were undoubtedly from God, his words didn't seem to jive with the traditions of the elders.

And so, here he was, approaching the 'light' under cover of darkness. As he neared, he came to Jesus with sincere desire and doubt.

"Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

But Jesus knew immediately the source of Nic's dilemma. And John presented it in his gospel because the poor Pharisee is not alone. We can all wear his sandals so to speak. Most of us at some time or another get caught in the same mess.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Jesus is the fullness of the expression of God's Kingdom for He is the King and all the promises of

God in Him are yes and amen. To see Jesus for who He is, is to see the Kingdom. However, Nic was more confused than ever. He said, *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

Now, to 'marvel' comes from the word meaning to look at. Jesus was telling Nicodemus that he was caught up in a skewed analysis – looking at the wrong thing. Consequently, his carnal or logical mind was befuddled.

Jesus continued, *"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

He was saying, 'You hear the sound of my words but you don't know 'where I'm coming from' or 'where I'm going with this.' I am of the Spirit and what I'm saying is of the Spirit. If you're going to 'get it' you'll have to be radically changed – born again spiritually. And for that to happen, you'll have to look at the right thing.'

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

He was still tunneled into the 'how' and not the 'Who'. *Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know*

and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

Now, Christ was leading him along the path of discovery. When He said, "We speak what We know..." it is more appropriately translated, "We speak of what We see with awareness and consider." And when He followed with, "...and testify what We have seen" it means, "and bear witness to what We've stared at and discerned clearly, what we've experienced as a consequence."

He said, 'What I've told you is earthly and you don't believe. How are you going to receive the heavenly?' For example, *"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."* Now, some commentators proposed that this is a retrospective insert by the Apostle. I don't buy that. It's a statement that is completely in the flow if you would of His instruction. Heaven, is a totally different dimension. Time is quite different there. Past, present and future are wrapped in the eternal now. Surely, this was a mind bender for Nicodemus. It is for me.

But graciously, Jesus gave him more to consider – something, he should have been able to relate to a little better. *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."*

To track with Jesus (and Nic), we must turn to the Old Testament book of Numbers. In chapter 21, it was near the conclusion of their wilderness wanderings but the

Hebrew people were quite down. Miriam had died; Aaron died, they'd been 'molested' on one side by a small army of Canaanites and the Edomites on the other side refused to grant them passage to their destination on the Kings Highway. It probably seemed like the whole world was against them.

And even though God had given them manna to eat, fresh water from the Rock to drink and their sandals had never worn out – miraculous provision – nevertheless, they were really bummed! As they journeyed around Edom, *"the soul of the people became very discouraged."* (or literally, cut down like grass).

"And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." (Num 21:5)

You might say they'd been outcasts from the 'world community' their whole lives. After wandering in the wilderness for so long, they even came to disdain the miraculous manna. It was the 'time of the end' – the end of their wanderings, but they didn't know it. They'd seen God's hand at work in the defeat of the Canaanites, but their hearts were hardened. They complained that there was no food or water which was a blatant misrepresentation. They were simply ignoring the truth of God's gracious protection and provision. They'd even driven Moses to strike the Rock (rather than speak to it) in anger and frustration... There's only one way to deal with hard, contentious hearts...

“So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.” (v6) Now, the word serpent in this verse is implied. The actual Hebrew term is ‘seraph’ which simply means fiery and thus leads most to conclude that these creatures inflicted a burning poison with their bite. This word seraph though is also used in Isaiah chapter six to describe heavenly beings about the throne of God. Again, the emphasis is upon their fiery appearance or nature.

You see, this passage in Numbers 21 is both practical and prophetic concerning belief in Christ and fire sent from heaven is the key in each case. Practically, the Jews had become so hard hearted to the Lord that they needed a fiery affliction to break through their dullness and cynicism. More than judgment, this was a merciful ‘wake-up call’ from God. In their deplorable spiritual condition, there was no way for them to enter the promised land yet they were on the threshold, approaching the fulfillment of the inheritance.

