

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 116

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Editorial

Dear Brethren and Sisters and Friends, Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank you for your letters, also for the items of interest all of which help to enliven the Circular Letters.

In spite of careful proof reading some typing errors are missed and usually the meaning is still clear, but last month (C.L. 115) on page 15 and five lines from the bottom of the page, the word 'corruptible' appears. This should read 'incorruptible'. My apologies for this mistake and my thanks to Sister Evelyn Linggood for spotting it and letting me know. May I suggest, if you keep your C.L.'s or if you pass them on to friends, that you make the correction.

Some years ago I noted a prophecy relating to Lebanon and it's completion seems to be very near. Some twenty or so years ago Lebanon was becoming a very prosperous country indeed, with vast wealth from oil revenues of the Middle East being channelled through the banks and finance houses of Beirut, while Beirut itself was vying with major cities of finance like Zurich, New York, and London to become one of the world's great monetary centres. Now, that wealth has all but disappeared due to internal strife. Isaiah 33:9 & 10 reads, "The earth mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits. Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself."

This thrice repeated assurance of the Lord is very significant and linked with the annihilation of Lebanon indicates the end of Gentile times and the nearness of our Lord's return.

"The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 5:10)

Brother Russell Gregory.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

1 John 1:5 - "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

1 Kings 8:12 - "Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness."

2 Chronicles 6:1 - "Then spake Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness."

Psalm 97:2 - "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgement are the habitation of his throne."

In the above quotations we have the extreme opposites brought before us. Light and Darkness. Both of which have an association with God, but only one is an attribute of God. But we must remember that in each case of these quotations we see men speaking to men, which we may consider as being written from man's standpoint for we know from other scriptures no man can see God in person and live. (Exodus 33:20). We have what seems to me to be yet another example that man cannot see God and live. The martyr Stephen as recorded in the Acts chapter 7, a well known one usually described as his defence before the High Priest and authorities of his day:

Acts 7:55, "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."

v 59 "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

v 60 "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

And we note as the next chapter begins that Saul (Paul) was consenting to his (Stephen's) death. A little more about Paul later.

Returning to the Old Testament, back to the time of Moses and his journey taking the children of Israel through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. When they came to Sinai and God was about to give Moses the Ten commandments as a basis for their individual and national life.

Exodus 19:9 "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD'."

v 11 "And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai."

v 16 "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount."

v 18 "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a fumes, and the whole mount quaked greatly."

We note although the presence of God was there, nothing recorded suggests that anyone saw God or His glory. Later in Exodus we see Moses in chapter 33 requests God that he should be allowed to see His glory, in no way does this suggest any doubt or wavering on the part of Moses.

Exodus 33:18-23, "And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee... and he said. Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live... it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen."

God is light and as we saw in our first quotation, in Him is no darkness at all, God does not work in darkness. This we see well portrayed in the early chapters of Genesis concerning the creation (or setting in order) of the earth as known to the present generations who will accept God's word. What happened before the creation as recorded in Genesis chapter 1 we do not know, but we can be sure there was a great catastrophe which resulted in a state of things as described in verse 2:- "And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." This may have a connection with Jude verse 6. We now turn to creation as recorded in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 where we are told:- "And God said let there be LIGHT and there was LIGHT." From there onward we have a measure of detail which we know as 'the creation', following light. In the last two chapters of Revelation LIGHT is also shown as a major factor in the Kingdom of God. Speaking of the New Jerusalem we are told,

Revelation 21:11 "Having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone clear as crystal."

Revelation 22:5 ".....and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign for ever and ever."

Between these two chapters of Scripture LIGHT comes before us in many and varied circumstances, as does also DARKNESS. LIGHT as we know is essential to life, both natural and spiritual. We are told in Isaiah chapter 45 concerning the creation of the earth. God Himself that formed the earth and made it there was purpose, He formed it to be inhabited. Adam and Eve were told to be fruitful and multiply, moreover in Numbers 14:21 we read,

"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD."

We now have to consider if the natural offspring of Adam and Eve were to fill the earth how do they stand in relation to God's glory, if it were to fill the earth. For in the main, any who have seen God's glory have died; surely some provision has to be made for Adam's natural children to enjoy the 'glory of the Lord.' First that which is natural so also is the spiritual. From a father certain attributes and features can be seen and expressed in a son. So with the spiritual. God is LIGHT, so also is His firstborn, JESUS CHRIST.

John 8:12 "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Intense DARKNESS is a frightening experience in the natural order. Pharaoh and his people experienced such a darkness during the plagues upon Egypt.

Exodus 10:21 "And the Lord said unto Moses, stretch out thine hand toward heaven that there be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt."

v 22 "And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days."

v 23 "They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days...."

