

# STRAIGHTWAY

“AND STRAIGHTWAY THEY FORSOOK THEIR NETS, AND FOLLOWED HIM” (MARK 1:18).

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

## Jesus, “The Messiah”

Dr. H. T. Spence

(Reprint)

*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks... (Dan. 9:25)*

*We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ (John 1:41).*

One of the great and precious truths that steps forward at this season of the year is the story of the coming of Messiah. The title *Messiah* is a most profound title that portrays Jesus, the Son of God. Its origin and conceptual mutation in the Old Testament is truly a powerful revelation of the divine appointment of our Lord by His Father.

### The Etymology of Messiah

The etymology of the term *Messiah* is to be found in the Hebrew language. The Old Testament presents the term as *Mashiah*; it is transliterated in the Greek as *Messias* from which our

English word is derived. Of course, the Greek word for Messiah is *Christos*.

In the Old Testament the term *Messiah* was used for kings and priests, those who were consecrated to their offices by the ceremony of anointing with oil. It applies only to a priest in an adjective form, such as “the anointed priest.” In its substantive use it was restricted to a king. Saul was called “the Lord’s Anointed.” We also see it used to identify David (2 Sam. 19:2) and Zedekiah (Lam. 4:20). As we peruse the music room of the Bible, the Book of Psalms, the king is designated as “mine,” or “thine,” or “his” anointed. In Isaiah 45:1, Cyrus is declared in prophecy as the anointed of God. In Psalm 105, even the patriarchs were called “mine anointed ones.”

Surprisingly, the only time in the Old Testament that the term *Messiah* is used of the coming, future king (Jesus) is in Daniel 9:25; He is here called “Messiah the Prince.” Therefore,

it must be realized that the special title *Messiah* in the Old Testament is never applied to the unique king of the future except in Daniel 9:25. It was the later Jews of the post-Old Testament literary writings who first used the term in a future, kingly context. Today, among the Jews, the Book of Daniel is not part of the prophetic readings in the synagogue partly because centuries ago the rabbis were fearful that the Jews would believe this prophecy (Dan. 9:25) referred to the person Jesus whom they crucified on the cross.

From the perspective of the Old Testament, the Messiah is seen as the instrument by which God's kingdom is to be established in Israel and in the world. There is this hope running through the Old Testament of a

personal deliverer. In the light of this hope, the Jews were a nation that lived in the future. They lived always in the hope of the future; they lived with strong expectations that there were "good times coming." They looked beyond their sins to when judgment would be gone and the Lord would restore them and their kingdom. From the time of their captivities, they have always been looking ahead to the final era of their history.

Whenever the term *Messianic* was used over the centuries, it was used in a double sense. First, it was a term designating a larger hope, a hope of a glorious future for the nation of Israel. Second, in a narrower sense, it implied the coming of a personal Messiah, one who would be the prominent personality in the perfected kingdom. In today's Jewish society, the first view is more accepted over the second. Only a remnant of Jews today interprets the use of *Messianic* to imply a personality.

## **STRAIGHTWAY**

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### **Messiah – A King**

We must remember that the chief element of the Old Testament concept of Messiah is that of the King. It was truly believed—and is still believed today—that through the appointment of a king, God would work out His saving purposes for His people. In the Old Testament theocratic government, the Jews viewed that Jehovah ruled through an individual such as Moses, Joshua, the judges, and kings. The Jews

have believed in an everlasting covenant of government given to David in this regard:

*And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David (2 Sam. 7:11–17).*

There is also the promise given to David by God in 2 Samuel 23, where David gives his final words:

*Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, the Spirit of the LORD spake to me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel*

*said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow (2 Sam. 23:1–5).*

Isaiah was the first of the prophets to speak of an extraordinary king to come. The earlier prophets did speak of the restoration of the divisions of the kingdoms becoming as one (Judah and Ephraim) as well as their possessions being restored. However, it was not until the Assyrian captivity that the personality of the king was brought into prophetic prominence as a contradistinction to that of the world powers of the Gentiles. During this time Isaiah gave several prophecies concerning a coming one:

*Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may*

know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria (Isa. 7:11–17).