The bites of these fiery serpents were a physical manifestation of Israel’s spiritual environment and condition. Now, interestingly enough, this word for bite also means to onerously oppress with a debt and this is picture perfect. You see, in a similar fashion sin has bitten us all. It has poisoned all mankind with an unholy flame. As a consequence, we are also overwhelmingly in debt – obligated to it and to Satan, utterly oppressed.

“Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned,

for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed *for the people.”* (v7) It is fundamental that if we are to be born again, the fiery bite of sin must be recognized and dealt with. We must understand that we’ve been ‘bitten’ and without a remedy, we will indeed die.

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.’ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.” (v8,9) Contrary to the people’s petition, God did not remove the fiery beasts but instead provided a cure. Neither, has He removed sin from our existence, but He has provided the perfect prescription – the pole.

God told Moses to make an image of the fiery creatures and set it on a pole. This is a terrible/wonderful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was likewise placed upon a pole – the cross of Calvary. And as Moses made the serpent out of bronze – the metal of judgment – so God laid on Christ the judgment for all our sins, all our poison, all our fiery bites.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* That is, Jesus became the bronze serpent upon the pole if you would – not a sinner but rather sin. He

carried the entire debt for us all.

And the people were healed by looking at the image on the pole. This verb in the Hebrew does not mean a passing glance but instead to *approve, consider, discern, enjoy, have experience, take heed, respect, regard with pleasure, look intently.* (Strong’s) That means you won’t see what Christ did for you unless you really look at Him and His sacrifice in this fashion. It needs to sink in. That’s where the healing is found.

John recorded this teaching early in his gospel because if we are to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior, we must come to the cross and FIX our gaze on the One who is upon it – to ponder, discern, recognize and appreciate. We can’t stamp out the serpents. If we pretend they don’t exist or call them by another name, we’ll die from their bite. We can’t always avoid them, but we can come to the pole – to the cross.

Prophetically, this passage speaks of and to the Jewish people. Spiritually, they have wandered in a dry and desolate wilderness for nearly two millennia. They have suffered great persecution, but God has provided for them in just amazing ways. Nevertheless, they have as a whole come to disdain their God. Some research indicates that up to 90% of the Jews in Israel itself are either agnostics or atheists. Consequently, those in the religious minority are considered extremists.

And as with the story in Numbers, they are approaching the end, the end of the age. Once again, fire is in their future. To them, the Word says, *“See, the LORD is coming with fire,*

and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.” (Isa 66:15)

“In the whole land,” declares the LORD, “two-thirds (of the Jewish people) will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is our God.’” (Zech 13:8-10)

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.” (Isa 43:2)

The soon coming time of tribulation will be filled with fire, and as with Moses, the Jews who would be saved out this great trial will have to **look** upon the One whom they ‘pierced’ – the One upon the cross. As the scripture records, *“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will **look on Me** whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”* (Zech 12:10) So shall the remnant of Israel be healed from sin, saved by grace.

Friend, like Nicodemus and me, you’ve been bitten. What will you do about it? Do nothing and you will die. There’s only one cure. Consider Jesus Christ. Look on Him and live!

Happy Hour

It's a strange name for a town – Drunken. But, this is the place Christ came to get a drink. The story is found in John chapter four.

You may have heard great sermons on witnessing or the compassion of Jesus or perhaps on the acceptance of cultural differences coming from this passage of scripture but we will consider it in the light of John's stated desire to help us believe in Christ (John 20:31). And first, we need a little geographical background.

At the time, Israel was divided into three regions. In the north was Galilee; in the south was Judea and sandwiched between them was the 'defiled' land of Samaria. However, when a conservative Jew wished to pass from the north area to the south or vice versa, he would not travel through Samaria. In fact, he would cross the Jordan river and make a large detour to the east through the region of Perea. You see, the Jews and Samaritans held a lot of ill will for each other. In fact, "Samaritan" was a curse word for the Jew.

