

JUDE (14)

—H.L. Heijkoop

And Enoch, [the] seventh from Adam, prophesied also as to these, saying, Behold, [the] Lord has come amidst His holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly of them of all their works of ungodliness, which they have wrought ungodlily, and of all the hard [things] which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. — v. 14-15.

It is great comfort to see that the Lord foresaw the wiles of the enemy from the beginning, and that He has equipped His own with all that is needed for their safekeeping and defense. Therefore, the forms and the character in which the apostasy would reveal itself from the beginning until the end are described first. But then, the extraordinarily important truth is presented to us that those who even then had found their way into the assembly, would be the object of the Lord's immediate judgment at His coming. Though it might then not consist of the individuals, it will be the same class; a class characterized by the perfection of wickedness in its apostasy from the last evidence of God's goodness before the coming of the Son of man in glory. God's longsuffering may be great, for He does not want that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9), but when the apostasy has become full in God's eye, the judgment *will* come.

Jude presents this truth to us in a very special way! Not just by means of a new prophecy, but by one of the first prophecies ever to be pronounced, in any case the first prophecy that clearly revealed the truth of the Lord's return, thereby giving its character to all later prophecies. At the same time, it was a prophecy not previously recorded in the Word of God. God had kept its incorporation into His Word for the time that Scripture calls the last hour.

It is God's first testimony. From this we see that He from the very first testimony was occupied with the assembly's apostasy. Similarly, He foretells already in Deuteronomy 32, at the beginning of Israel's history, what its end will be. This shows us how important the Assembly is in the eye of God: it is the most perfect unfolding of His counsels of grace in connection with man. For the sake of the Assembly, His Son went to the cross (Eph. 5:25); for her the Holy Spirit came to earth to indwell her (Jn. 14:17; Eph. 2:22; 1 Cor. 3:16; 12:13); and to her God gave the glorified Man in heaven as Head.

To differentiate him, Enoch is called "[the] seventh from Adam," for there is another Enoch, a son of Cain, from whom we cannot expect any prophecy. And there was also another "seventh from Adam" in Cain's line, Lamech. I believe that for this reason the article before "seventh" is missing in the Greek. It actually says: "a seventh from Adam."

But I believe that there is yet another thought connected with this "seventh." We know that in Scripture seven is the number of perfection. Generally it is used in a favourable sense, but sometimes unfavourable (see e.g. Mt. 12:45). Don't we see the same in these two "sevenths" from Adam?

The name Enoch means "devoted, consecrated." How well do we find this realized in his life. We don't read that he associated with people. How could he have mixed with men who did *not* walk with God? For only he is said to have done so! The *sons* of the prophets may have ever so much knowledge of the truth of God, they cannot enter into the feelings of a prophet! They cannot understand how a prophet can rise to heaven *and remain there*. Despite all their knowledge they expect him to return; likely on a mountain, or perhaps even into some valley on earth (2 Ki. 2).

Though Enoch may, as far as *men* were concerned, have been lonely, he walked with God. And he has the testimony that he pleased God. What God in vain had looked for in Adam in the garden of Eden, those perfect circumstances, He found in Enoch. God desired to walk with Adam here on earth (Gen. 3:8-9), but Adam hid himself. Now God found in Enoch, this seventh from Adam, a man who walked with Him for three hundred years. And since he walked with God, he knew God's thoughts; even more than that, he shared them. He saw the corruption around him, but he also saw God's judgment as it would eventually be executed in its final form. That would not be a judgment flowing from God's providence, as during the flood, but that final judgment by which *the* Man after God's thoughts would assume His rule over the earth.

How different from Lamech, the other "seventh from Adam." Lamech means "corrupter, downcaster," or "the one who hauls down." In him we see the rejection of divine order (two wives); the partial success (by means of the inventions of his sons) in

nullifying the curse God had pronounced over the earth; and finally, the bragging violence of the man who doesn't own any authority over him. Indeed, in these two "sevenths" we have perfection. In Lamech we have the perfection of evil, both in the circumstances surrounding him, and in his attitude toward the revelation that God had given of Himself. In Enoch we see the perfection of the work of God's grace in a fallen and lost man. As such these two depict today's dispositions toward the revelation which God has given of Himself *in our time*: the perfect revelation of His grace, in the Son of His love, who came to earth to die for sinners.