In the above passage, as well as in the two below, the anointed King will be endowed by the Spirit to discharge the royal functions in the kingdom of God. Note this in the prophecy found in Isaiah 9:6, 7 as well as 11:2:

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

*And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.*

Micah, a contemporary to Isaiah, gives a similar passage describing the messianic or anointed king:

*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (Mic. 5:2).*

The prophecy in Micah 5:3 is a classic one concerning the Virgin Mary:

*Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.*

After such prophecies and the times of these prophets, the messianic concept began to lose its luster in Jewish history for two reasons. First, the throne of David lost much of its power and influence. Second, the figure of the ideal king would not be portrayed again in its former glory and spiritual color.

### **Messiah and the Time of the Captivity**

Although no mention was made of an anointed king during the days of Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, the hope of a Davidic ruler was kept alive by Jeremiah and Ezekiel:

*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth (Jer. 23:5).*

*But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them (Jer. 30:9).*

*Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him (Ezek. 21:26, 27).*

*And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd (Ezek. 34:23).*

*And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them (Ezek. 37:24).*

Yes, the language of Ezekiel implies that it is the ideal Messianic ruler who is predicted in these verses.

It becomes evident in the readings of Scripture after the prophet Ezekiel, and the remaining years of the captivity, that the hope of a preeminent king of David's house disappears. But following the captivity, a prince of the house of David, Zerubbabel, is appointed by Cyrus to be the governor over the city of Jerusalem. The Lord through the prophet Haggai gives a precious declaration to Zerubbabel in Haggai 2:23:

*In that day, saith the LORD of hosts,*

*will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.*

God in this passage declares Zerubbabel to be His signet ring. Zechariah, the younger prophet of that first return also declares in prophecy:

*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).*

This anticipated, anointed King would not come like a warrior king, but upon the foal of an ass, righteous and victorious, yet lowly and peaceful. After the prophecy of Zechariah there is no mention of the Messianic king in the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi.

## **The Book of Daniel and Messiah**

When one reads the Book of Daniel and senses the prophecies contained therein, there is evidence that a number of those prophecies were written to encourage the Jewish people to steadfastness during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. It is in these prophecies that the Messianic hope assumes a new form. Here the apocalyptic idea of the Messiah appears for the first time. The coming ruler-king is represented, not as a descendant of the house of David, but as a person

in human form, and beyond human character, through whom God would establish His sovereignty upon the earth. Daniel 7:13, 14 states,

*I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

During the years of the Maccabees, there was a stirring of fresh, national life with the hope for the coming king to overthrow the Syrians. Even when Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 B.C., this hope for God to send a deliverer from the house of David increased in the hearts of the Jews.

### **The "Messiah" Hope in the Time of Jesus**

At the time of Jesus' birth there was a great prevalence of the Messianic hope among the Jews. We see from the question of John the Baptist in Matthew 11:3, "Art thou he that should come," that such an individual was expected. The people even wondered whether John himself were the Christ (Luke 3:15). Such a hope was evident in the hearts of those who became disciples of Jesus:

*One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ (John 1:40, 41).*

The Samaritan woman also expressed this anticipation:

*The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things . . . Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? (John 4:25, 29).*

Toward the end of Christ's ministry, Matthew 21:9 and 22:42 reveal that the Jewish nation believed that Messiah would be the Son of David. It also cannot be doubted that "Son of God" was used as a Messianic title by the Jewish leaders (Matt. 26:63), as well as the title "Son of Man" (Mark 8:38). After the Resurrection the preaching of the apostles clearly declared Him the Messiah (Acts 2:36). But the sufferings and death of Christ were enigmatic to the Jews' thinking. The thought of a suffering Messiah who would atone for sin was alien to the Jewish mind. Only after His resurrection and ascension were they led to see how entirely they had misconceived His Messiahship and the nature and extent of His Messianic kingdom. Their searchings of the Old Testament gave them clear evidence of the cross.

In the suffering servant they beheld the Messianic king on His way to His heavenly throne, conquering by the power of His atoning sacrifice and bestowing all spiritual blessings (Acts 3:13, 18–21, 26; 4:27, 30).

### Conclusion

As the New Testament unfolded, the writers under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit described additional insights and features of the Messiah in accordance with Jesus' own teachings. He had ascended to His Father and became the heavenly king. But all things were not yet put under Him. It was therefore seen that the full manifestation of His Messiahship was reserved for the future, that He would return in glory to fulfill His Messianic office and complete His Messianic reign. Notice Paul's declaration before King Agrippa:

*And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews (Acts 26:6, 7).*

To us, as to the early Christians, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). To Him, hidden in the bosom of the ages, all the scattered rays of prophecy pointed; and from Him, in His revealed and risen splendor, shine forth upon the world the light and power of God's love and truth.