It was back in the year 722 BC that the Assyrians invaded and crushed the northern kingdom of Israel and took the ten tribes living there into foreign captivity. It was a monstrous act really. The Assyrians literally put fish hooks in their captives' mouths, stripped them naked, tied them together and dragged them back to their homeland where they were kept hostage. After this, they sent some

of their own people into Israel to colonize it. As a consequence, they intermarried with the Jews there who hadn't been taken away and 'la voila' – you have Samaritans. They were mongrels, half-breeds and thus disgusting in the eyes of the Jews. They were banned from the temple in Jerusalem and so they erected their own temple on Mt. Gerazim. Now, even though they revered the Torah – the books of Moses – they altered the stories such that Mt. Gerazim became the location of the Garden of Eden, the resting place for Noah's ark and the site where Abraham offered up Isaac. ('Rewriting scripture' a la Mormonism and other cults is not new!)

In John chapter four, Jesus was on His way north to Galilee from Judea. "He left Judea, because he was likely to be persecuted there even to the death; such was the rage of the Pharisees against him." (Matthew Henry) And the scripture says, "*But He needed to go through Samaria.*" This is wonderfully prophetic. You see, Jesus left Judea to spend time in Samaria, a gentile-ish land, and as we will see, He then afterward returned to a Jewish region. This is pictorially reminiscent of the two comings of our Lord to Israel – in the first, He was 'unwelcomed' and in the second He will be lauded and desired. And between these two He's been ministering to non-Jews in what we call the Church Age. It aligns perfectly with our study chapter here in John.

"So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph." There was a good deal of heritage in this place named

'Drunken'. Abimelech was made king here; it was Jeroboam's royal seat; the Valley of Achor called the door of hope in Hosea 2:15 ran along by this city and to top it off, Joseph's bones were buried there. (Gen 48:22, Jos 24:32). Yes, it had a strong Jewish heritage yet the Samaritan zealots claimed 'God was through with the Jew' so to speak. Whoa! That's sounds like today's false doctrines of substitution, doesn't it?

"Now Jacob's well was there." You know, this well is still there. It's about 150 feet deep and one of the few authentic sites you can visit in Israel. However, assuming the water level was about the same as it is now, can you imagine hauling buckets or jars of water up 150 feet? That's a lot of work. If you weren't thirsty to begin with, you certainly would be.

But it wasn't always that way or so it would seem for the word used for well here means a fount or flowing spring whereas later, as it is spoken of, the term used for well means a deep cistern. It appears that Jacob's well may have changed from one that flowed like a fountain to one that was just a plain lot of work to get anything out of.

"Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour (noon). A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink.' For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food." Now, as you've likely been taught, this was indeed radical.

Ordinarily, a rabbi of that time would not even acknowledge his wife if he saw her on the street. But here, Jesus began to minister to the lowest

social outcast. Outcast? Yes. You see, the women typically went for water in the morning or evening but this lady was there at noon. Once you hear her story, you'll understand that she probably had few female friends.

But that's where the gospel finds 'paydirt'. The 'together elite' don't usually respond to its call. It is the sinner that can be saved if you know what I mean. Unfortunately, the church corporately spends far too much time and resource trying to impress the unimpressable.

Anyway, the dialog began as, "...the woman of Samaria said to Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?' For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans."

"Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'"

Keeping our focus on coming to faith in Christ, let's consider this woman's heart. To begin with, she's bluntly honest and this is always the starting point on the road to salvation. Those who try to play an insincere or dishonest game of verbal dodge-ball with God find Him silent. But Jesus gave this woman a response that engaged her beautifully. When He said, "living water", the original language is water 'having vital power within itself, the power to enjoy real life – fresh, strong and powerful'. Now, that's no belly-wash!

"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater

than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

Note that her first inclination was to think that Jesus would draw this 'living water' from Jacob's well. Her question was sincere and like most all of us who believe, her initial understanding of Christ's words was foggy at best. She challenged Him based upon her limited tradition and a supposed link to the patriarch. It is much like those today who suppose that their salvation is

somehow enabled by a loose relationship they share with someone 'religious'. This is often because they think they have to be good to go to heaven, that salvation has to be earned, and they know they're not 'good enough' so riding on someone else's coattails so to speak is the only alternative.

"Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.'"

What the world offers, like Jacob's well did originally, can come easy and initially be a temporary thirst satisfier. But over time, it takes more and more effort. It gets

tougher and tougher to slake that dryness in your soul. Finally, you can wonder if it is even worth all the effort for the momentary satisfaction. In contrast, Jesus spoke of a source that billows



Living Water by Simon Dewey

eternally with life – a fountain that springs up or literally leaps. It's the same descriptive word used when Peter and John saw the lame man healed outside the temple in Acts 3:8 who, after being healed, "...entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."

"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.'" As yet, she still didn't understand but she recognized that this was what she wanted. Salvation has never been understood. If you're like me, there are fewer and fewer brain cells 'upstairs' and I'm grateful that understanding everything is not the key to eternal life. This woman only recognized that what Christ offered was WAY better than what she had.

"Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.'"

"The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.'"

"Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.'"

There is no other way; there is no real conversion without conviction. Salvation is not an intellectual discovery. It is the humbling confrontation with your sin before a merciful and gracious Creator. That's why Jesus presented it to her. Now, I submit that this woman is not just an example of a sad story – someone who for whatever reason went through five or six men.

Rather, she typifies us all. Now, you may think, 'I'm not that bad!' But, actually, you are. So am I. Even if your grandparents and parents were missionaries and you've worked with Billy Graham for decades, the truth is that we are all as deeply in need of salvation as the dear woman in this story. The great apostle Paul concluded, "...that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinners**; of whom I am **chief**." (1 Tim 1:15)

"Notice also Jesus didn't say, 'You've had five husbands. Let's talk about Husband #1: Sam. Then, we'll talk about why you left George in Session 2. Come next week, and in the third session, we'll talk about Pete. In Session 4, we'll discuss Harry.' No, it didn't take Jesus five sessions to discuss the five husbands. He didn't delve into co-dependency, or into the woman's past iniquities. Yes, Jesus revealed her sin — but He didn't revel in it. Big difference. I think it is dangerous for people who mean well to start

reveling in the past sin of another — talking about it, exploring it, pursuing it. Jesus does not model this for any minister of the Gospel, or for any servant of the Kingdom. He says, 'I know you're a sinner. You know you're a sinner. Now, let's go on from there.'" (Jon Courson)

"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.'" Her perception of Christ was changing. We commonly think of a prophet as one who predicts the future accurately but most literally a prophet is one who speaks the truth. Now, this truth wasn't particularly secret. There were many who undoubtedly knew it but how surprising it is sometimes for us to learn that God already knows our whole story. He knows it all and yet He comes to us.

Some say that her comment here was a theological dodge of sorts like when you are sharing with someone about Christ and they say, "Well, who did Cain marry??" or "Can God make a rock so big He can't move it?" but I don't agree. This woman's interest was sincere and she, observing that Jesus had a prophet's insight into her life posed a question that probably had really nagged her. Her experience and training led her to believe that something was amiss – she'd been taught one thing and yet the truth was somehow elusive. Both the Jews and the Samaritans couldn't be right. This woman wanted to know the truth of the matter even if it contradicted the traditions she'd grown up with. Again, a sincere desire for the truth is fundamental to

growing in faith. So many Christians never progress in their spiritual walk because they stop desiring the truth – that’s because it’s humbling, very humbling.

“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’”

Jesus said, “You don’t see or perceive (and thus, know) what you worship.” And this isn’t limited to the woman or the situation. Undoubtedly, Jesus is referring to the mongrel nature of the theological ‘soup’ the Samaritans believed. But, it also speaks to the whole of fallen humanity. The truth is that everyone’s life is an act of worship to someone or something whether to self, Satan or the Son of God. Nevertheless, the vast majority of non-believers don’t see it. At best, they are playing a dangerous game with eternal consequences. Sin has drastically contorted their perception.