Hebrews 11:5 tells us that Enoch, before his translation had this testimony that he pleased God. We see this confirmed in this prophecy. We see also the hope in which Enoch must have lived. Prophetically he *saw* the Lord's coming from heaven to this earth, accompanied with all His saints. Well, just as Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, concludes from this fact that we must be first with the Lord to be able to come with Him from heaven (1 Th. 4:14-18), so also Enoch must have had this hope. And his hope was not put to shame, he has not seen death, for God took him before that time (He. 11:5). Thereby he became a type of the Assembly, which, led by the Holy Spirit, cries: "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:17,20). Unfortunately, not every believer says this personally, but the Spirit and the bride do say it, and they encourage every believer to do so personally as well.

But *why* do Spirit and bride say this? Doesn't Revelation 22:10-15 give us the answer to this question? It is because the whole world lies in the wicked one (1 Jn. 5:19), and the Assembly's condition has become such that the Lord must judge her and spue her out of His mouth (Rev. 2 and 3).

Enoch saw the evil fully developing itself into apostasy from God. This caused him to announce God's judgment to warn man. Not much later God's providential judgment would be executed through the Flood. Doubtless, Enoch must have seen this coming. This would be very evident if what I read once is true. The name Enoch gave his son, Methuselah, supposedly means "When he dies it will be sent" or "It will come at his death." And indeed, in the year of Methuselah's death, the Flood came! But Enoch's eye, enlightened through his continual fellowship and walk with God, saw beyond that providential judgment, beyond the thousands of years that would pass, to see *Him* who would come to execute the final judgment. Daily communion with God causes us to think as God thinks: His thoughts become our thoughts; we will judge matters as He judges them. The result of this is that it becomes to some degree true of us what God has said of Himself. We too will be declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done (Isa. 46:10).

That is how we will see things when we live in fellowship with God. We see the natural apostasy of man and the even greater evil of apostasy of Christendom. Since God has been completely revealed in Christendom, its apostasy is the most serious evil there can be. Once this apostasy is complete, there can be no more delay of the final judgment. Today we see this apostasy around us. Perhaps the worst has not yet come, for it cannot have come as long as that which restrains is still present (2 Th. 2:6-7). But, though curtailed, the evil is yet fully present. As soon as the Assembly is taken up and, consequently, the Holy Spirit no longer dwells on earth, the apostasy will reveal itself fully (2 Th. 2:3). Then the Lord Jesus will come to execute the final judgment over His enemies.

It is a serious thought; the class of people who will be judged by the Lord at His coming, had already infiltrated the assembly in the days of the Apostle. Some may have gone out openly before the judgment (1 Jn. 2:19). Yet, as a group, they are still seen inside. How does this dispose of the expectation of some who refer to Matthew 13:33 as proof that there will be progress, that the gospel will permeate the world until it is entirely saturated with it. As if leaven is not *always* a picture of evil! Besides, if leaven in Matthew 13 were a picture of what is good, then this verse contradicts entirely the remainder of God's Word.

Enoch prophesied that the Lord *has* come, rather than *will* come. In prophecy, something that is still future is often referred to as something that is already present. Prophets *see* the things of which they speak. See for instance Revelation 4:1 where John is told to "Come up here, and I will *show* thee the things which must take place after these things." It is for this reason that they are often called "seers." So we read in Revelation 21:2, "And I *saw* the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God," although John describes there the eternal condition. Similarly, Isaiah 53 refers in the past tense to things connected with the suffering and death of the Lord, although the Lord would actually come to earth only many centuries later. It is good to keep this principle in mind while studying prophecy.

amidst His holy myriads

The Greek literally says *in* rather than *with*. The idea is therefore that the Lord will come in the midst of His own. The Greek word for "myriads" is the plural for ten-thousand. It usually implies an innumerable group, an infinite number. The question

presents itself; Who are these myriads? From 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:14; Revelation 19:8,14; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 and other places, we see that they are the believers who have before that time been taken up into heaven. No doubt angels will come with Him from heaven as well, although it is not certain that these are included here. Angels are indeed called "holy" angels, but normally only believers are spoken of as "saints."

to execute judgment against all; and to convict all the ungodly of them.