This Christmas, as we look back to the historical birth of Jesus, believing Him to be the Messiah-King, may we also look forward to the day when all things will be put under His feet, to the day when His kingdom will be spread from shore to shore, and His peace and word will cover this earth like the waters cover the sea.

May we announce the news to our relatives and friends this Christmas, "We have found the Messiah!" **S**

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# Satan's Deadly Edict

Dr. H. T. Spence

(Reprint)

In Genesis 1:11, 12, there is a divinely-ordained law declaring that everything which possessed life should bring forth after its kind: *Like* is to bring forth *like*. Within that law, the power of reproduction is ordained in the seed, a “seeding yielding seed.” This principle was not altered at the fall of man; life within the seed is to bring forth after its kind.

This law of a *seeding seed* (Hebrew) truly adds light to the pronouncement of Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” This declaration came as the first pronouncement of judgment from God: the first word was to the serpent, the second to the woman, the third to the man, and the fourth to the ground.

In Genesis 3:15, God was addressing Satan through the serpent. Other instances of this approach include God's address to Satan through the King of Babylon (Isa. 14), through the king of Tyre (Ezek. 28), as well as through the disciple Peter (Matt. 16:23). In all of these incidents, God spoke to the power behind the individuals; that power was Satan.

An insight was revealed in Genesis 3:15 when it was made clear that

the Lord God entered into the battle against Satan. These two heads would be the heads of two classes of people in history. Four of the eight pronouns given in this verse include *I*, *her* (seed), *it*, and *his*. These four pronouns represent God, His Son, and His spiritual progeny. The other four pronouns include *thee*, *thy* (seed), *thy* and *thou* and stand for Satan and his spiritual progeny. In viewing the entire perspective of this verse, we see there are descendants of Adam and Eve who sin willfully and do not believe God. They willingly retain the spirit of Satan by obeying his rule. We must also understand that the Lord God said, “I will put *enmity*” (emphasis added), or He would be the one to bring the hatred between the two seeds. He is the One Who started the divine conflict of the ages, this battle of truth and righteousness in the Garden. This conflict is still going on, and the enmity will continue until the One who started it ends it in glorious victory and peace. Genesis 3:15 was God's deadly edict against Satan.

## What God Knew That Satan Did Not

If Genesis 3 were isolated from the rest of Scripture, it would be a sad chapter. In this verse it appears that Satan became the victor and tri-



umphed over God in defeating man. Satan could now claim man and his possessions after man was driven from the Garden. Satan truly took a diabolical step in tempting, deceiving, and overthrowing man that day through the influence of the serpent.

This led to the divine stratagem of God's trapping, capturing, and overcoming this enemy of darkness. In Acts 15:18 we are told, "known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." He knew the end from the beginning. It truly is inspiring to consider what God knew and what Satan did not know. For the course of historic events that followed did not go as Satan planned or thought it would go after he accomplished the fall of man. He may have believed that man would be hopelessly lost, that the earth again would become a total mass of wreckage and chaos, and that God could not do anything concerning it but be eternally defeated in His purpose for the human race.

Yet there are two great realities that must be considered. First, it is only God Who is omniscient; He is all knowing, all wise. God is never surprised, neither caught unaware, nor unprepared for any emergency. Satan did not spring any surprise on God. Yes, God knew it all even before the beginning. Secondly, although Satan is truly wise, he is not all wise. He may be wiser than man, individu-

ally or collectively. He can do a lot of things, but he is neither omnipotent nor omniscient.