There is no record of Pharaoh sending for Moses and Aaron to ask God to remove the darkness. But in verse 24 they were told to go, serve the Lord.

Exodus 10:28 "And Pharaoh said unto him, get ye from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die."

v 29 "And Moses said, thou hast well spoken, I will see thy face no more."

One more plague was to come upon Egypt, after which the Children of Israel left Egypt - in fact, they were almost driven out as God said they would be - resulting in the freedom from Egyptian bondage by Israel. But a greater freedom from bondage can be had today by those who will accept it as

a result of the death of the only begotten Son of God, (remember Adam was a son of God but only a created son of God, not a firstborn as was Jesus Christ) who was begotten of the Holy Spirit. “The Light was put out by the Romans at the instigation of the Jewish authorities headed by the High Priest of the day, Caiaphas, who prophesied, John 11:50 “Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation (Jewry) perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year/ he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.”

When this prophecy was fulfilled what happened? The LIGHT of the WORLD was extinguished, there also was a physical darkness as we see in Matthew 27:45 “Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.”

As a result of the happenings before and during the darkness the centurion in charge of carrying out his duty realised and stated, “Truly this was the Son of God.” The Son of God - The Light of the world - was placed in a grave? Light went into darkness, into the grave of Joseph of Arimathea, as recorded in Luke 23:50-53. But the Light of the world was not to remain in darkness as we can see from Acts, where Peter is recorded as saying, in chapter two, when speaking of David he said, verses 30-31, “Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption.”

The Light of the world shone again. Was seen by many; the disciples, Stephen, Paul, Mary Magdalene. Paul even as Saul had the privilege of seeing the risen Christ. The LIGHT which was again to ILLUMINATE mankind, shone again. It was the Law in its extreme DARKNESS that was holding Saul, as we see from Acts 22 and Galatians 1 where we are reminded of his upbringing;

“... at the feet of Gamaliel and taught according to the perfect manner of the law.... I profited in the Jews religion above many of my equals, being more zealous of the traditions of my fathers. A son of a Pharisee.

Because of his position he was anti-Christian and so he had authority from the high priest, written authority to Damascus, if he found any of this way, who had accepted the LIGHT of the world he was to bring them bound unto Jerusalem. What misguided zeal. That zeal shall I say God saw. Rightly directed think what could be done. Extreme DARKNESS into glorious LIGHT.

Romans 8:3 “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son.”

v. 2 “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Saul set off in his darkness of understanding and a retinue with him, but suddenly a blinding light from heaven shone about him and he fell to the ground; he heard a voice but saw no one. We are all familiar with the words of Paul’s conversion as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 9, where we have brought before us Natural and Spiritual LIGHT and DARKNESS. “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest,” Paul was told; whereupon certain instructions were given him to go into the city of Damascus, etc., and it would be told him what to do. He was in DARKNESS, (Spiritual) but was soon told what to do to remedy the position. He got up and was about to go, but he was still in DARKNESS, this time natural blindness. He had to be led by the hand. Having met Ananias we come to the well known order – first natural, then Spiritual. Let’s extract portions from the following verses:-

Acts 9:17-20, “Ananias... putting his hands on him said. Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way... hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received his sight

forthwith (natural light) and arose, and was baptised... And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.” (Spiritual LIGHT).

The Love of God seen in the LIGHT of the World was active in Paul till the end of his life. In Romans 8:38,39 he stated that nothing could separate him from the Love of God. And in Corinthians, second book, chapter 11, verses 23-27 are listed many of the things Paul endured for the sake of TRUE LIGHT. At the end of his life Paul could say “I have fought a good fight.” He had finished his course, he had kept the faith. The LIGHT entrusted to him was ever shining bright. For he had seen literally, I feel, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. God’s only begotten Son.

In the natural order, when in darkness, if we suddenly see a very bright light we have to react or accommodate our eyesight to it. If we do not we are floundering and our darkness will seem even worse. In our natural state, like Moses, we could not see God or His Glory and live. But in God’s love, by the eye of faith He has shown us in contrast to our natural environment of Spiritual DARKNESS a very bright light - The Lord Jesus Christ, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. We have responded to this light. As with Paul, let nothing separate us from the light in which we rejoice. From time to time we remember Jesus at the Breaking of Bread.

He is the GOOD SHEPHERD.
He is the BREAD OF LIFE.
He is the LIGHT OF THE WORLD.
He is the DOOR INTO THE SHEEPFOLD.
He gave His LIFE for The Sheep.

Without Him we are in eternal DARKNESS, but what do we see in John 8:12 “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

John 17:3 “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”

Brother Harvey Linggood.

And Jesus opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed, are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for their’s is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Matthew 5:2-12.