To understand this correctly, we must remember that in the beginning of the verse it has been said that Enoch prophesied of *those*, that is of those who had crept in, with whom the epistle of Jude was thus far occupied. For Scripture does not know of one general judgment of all. The Lord Jesus says emphatically in John 5:24, "He that hears My Word, and believes Him that has sent Me, has life eternal, *and does not come into judgment*, but is passed out of death into life." Then in verse 29 a distinction is made between those who are born again, who have practised good, they will leave their graves and enter into the resurrection of life, while those who have done evil await *the resurrection of judgment*.

What would believers be judged for? The Lord Jesus bore the judgment for their sins (1 Pet. 2:24). "Much rather therefore, having been justified in [the power of] His blood, we shall be saved by Him from wrath" (Rom. 5:9).

2 Corinthians 5:10 is an entirely different matter. Believers and unbelievers alike must indeed be *manifested* before the judgment seat of Christ. For unbelievers this means judgment, and — besides — it will take place at an entirely different moment than the manifestation of believers. This latter event will be at least a thousand years earlier. Believers must be manifested there, so that they may see *everything* in their lives in the true light. This way, they will evaluate everything in the same way the Lord evaluates it. If this would not take place, there would eternally remain a difference of thought between the Lord and ourselves, because we would evaluate some things in our lives differently than He does. This in turn would mean that there would not be a perfect fellowship between Him and us. Therefore, every believer who desires communion with the Lord, and who therefore doesn't want any difference of thought to exist between himself and the Lord, longs to be manifested at that time.

The words "among them" are not found in most manuscripts. Some (K & L) have them, as do a few church fathers, but the great majority of textual witnesses don't.

The Greek word *elencho*, is rendered "convince" in the KJV, the New Translation has "convict." In a footnote at John 3:20, Darby says of this word: "A word hard to translate. It is to show the true character of anything, so as to convict, and hence reprove by showing a man's fault." Vine gives: "to convict, confute, refute, usually with the suggestion of putting the convicted person to shame." It does, therefore, not refer to the punishing, but rather to the convincing of the perpetrators, so that they will see for themselves what they have done, the evil character of their deeds, and will no longer be able to refute it. This is how the Lord will act in judgment. He will make everything so abundantly clear that the unbelievers can only acknowledge their guilt and the righteousness of their punishment. This, however, does not mean that they will repent. Then there is no more repentance and conversion, but only the worm that does not die. This speaks, I believe, of the consciousness that the punishment for their deeds is righteous.

The word *elencho* occurs often in the New Testament. Prominent are: "Which of you convinces Me of sin?" (Jn. 8:46); "He will bring demonstration to the world, of sin." (Jn. 16:8; 'convince' supposes effect in the person convinced; 'convict' would not do for righteousness or judgment: I have said 'bring demonstration,' though it suggests perhaps too much the *action* of the Spirit when come; but His presence and all that He does affords this demonstration. — Footnote in the New Translation). "He is convicted of all" (1 Cor. 14:24). "Being convicted by the law as transgressors" (Jas. 2:9). (We find it further in Eph. 5:11,13; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:9—refute—,13; 2:15; Heb. 12:5; Jude: 15,22,23; Rev. 3:19; Mt. 18:15; Lk. 3:19; Jn. 3:20; and 8:9 — KJV).

of all their works of ungodliness, which they have wrought ungodlily, and of all the hard [things] which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

Aren't we struck by the fourfold repetition of the word "ungodly"? It shows the disgust Jude felt for these people.