There are eight major things that God knew positively that Satan did not know. (1) God knew that He would renew the probation of man. Probation was not renewed to the angels who fell; there was no second chance, no redemption, and no salvation given to them and Satan. Therefore Satan may have thought man would be hopelessly lost. (2) God knew that He would offer grace to sinful man. Satan did not know the great truth concerning the grace of God. (3) God knew that He would become a man to be the redeemer of men. Man was created in God's own image. God could take this image to Himself without marring the Godhead; He could become a man and be God at the same time. He would take man's place in fighting man's battles, and die in man's place to pay the penalty of man's sin. (4) God knew that He would start a holy conflict in opposition to sin and Satan; furthermore, He knew that this conflict would result in a glorious triumph for the glory of God. (5) God knew that in this holy conflict Satan would bruise Christ's heel (his footstool identification), and Christ would crush Satan's head. A bruised heel is painful but not fatal. This conflict would result in the serpent's head being bruised (Heb. "crushed"); a bruised head is both painful and fatal. (6) God knew

that a new race of many sons of God would arise as overcomers. All would bear His image and likeness; they would love righteousness and hate iniquity. They would choose to suffer wrongfully rather than do wrong, even to the extent of laying down their lives as martyrs. (7) God knew that Christ His Son and the saints would triumph over Satan, bring His eternal defeat, and usher in everlasting righteousness. And (8) God knew that Satan would be incarcerated in the lake of fire to be tormented forever! God would do all that was needed in such a way that forever throughout eternity neither Satan, angel, demon, nor man could dispute God's justice or validity!

## Two Seeds

Galatians 3:16 reveals that Christ is the fulfillment of that promised seed. And God, in accordance with His own law, which He ordained as the Creator, would give the evidence of the power of reproduction in the seed, the seeding seed, the yielding seed. Like would bring forth like. Thus to this end Christ died: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Christ died, and as a result of His death and resurrection, there will be a mighty harvest of many sons of God who will be like Him. It is a new and holy creation, begotten in the image and likeness of God. He was the seed of the woman!

However, there is another head, another seed as seen in John 8:44:

*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

In Matthew 13:25 we read of this "father" the devil, the progenitor of his own seed: "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." In Matthew 13:39 we read, "The enemy that sowed them is the devil." In verse 38 we are told, "the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one."

Wheat reproduces and tares reproduce. Like will beget like. Wheat begets not tares; tares beget not wheat. These are two separate kingdoms with two separate fathers. There is no neutral ground; everybody is either a child of God or a child of the devil.

## Attacks Against the Godly Seed

For six thousand years Satan has tried to destroy the seed of the godly. Concerning the first two children born, we are told in 1 John 3:12 that Cain was "of that wicked one." The Devil through Cain tried to stop the godly seed of his brother Abel. Nevertheless, God raised up another seed through Seth continuing and preserving the

godly line. Following Abel's murder, the ungodly line moved away to the land of Nod to birth its progeny (Gen. 4:16).

Approximately two thousand years later, Satan begins using the worldliness and attractiveness of women from the ungodly seed to draw the attention of the men of the godly line (Gen. 6). Satan was seeking to hinder the prophesied coming seed of Genesis 3:15 by corrupting the whole race in a moral degeneration by intermarriage of the seeds. To pollute the godly line has been an age-old pursuit of Satan. If he can't destroy the man (Abel or Seth), then he will pollute the seed, seeking for the women of the serpent's line to destroy the men of the godly line. Providentially, God sent the Flood to purge and preserve the appointed line.

When Satan tried to pollute the seed religiously at Babel (Gen. 11), God sent confusion of tongue and language, and eventually called Abram out of idolatry. Then God speaks in Genesis 15:13:

*Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them: and they shall afflict them four hundred years.*

When the family of Jacob went down into Egypt, a pharaoh that knew not Joseph began to abuse this promised line. Egypt tried three approaches to destroy their seed: (1) increase their

labor with affliction, (2) kill all male children at birth, and finally (3) throw all young male children into the Nile River. No doubt many children died in this persecution, but God even used this for His glory by moving the daughter of Pharaoh with compassion to take Moses into her home. Through Moses God brought deliverance to His people. The bruising of the heel continued.

The coming of the seed through the course of history climaxed with the Christ Himself. Immediately, the Devil through Herod the Great attempted to destroy "the seed" when Christ was but a child (Matt. 2). There were a number of times during His earthly ministry that the people sought to kill Jesus. Finally His death on the cross became the greatest attack of Satan's edict against the seed. Nevertheless, Christ arose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

Following the Resurrection of Christ, Satan knew he could no longer touch Christ. Consequently his attack turned against the seed of "the seed." Immediately into the early church the Book of Acts records seven major persecutions against God's people. Then during the ten imperial persecutions between Nero and Diocletian, hundreds of thousands were killed for the testimony of Christ. As a result, "the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church" (the apologist Tertul-

lian). Jesus had warned His disciples in Matthew 10:16,

*Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

The apostle Paul declared in Romans 8:36,

*As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

It is impossible to describe the affliction and sufferings of Christians in the East; it is impossible to conceive of the hundreds of concentration camps scattered across the world where thousands have found themselves suffering for the cause of Christ simply because they are identified with “the seed.” Even throughout the inquisitions of the Roman Catholic Church, there have been an estimated 68 million people put to death by this oldest Christian apostasy. Although a number were Jews, the majority of these were God’s people, the seed of Christ.