This woman wanted to see, to know the truth and He was staring her right in the face. From her sincere question came a liberating answer – God is not stoically sitting in the heavens listening to some and ignoring others. Rather, He’s actively seeking out those who will worship in His Spirit and with a true heart – nothing feigned, no games,

no mindless religious routine. Jesus “needed” to go through Samaria as an illustration of what God is doing in this age – seeking those, like this woman, who want the truth and who will relate to Him, worship Him, literally ‘kiss the hand’ in Spirit and truth.

“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’”

“Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’”

Ah, this was the turning point. Note, that she responded, “I know” rather than “we know”. It became personal for her. Belief in Jesus Christ is nothing if it’s not personal. It is never because your parents are believers or your spouse. In her statement, you can just sense this woman’s anticipation of the glorious truth being revealed to her heart. She wasn’t theologically ‘savvy’ but she knew she needed a Savior. Jesus was first a “Jew”, then a “Sir”, then a “prophet”. Here, she brought up the topic of a Messiah, not Jesus.

At what point will you be satisfied with your relationship with Christ? Do you know you need a Savior? I submit that Jesus reveals Himself to us to the degree we desire to know Him.

“And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or, ‘Why are You talking with her?’”

“The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ‘Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’”

Then they went out of the city and came to Him.”

Ha! You know, there’s a waterpot left behind every time the living water leaps forth in someone’s heart. The things we once thought important, even vital to satisfying our ‘thirst’ are simply not our passion any longer. I remember when I got saved, I ran down the hallways of the dorm I lived in knocking on all the doors of my friends, incredibly eager to share with them what I’d just discovered. So this woman tasted the heavenly fount and could not wait to share the news. Nevertheless, she was humble in her approach.

A few verses later, the scripture records, *“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word.”*

“Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’”

Again, the prophetic posture of this story is displayed. Jesus stayed with these non-Jews for two days and they were just wonderfully receptive. No miracles were recorded; just the power of His word was enough to bring conversion. Peter recorded that, *“But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”* (2 Pet 3:8) That is, we can see this ministry lasting, in a prophetic sense, about

two thousand years. Of course, we are quickly approaching that point aren’t we? And it was after this period of time that Jesus returned to ‘His people’.

This also helps me understand why we’ve not seen during the church age as many bona fide miracles as we might think we would. Sure, God’s still in the business of miracles, but in all honesty, most people have come to Christ in this age based upon hearing Him personally speak to their heart.

It was in a mongrel Samaria that Jesus was first widely recognized as the Savior of the World. In a town called Drunken, it was indeed a ‘Happy Hour’ when the Lord found there those receptive to the Heavenly Quaff. For two days they listened and received the Living Water of His Words. May we all be as sincere with the Lord as this woman by the well. May we likewise leave our waterpots behind to spread the good news. It’s a joyous message, a happy hour if you would, and we haven’t got much time left.

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Preparing The Way for Gog-Magog

January 18, 2005
Jack Kinsella



The Russians are denying they have any plans to sell [their] new Iskander missile system to Syria, telling the State Department in Washington, "There are no talks under way between Russia and Syria concerning shipment of such missiles. Such talks are not taking place."

What does the denial mean?

It means there ARE talks underway between Russia and Syria concerning the shipments of missiles. You can tell the difference. When Russia is denying a policy, it means it is true. If it wasn't true, the Russians wouldn't bother to reply at all.

The denial was issued by Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov during an official visit by the Russian diplomat to Washington where he met with Secretary of State Colin Powell.

While Ivanov was denying the talks, Syria's President, Bashar Assad, was finalizing the details of his scheduled trip to St. Petersburg on January 24 to sign the deal to buy the missiles. Russia says it isn't currently talking about shipping.

It is worth noting that the meeting between Assad and Vladimir Putin will be in Putin's home town of St. Petersburg, instead of a more-high profile meeting in Moscow.

I was fascinated to read that most of the major newspapers, and even the State Department interpreted Ivanov's statement as a "denial" that Moscow is planning to sell missiles to Syria.

You'd think that, after Bill Clinton, professionals like that would be better at parsing a statement to see what is REALLY being said.

You know, like when you are asked if you ever smoked marijuana and you

deny it by saying; "I never broke any of America's drug laws" (because you smoked pot in England?)