Two reasons are given for their judgment. First, their works, secondly, their words which are directly against the Lord. It is generally accepted that men will be judged for their deeds. Revelation 20 says so expressly. But how little do people think of the importance of the words they speak. The words of a man show what he is. No man *can* do all he wants to do. He knows too, that many deeds are punishable, even by the government or by his fellow men. But there is nothing in his heart that he cannot say. Psalm 12:5 says, "With our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own; who [is] lord over us?" Doesn't this express the thoughts of many? Therefore the Lord Jesus says, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Mt. 12:31-37).

To be cont'd

HEAVEN (2)

—A.E. Bouter

The open Heaven (Acts 7:55f)

In Ezekiel 1:1 we read that the heavens were opened and that the prophet saw "visions from God." If the heavens would really have opened over this earth, it would no doubt have been entirely destroyed by the glory of God. Only after the coming of the Son of God in flesh could heaven really open, and then only *over Him*. It opened in the first place for Him, though also for His disciples, for all who desired to do the will of God (in repentance, confession of sins, and baptism, in recognition of God's rights in a "religious" world where He had been rejected). But today the Object of heaven's delight is no longer on earth, He is now in heaven where He is seated on the throne of God's majesty. Now, the believer is, according to God's counsels, united to Him by the divine nature, and he knows Him to be there as the Object of his delight, but also as it were as Head of His army's headquarters.

A disciple like Stephen receives all instructions from Him whom he may represent here on earth, not just as an ambassador from heaven, but also as a soldier fighting for his General.

How worthily does Stephen acquit himself of this task! He testifies of the fact that the Son of man — rejected by his fellow Jews both during His humiliation while here on earth, and in His glory in heaven — is *standing ready* at God's right hand. What grace is this! There He stands with all the power and authority that is connected with God's right hand available to His faithful disciple. But He is also standing ready, according to the riches of God's patience and mercy, to return to His earthly people. But they did not want Him to be King over them (cf. Lk. 19:14). In God's time, however, He will assert His royal rights for blessing to the Jews and the entire world (Acts 3:21).

It is an honour for the Master when something of Himself can be seen in His disciples, when His glory is to some degree expressed in them (cf. Mt. 10:24f). Again, how eminently is this done by Stephen.

- 1) "Full of the Holy Spirit," as we just saw.
- 2) "He stared into heaven." Thereby he showed his affection for and his attachment to his Master, who is standing there ready for him, as well as his obedience, in spite of all opposition.
- 3) "And seeing the glory of God." This was for him the point of attraction, as it once had been for Abraham (Acts 7:2; cf. now for us 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4,6).
- 4) He called upon God. Even in this totally impossible situation he is entirely dependent upon God, as many before him had been (Gen. 4:26; 12:8; etc.). At the same time this contains an element of worship, as we find it with David in a very difficult situation (2 Sam. 15:22). It does not say literally that he called upon God, but here we see again (as also in v. 55) how the Holy Spirit presents the glorified Man as being God Himself.
- 5) "Receive my spirit." Even in the hour of death, Stephen follows the example of his Master (Lk. 23:46).
- 6) "And kneeling down." In his attitude he shows herewith to God *and* those who are standing around, his total dependence and subjection to his Lord, which he had already expressed in words.
- 7) "He called with a loud voice." This shows not only the same as point 5), but besides, the voice of this first martyr for the glorified Lord was loud and clear: an audible testimony to all. For Saul (8:1) this proved to be most important.
- 8) "Lord, do not put this sin on their account." This eighth point shows us Stephen as the worthy representative of a new order, the dispensation of God's grace.

On the one hand the heavens were opened to show the disciple on earth the glory of his Lord in heaven, the Object of the love and devotion of his heart. On the other hand it was a last testimony of God's grace for His earthly people. After the rejection of this testimony the heavens will open again, but then in judgment (Rev. 19). Here, however, it seems to me that the heavens were also opened to express divine delight in such a disciple as Stephen, a real conqueror (as his name signifies: "laurel").