### **Martyrdom Is Returning**

Martyrdom that is still found in many countries today is coming to America. We must prepare for this intensified persecution against God’s saints. America must be included in the scripture, “and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” (Matthew 24:9). The Antichrist will be given authority to “make war with

the saints, and to overcome them: and power [will be] given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Rev. 13:7). Nevertheless, this period of persecution will also be for a witness in the earth. God through His Son will consummate the end of this enmity: the Seed and the Seed’s seed will be victorious! Isaiah 54:10 declares, “He shall see his seed,” and in Psalm 22:30 we read, “A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.”

### **Conclusion**

The End Time gives clear evidence that Satan is aggressively working on the destruction of the remnant seed through two attacks: (1) the literal killing of the true Christians around the world and (2) the polluting and mongrelizing of the godly seed. We are witnessing the first attack in China, the Arab countries, the communist world, and parts of South America as hatred of Christianity ever increases.

The second attack is the most subtle and fearful, for it tries to destroy the “power” of the seed, the Gospel of Christ within the heart. This approach is seen through efforts to pollute the true Gospel with a false one. The accommodation of the flesh and gradual acceptance of the world’s business and philosophical standards is greatly affecting the Gospel message of the church. Such fleshly pollution is drawn into the Christian seed through means

such as Contemporary Christian Music. This mongrelization of the seed is evident through subtle changes of the message of the Bible creating a broader base for the invitation of the world. We see this in the growing acceptance of Mel Gibson's *The Passion*, Dan Brown's *The DaVinci Code*, the recent so-called finding of the *Gospel of Judas*, the recent emphasis of the Gnostic writings, the rising influence of the theology of Romanism, and the "Neo" movements found in Christianity today. These influences are affecting the conservative spectrum of Christianity.

Even Fundamentalism is slowly but surely blending into the fabric of Neo-Evangelicalism. As a last bastion to withstand the end-time global apostasy, Fundamentalism is now well on its way to reuniting with the movement that left its ranks for a more hopeful position of dialoging and fellowshiping the Liberals, Moderates, and Neo-Evangelicals. We are now witnessing Fundamentalism laying hold of and delighting in the same non-separatist positions that the Neo-Evangelicals embraced in the 1940s. The very carnal rhetoric Neo-Evangelicals used at their inception to explain their positions (which Fundamentalists then condemned) has now become the very rhetoric of present Fundamentalism. What Neo-Evangelicals craftily sought to exclude in their preaching has become the

same failure in mainstream Fundamentalism. Similarly, our periodicals also are being written for greater acceptance by a broader base of readers. The increasing shift toward Reformed Theology has become a popular means of leaving the church's problems to sovereignty rather than of taking a stand against the encroachment of the apostasy within our ranks.

When the Charismatics introduced "Praise and Worship" music in the 1970s, Fundamentalist music leaders believed we needed to pursue a similar style of music because it was the "in thing" in worship. Now even traditional congregational hymn singing has followed the path of our weaker, more contemporary special music.

Satan is also trying to mongrelize the seed by the broader spectrum of the English versions of the Bible. The battle now is over "what is the text?" If we are saved by an incorruptible seed (1 Pet. 1:23), what is the seed of the Word of God?

Similarly, any dress standard of dignity is being subtly intimidated; the pressure now is placed on the pursuit and acceptance of the casual look already embraced by the Neo crowd. One needs only to consider the casual, non-offensive dress of various musicians appearing on Fundamentalist recordings. Are they clean-cut secular artists or Christian artists?—does the world know?

So much of Fundamentalism has entered into gray areas. It will only be a matter of time before we will witness and hear the open contemporary sounds of Neo-Christianity. Although the child of God is to be of the light and delivered from the darkness, most churches today choose to live in the gray, twilight zone where the light and darkness meet.