Chat Section

Re:- your query about the order of events and scriptural guidance about death and the death state, I set forth my beliefs;

The 'first' death is the symbolic death we accept in baptism - thus we symbolically die - because of our relationship to Adam. After our baptism we are related to salvation by "Grace", not works; yet we must do what is in our power to keep the ten commandments, yet we are covered by the sacrifice of Jesus if and when we fail. The dead in Christ rise first (we are in this sector) at His second coming, and, as Paul states, we rise incorruptible - the corruptible having put on incorruptibility, and the mortal having put on immortality. This change of relationship, I believe, takes place - legally - at our baptism.

Our works in this life, as baptised ones, do not save us, but they will determine our status in the Kingdom, at Christ's return, Revelation 22:12, "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

The rest of the dead live not again until the end of the thousand years millennial reign of Christ. Some to salvation, some to die again for eternity.

During the thousand year reign of Jesus, the Gospel offer will still be preached. Many will accept, many will reject. During this period, of course, people will die as now and they will be resurrected at the end of the thousand years - to acceptance or rejection by Jesus.

"Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection; on whom the second death hath no power."

Brother Harold Dawson.

Jesus said.....

No. 4

"But whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Here is emphasised the importance of Jesus being the Son of God – that He was the rock upon which He is building His Church.

Jesus Christ had His life direct from His Father as His birthright. It was a gift and not earned, but it could have been lost by transgression. This birthright remained His through obedience. It was His natural life He laid down for His friends.

To suggest Jesus was born the Son of God in order to give Him special strength to overcome temptation makes a mockery of the fact that He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, for the test of obedience lies in the strength of the temptation and is no rock upon which to build anything.

This is the rock upon which Jesus is building His Church - and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The Bombardier Beetle Blasts Evolution

Famed British biologist J.S.B.Hildane was once asked what organic evolution had revealed about God's creation. "An inordinate fondness for beetles," was his reported reply.

There are, indeed, a multitude of amazing and exotic beetles on earth. What specific beetles Hildane had in mind is difficult to say, but the bombardier beetle is an excellent candidate for a very special fondness on the part of the Creator.

Bombardier beetles, commonly found near ponds and under rocks, are easily recognized by their orange and blue coloration, and they exhibit an absolutely unique defensive capability possessed by no other creature. When threatened or attacked, they eject a noxious and potent spray from a special "reaction chamber" located at the tip of their abdomen. Not only is the well-aimed spray strongly offensive and irritating, it is also literally hot - as hot, in fact, as boiling water.

Scientists have found that the bombardiers have two sacs that lie side by side in the abdomen. The beetles can aim their vile spray with uncanny accuracy by swivelling the gun-barrel like openings of these sacs. Small predators such as ants, spiders, frogs or praying mantis are effectively repulsed by the spray.

How is the spray actually produced? German investigators have found that the special glands contain a mixture of hydroquinones and hydrogen peroxide. A smaller outer compartment on each gland contains a mixture of enzymes that catalyze a reaction when the mixture of the inner chamber is squeezed into the outer one. The reaction occurs as a small but brisant explosion, with oxygen and highly poisonous benzoquinones being produced. The oxygen gas provides the propellant for the expulsion of the benzoquinones. Because of the intense chemical reaction, the bombardier spray is very hot and has been measured at a temperature of nearly 100 C, or the temperature of boiling water.

Finally, the protective spray of the bombardier beetle is not continuous; instead, it is pulsed, just as a rapidly firing machine gun. The discharge can be heard as a distinctly audible "pop."

But how could the bombardier beetle have slowly evolved as evolutionary theory suggests? The creature contains a complex and elaborate system for producing, aiming and firing an explosive, poisonous mixture of unstable chemicals. The inner compartments containing the two potentially explosive chemicals must have always been securely isolated from the outer reaction chamber containing the special enzymes that initiate the explosion. Unless everything worked perfectly from the very beginning, the bombardier beetle could literally have blown himself into extinction - or at least boiled himself alive!

Nor would the ability to produce such mini-explosions of noxious spray have been of much survival value unless the beetle also had the ability to properly aim the resulting spray at a potential predator.

Any slow changes in the anatomy of pre-bombardier beetles in preparation for the final configuration of a yet future bombardier would have little or no survival value and would be fraught with danger if the various chemicals mixed at the wrong time or in the wrong chamber. Surely a "proto-bombardier" would not have known that various precursor reactants, enzymes, storage compartments, reaction chambers, mixing muscles, diaphragms, and expulsion nozzles would "someday" be useful if they could somehow be properly combined in an integrated, functioning defence system!

Thus the bombardier beetle is living proof of intelligent design. The slow changes of evolutionary theory simply cannot account for the absolutely stunning capabilities of the bombardier. The beetle's intricate survival mechanism must have been fully functional from the day it was created. With every

“pop” of its defensive (or is it offensive?) spray, the bombardier beetle dispenses another blast to the theory of evolution.