Indeed, there are no talks underway concerning the SHIPMENT of missiles because Assad won't sign the deal until January 24. Why discuss a missile 'shipment' until after the sale goes through? And Ivanov's denial concerns 'shipment' talks -- THOSE are the talks that are 'not taking place'.

The missiles in question are not prohibited missiles under international arms agreements because of their limited range. The Iskander SS-26 is an updated version of the Soviet Scud missile with improved guidance and capable of carrying a chemical/biological or nuclear payload.

In tests, the Iskander delivered its two 1,000 pound warheads within a twenty-five yard circle of its intended target.

Its range is just 180 miles -- within acceptable international limits. But its range is more than sufficient to put all of Israel within Damascus' kill-zone. It can easily overcome existing air defenses.

It has no NATO equivalent and is extremely effective because it is launched from a mobile launching pad. It is satellite guided, and can 'see' through bad weather like our smart bombs can.

And the Iskander is only ONE of the weapons Moscow is talking about SELLING (not delivering, that comes later) to the terrorist-sponsoring Ba'athist government in Damascus. The second missile is even scarier.

The Igla SA-18 is the terrorist weapon of choice. It is the successor to the shoulder-fired SAM-7, upgraded and improved until it is one of the most deadly hand-held anti-aircraft weapons ever devised.

The improved SA-18 gives the user more time to fire, has a greater range than the SAM-7, and unlike the SAM, is not a heat-seeking missile, so it is immune to flares. That means it can cut through virtually all of our current missile defense systems.

Syria is one of the chief sponsors of Middle Eastern terrorism. Syria harbors and equips Hezbollah, sheltering the terror group in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Terror groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad are listed in the Damascus phone book.

There is intelligence that indicates Saddam sent his WMD stockpiles to Syria just before the US invasion, and Syria operates a direct pipeline into Iraq, facilitating the movement of insurgents and [providing] weapons to fuel the insurgency against the Iraqi and US governments.

Should the SA-18 fall into the hands of terrorists, no commercial aircraft in the world would be safe. No military aircraft in the world, (with the exception of the B-1 stealth bomber and the new F-22, of which we have very few) would have a chance against it.

A few dozen SA-18's in Iraq would effectively ground US air operations against terrorist strongholds, neutralizing the US air superiority advantage. It would shield Syria from Israeli retaliatory strikes from the air, leaving Israel with only its nuclear option to deploy in the event of war.

Syria enjoyed close ties with Moscow during the 50-year Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

But post-Soviet Russia has seen its influence wane in the aftermath of the fall of Communism. Iraq, for example, was once a Soviet client state. Today it is an American protectorate.

So Moscow is trying to repair the damage. It supplied Iran with nuclear technology and know-how, sold Tehran the same missiles it is now

planning to sell Damascus, and is generally resuming its traditional role as the principle supplier of arms to Middle Eastern dictatorships.

Russia has been upgrading Syrian military equipment for years, although this is the first new arms deal with Damascus since 1990.

This all has such a familiar ring to it, doesn't it? The sale of advanced weaponry, including nuclear know-how to Iran explains the ranking of 'Persia' as the principle ally of Russia in the Gog-Magog invasion.

Ezekiel 38:5 lists the major players in the following order: "Persia (Iran) Ethiopia (modern North Africa, including Sudan and Somalia) Libya, (Mediterranean North Africa) all of them with shield and helmet" (Gog-Magog's ground assault force)

It is simply stunning when one sits back and thinks about it. Ezekiel wrote of the invasion of Israel in the latter times'. From Ezekiel's vantage point in history, 'Israel' was destroyed more than 150 years before.

As a captive of Babylon, in Ezekiel's world, the Kingdom of Judah was history, Jerusalem and the Temple were in Babylonian hands, and there was every reason to doubt the survival of the Jewish people, let alone their future restoration in the 'latter times'.

But, from OUR vantage point in history, Ezekiel seems to be discussing our daily newspaper headlines.

As far as Syria is concerned, it plays no role in the Gog-Magog invasion, despite its current cozy relationship with Moscow.