In spite of the reasoning of leaders that there is still some gospel in all of this, we must clearly realize that

*there is no power in a corrupt Gospel.* This is why the churches have become impotent against worldliness and the flesh. This is why the sodomites are becoming publicly bold in their views, and violence is filling the earth. There are very few of the true seed of Christ, and very few have the incorruptible seed of the Word of God within. May the Lord help us to make it to the end of our days as a part of the true seed of Christ and with the true Gospel seed in our hearts. **S**

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# Christ's Birth in an Outhouse of a *Kataluma*

Dr. H. T. Spence

(Reprint)

Luke 2:7 states, "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Ancient tradition places the birthplace of our Lord in a cave, for caves were used as stables in most countries with rocky terrain. The Greek word for *inn* is *kataluma*, denoting the simplest of inns. It is similar to a Syrian *khan*—a refuge from thieves, a shelter from the heat and dust, a place where a man and his beasts may lodge, where a trader may sell his wares, and a pilgrim may slake his thirst. However, in such inns the visitor had to do everything for himself.

At the time of this momentous event, the census for the taxation, people had filled the little town of Bethlehem occupying even the most inexpensive of inns. Thus a cave, a stables, an outhouse where waste was disposed of became the divinely appointed place for the Christ Child to be born on earth.

The Holy Spirit led the physician Luke to use this word *kataluma*, a lowly place that aptly depicts the humble life and death of Christ. The Gospel is heavily freighted with the truth of this word. Why did God pick a *kataluma*-type birth for His Son? If one reads

the Bible with a prayerful heart, he will see that God has been working in the *kataluma* fashion since the foundation of the world.

## ***Kataluma* Types in the Old Testament**

In Genesis 3:15, God could have immediately destroyed the Devil after the fall of man. Instead, He chose the plain, ordinary seed of the woman, the weaker of the vessels, to take care of the sin problem as well as the Devil.

God could have supernaturally made a luxurious cruise liner to carry Noah, but He chose for Noah to build the ark with no fancy fringes on it. It certainly was a *kataluma* boat.

God could have created a place of giant redwoods or a place equivalent to Cyprus Gardens in Florida in order to call Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. Instead, God used a *kataluma* calling, a burning bush on the backside of the wilderness.

God could have chosen an animal with a higher intelligence like a monkey to speak to Balaam, the apostate prophet, when he was to curse Israel. Instead, He chose a *kataluma* animal, an ass.

God could have supernaturally made a machine gun ahead in history

as David's weapon to kill Goliath. Instead, God provided *kataluma* weapons, a slingshot and a smooth stone, to bring down the giant.

When Elijah announced a severe drought and famine, God could have used a variety of ways to provide for the prophet food and a hiding place from King Ahab. But God chose a *kataluma*-type stream of water for Elijah as well as unclean grocery boys, ravens, to feed the prophet.

God has used broken pitchers and trumpets to kill an army, and a muddy river to cure a leader from leprosy. Yes, God has used a multitude of things that men would view as nothing, but in His hand and plan they became the ideal means for the moment.

### **The Coming of Messiah**

What about the Messiah? How would he come? Isaiah 53:1 declared, "Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." It seemed God bypassed the great palaces of the leaders in Rome and the luxurious homes of the rich. He bypassed it all and chose for His precious Son to be born in the stables of a *kataluma*. The Lord chose Mary, a young girl in her mid-teens, to be the mother of Christ rather than one of the more mature, seasoned women such as Elizabeth or Anna the prophetess.

"Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28). "For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden" (1:48); "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree" (1:52).

According to Leviticus 12, the sacrifice of dedication for a child was to be a lamb; but if the family was too poor, two turtledoves or pigeons were acceptable. Mary and Joseph brought the latter (Luke 2:24), a *kataluma* sacrifice. Over his many years, the priest Simeon must have seen thousands of parents coming in with their babies and accompanied by a sacrificial lamb. But when Simeon saw this child, when he took him up in his arms, he declared, "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people" (2:30, 31). The Holy Spirit revealed to this priest, in spite of their *kataluma* sacrifice, that this child was the Messiah.

When Jesus grew up to manhood He still lived that *kataluma* life. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20).