The above article by Robert A. Ginskey has been taken from “The Plain Truth”

Faith in Front of a Crowd

We are all familiar with the famous chapter about faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but have we ever thought what it must feel like displaying our faith in front of a hostile unbelieving crowd?

I am thinking of Moses, when, as recorded in the book of Exodus, he had to stand in front of the murmuring children of Israel and get water out of the rock. We know what happened. The Israelites were complaining for lack of water and in spite of the many miracles which God had done for them they had not yet learned to put their trust in Him, the Provider of all their needs.

Now, just imagine we had to stand in front of this crowd, who, by then, had turned really hostile just waiting for the excuse to attack. Would not we have been extremely frightened? Yes, let us admit it, not only frightened of being attacked but perhaps more so of making a fool of ourselves! We can admit to ourselves we would have been afraid of looking the fool because of the possibility of the water failing to come out of the rock.

Looking a fool in front of a mistrusting crowd would be just as bad as being faced with physical danger. We don't know how Moses felt (One day, in the Kingdom, we may ask him), but he was the greatest prophet and always in close contact with God. I imagine he was not in the least afraid, he had full trust that as soon as he smote the rock there would be water.

Now, all people whose work brings them into contact with crowds, such as speakers, actors, teachers and the like, have this problem to face of how to avoid making a fool of themselves, for if they fail in their task they are likely to have things thrown at them. (Perhaps you have heard the joke about the actor whose audience shewed their appreciation by presenting him with a cottage - they threw it at him brick by brick.) The practice of science lecturers is, of course, to demonstrate in front of the class only those experiments that are certain to work in a set way, while the trickier experiments are left for the students to perform during their laboratory practice - no blame for failure can then be put upon the teacher.

Take the case of Elijah in front of 450 prophets of Baal. The agreement was that the one who answered by fire, he is the true god. Baal's prophets failed miserably, but how did Elijah react? Was he afraid that it might be his turn next to look foolish? No, not in the least. First, he calmly mocked the prophets of Baal, then he went further and had the sacrifice drenched with water - which was so scarce after so long a drought - the wood also until the trench surrounding the altar was full. All done to supposedly prevent fire taking hold. Then he prayed to God and without fail fire came down from heaven, consumed the sacrifice, and against all the laws of nature, burnt up non-combustible matter such as the water and the stones of the altar - a complete reversal of the laws of nature whereby the water should have extinguished the fire.

The gospels and the Book of Acts are full of accounts of miracles where Christ, and later, the Apostles, raised the dead to life in front of watching crowds. Let us look at just one; the raising of Lazarus. John 11 Jesus prayer, verse 41, is short, and to the point (many of us could learn from such example!), “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.” Note the first sentence, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.” This is in the past tense, so speaking of

the future as though it had already happened. This is God's way of expressing certainty as we are told by the Apostle Paul in Romans 4:17, "... even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." And also we notice the complete absence of self-glorification. How many of us, standing in front of a crowd, would not have tried to take just a little credit for ourselves? King Saul, centuries earlier, had this fault, and even Moses failed in this respect on one occasion. Wanting to take credit for what we have done, even though our part is trivial, or only part of a team performing some task, is a temptation we all face from time to time. But Jesus, tempted in all points as we are, as on all occasions, as a faithful Son, gave glory to His Father.

Concerning our present position, we are not required to perform the sort of miracles which overrule the laws of nature, but have we that sort of faith? Can we trust God in difficult situations? There are great powers on our side if we put things to God in the prayer of faith. And when, afterwards, we accomplish the awkward task with Divine help, do we kneel down and give God the credit with the same eagerness and sense of emergency as when we called upon Him in our distress?

Let us never forget how, through God's mercy only, and not because of any worthiness we may suppose ours, we are what we are. And let us remember we were strangers to Israel, bought back servants to sin, at the heavy cost paid by a loving Redeemer.

Brother Leo Dreifuss

Fill Thou my life, O Lord, my God,
In every part with praise,
That my whole being may proclaim
Thy being and Thy ways.

Not for the lip of praise alone,
Nor e'en the praising heart
I ask, but for a life made up
Of praise in every part.

Praise in the common things of life,
In goings out and in
Praise in each duty and each deed,
However small and mean.

Fill every part of me with praise,
Let all my being speak
Of Thee, and of Thy love, O Lord,
Poor though I be and weak.

So shalt Thou, Lord, from me, e'en me,
Receive the glory due;
And even now shall I begin
The song for ever new.

So shall no part of day or night
From sacredness be free;
But all my life in every step,
Be fellowship with Thee.