Syria, as a principle sponsor of Middle East terrorism and Israel's chief tormentor, has a prophetic destiny distinct from that of Gog-Magog.

Damascus is painting itself into a corner. By purchasing the Russian

SA-18 and SS-26, it is virtually guaranteeing its own destruction.

Its arsenal will render Israel incapable of responding with conventional weapons to any Syrian attack, leaving Israel with only its nuclear option. Now a look at Isaiah's prophecy concerning Syria's future.

First, Damascus is the world's oldest continuously inhabited city. It was old when Solomon built the First Temple in Jerusalem three thousand years ago. It was old when the Apostle Paul met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus.

But Isaiah prophesied, "The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap." (Isaiah 17:1)

Since this has never occurred in history to this day, it remains an unfulfilled prophecy - so far. But one extremely likely to be fulfilled -- should the undeniable Syrian intentions to arm themselves, literally to death -- go forward as planned.

So much of Bible prophecy is beginning to fall into place that it is almost becoming routine.

Earthquakes, famines, wars, rumors of wars, pestilence, signs in the sun, the moon, the stars . . . the distress of nations, with perplexity. . . men's hearts failing them for fear at what is taking place -- it is almost TOO much to contemplate, until the supernatural becomes routine to the point Peter spoke of:

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2nd Peter 3:3-4)

To my mind, that verse has taken on new meaning. In years past, I read it as meaning that the lost would scoff --

but by and large, the lost are the ones most interested in Bible prophecy.

They are the ones buying up most of the books and movies about prophecy. The 'Left Behind' series has sold 42 million copies through mainly secular bookstore outlets.

Many Christians, having grown weary of hearing about prophecy, signs, a Rapture and the coming Tribulation, are concluding that maybe this isn't it, after all. I heard Jerry Jenkins, co-author of the Left Behind series, suggest to Bill O'Reilly last night that maybe the Rapture 'might not happen for another thousand years'.

The sheer preponderance of evidence has dulled the sense of wonder and awe at the miraculous -- when miracles are routine, the lack of miracles becomes noteworthy.

The Old Testament is a record of an ongoing series of miraculous signs, prophecies and direct contact between God and man. The New Testament is a record of another brief period of the miraculous becoming routine.

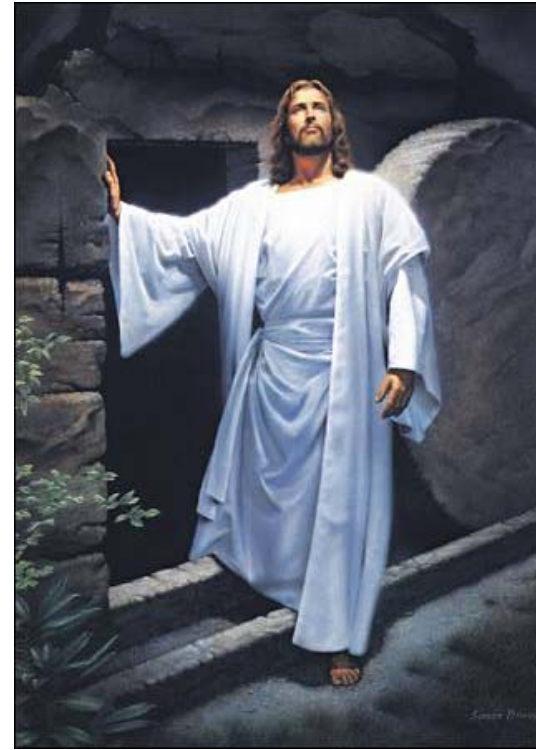
That is why the 400 year period between the Testaments is so noteworthy it is called the 'Silent Period'.

After 2000 years of relative silence, in this generation, God is talking to us again. The miraculous is becoming so routine it is losing the 'gee whiz!' factor for many.

"But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up."

Therefore be ye also ready: for IN SUCH AN HOUR AS YE THINK not the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 24:43-44)

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He Lives by Simon Dewey

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? Hosea 13:14