When the hour came for His sacrificial death He had a *kataluma* death. The Jewish means of execution was stoning; the Roman way was beheading. Yet, Christ was given the barbarous death of crucifixion on a cross. Heaven was shut up to Him because



He was made sin for us. Hell was shut up to Him as well as the earth. His friends forsook Him. The *kataluma*-type baby was born to die a *kataluma*-type death.

### **The Message of the Messiah**

In reading the four Gospel writers and even the letters of the Apostles, it is evident that Christ's message was no different.

In the Book of John, when Christ started out in His ministry, the people were lauding, "My, He has gracious words." But by John 6, when Christ stated, "I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst," the same ones were then murmuring against Him, including many of His followers. "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, this is an hard saying: who can hear it?" (John 6:60).

Christ did not come preaching the gospel according to Dale Carnegie on "How to win friends and influence people." But He came preaching repentance, being born again, the call to sin no more!

To the world, Christ is a *kataluma* Saviour and His message is of the same view. He is as the Tabernacle of the Old Testament: from within the Tabernacle one could look up at its covering and see goat's hair and ram's skins dyed red; however, from without

one only saw lowly badger skins. To the world this is what Christ and His message are. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:18). The prophet Isaiah declared,

*He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not* (Isa. 53:2, 3).

The contemporary church today is trying to change our Lord, make Him a superstar, a hippy, a revolutionist, or a leader against the establishment. He is viewed as a modern ecumenicist, enjoying the contemporary sounds of rock music integrated with the spiritual vocabulary. He is found in contemporary artwork on shirts, pants, posters, etc. He is drawn into contemporary slogans such as "Me and Jesus have got a good thing going," "Get high on Jesus," and "Honk if you know Jesus." However, His *kataluma* message is "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17, 18). The contemporary church talks much about love and peace, but the *kataluma* Saviour stated, "Think not that I am come to send

peace on earth: I came not to send peace on earth: but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. 10:34–36).

The Christ of the modern day church is "one of the boys" and has been set forth to make the world feel at home without any conviction or need of repentance. There is no stigma or persecution identified with the contemporary Christianity of our times. In contrast, the *kataluma* Saviour declares,

*The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household* (Matt. 10:24, 25).

Christ made it clear in John 17:14, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Our Lord also boldly declared, "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:38). The Charismatics with their emphasis upon prosperity and divine health have made Christ's kingdom an earthly kingdom of this world. Christ made it

clear even to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36); He even declared to his disciples in Acts 1:6–8 that He had not come the first time to restore the kingdom to Israel.

The Scriptures make it clear that we must accept the Christ of Scriptures, the despised and rejected One, the One Who will be hated by this world. And if the Church is worldly, then the Church will hate Him too. We are not called upon to change the message of the Bible or the truth of the Saviour presented therein. We must accept Him the way He is presented or reject Him fully. There is no middle ground.

### **From the *Kataluma* to the *Pandocheion***

*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich* (2 Cor. 8:9).

In Luke 10:30–37 Christ gave the story of a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, who "fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." This is a type of our own life. This world has tried to destroy us, stripping us of any character, wounding our conscience and our living, and leaving us for dead. It is amazing how the religious movements have tried to help the natural man failures but totally ignored the

spiritual needs of the people. Priests and Levites are passing wounded lives each day but are never able to give them what they need.

Jesus Christ is to be viewed as this good Samaritan, the half-breed, one who is hated by the Jews; it is He that came by us one day. Thank God, He came by “where he [the man] was, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.” Our beloved, despised, rejected Saviour did not only have compassion on him, but He also “went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast.” It is through His great merits at Calvary that He is able to come to us; He is able to bind up all the wounds from our life of sin, pouring in the oil of the Holy Spirit and wine of sanctification to bring about a full restoration of life unto Him. Oh, how the providences of God have been supporting and transporting us along.

Finally, He took us to the “inn,” a *pandocheion*, a palatial hotel, certainly the opposite of the *kataluma*. Because of His poverty for us, we will be the spiritually rich ones when His redemption is fully wrought in us.

It is our prayer that during this Christmas season God will richly bless your life and family. Let us ever be conscious of the fact that He was born to die for our sins. He was born in the outhouse stables of a *Kataluma* in order to take us to the palatial *Pando-*

*cheion*. It truly must be said, “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities” (Ps. 103:10). **S**

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