Stephen acted as a true prophet who makes God's thoughts known to His people to bring them to restoration. Time and again he showed how it was a question of a choice between God and idols (the devil). Abraham had been drawn by the God of glory so that he might leave an idolatrous system, but Abraham's descendents made the wrong choice. Stephen spoke of the glory and the throne of God (7:2,49), where he saw a Man (7:56) who was everything to his heart, possessing all authority, power, and glory. Stephen was a true Phinehas (see Num. 25) maintaining God's rights. In a later day, Paul did the same. He could not bear the thought that the glory of his Master would be replaced by a religious, judaistic system in which everything centres around fallen, failing men, rather than around the glorified Man. Love is "jealous," or, to put it in different words: it cannot tolerate anything replacing Him who is its One and All.

Today, Satan is still actively presenting alternatives to the people of God, things that take the place of our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan has the whole host of heaven at his disposal (Acts 7:42) and all things on earth besides; with these he seeks to draw the believer's heart away from the true and only Centre of attraction. Are we, like Stephen, filled with the glory of the Lord Jesus? Then Satan will not have a chance to draw us into idol service, to place things beside Christ as objects for our love, affection, and worship that would actually replace Him. Then... the heavens will be open for us too!

The heavenly vision (Acts 26:19).

Stephen's story is as it were the introduction to the call of Saul of Tarsus and his mission and ministry as Paul. As Saul he had been great in his own eyes, and "desired" by his fellow Jews; as Paul he is little in his own eyes, and therefore fit for God's special task (Acts 13:9; 1 Cor. 15:9; Eph. 3:8). It is remarkable to notice how *the heavens* are now the seat from where matters regarding God's testimony on earth are directed. We have seen how the Holy Spirit has descended from heaven on earth to build, lead and support God's Assembly, and how the Lord Jesus assists His faithful witness on earth from heaven. Now the heavens become the origin for the calling of a very special servant who will become the minister of the heavenly dispensation (Eph. 3), the special ambassador of the heavenly Master and the witness of the all-surpassing glory of the glorified Son of man in heaven.

Acts 9:3 "and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven";

Acts 22:6,11 "about mid-day, there suddenly shone out of heaven a great light round about me... the glory of that light...";

Acts 26:13 "at mid-day, on the way, I saw... a light above the brightness of the sun, shining from heaven round about me."

My present purpose is only to accentuate the *heavenly* character of this calling in its connection with the manifestation of the glory of our Lord Jesus. Especially in its contrast with the judaistic system of those days, but also in sharp contrast with the system of professing Christendom (be it Catholic or Protestant) which is for all practical purposes characterized by that which is of the earth. To take an example: The Pope kisses the God cursed ground. He joins, making himself one with, the world that lies in (is under the control of) the wicked one and is under the judgment of God. He is the representative of a religious system that is part of the present-day world system, of this present evil age which is irreconcilable to the heavenly calling (Phil. 3:14) and the heavenly vision (Acts 26:19). In this regard the passages in Revelation speaking of the religious, economical, political, social, system that is Christian in name only under the pregnant appellation "they who dwell upon the earth" are worth noticing.

In connection with the kingdom of God, the greatest revelation of glory is compared to the sun shining in its power (Mt. 17:2). But regarding the glorified and exalted Man in heaven (united to His Assembly on earth), we read of a light that surpasses the glory of the mid-day sun. This Person, in such glory and beauty, becomes the point of attraction and turning in Paul's life; Christ in the heavens is the source of the calling of His servant Paul. And this glory of the Lord Jesus characterizes his entire ministry (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4,6, etc.). Today this glory is the same. It has not changed, and it certainly has not diminished. What is the significance of the Lord Jesus in His heavenly glory for you and me? Do we live under the perpetual and increasing impression of His all-surpassing glory as Paul did? (See Gal. 1:15f and the places we mentioned in the Acts, where we find such an increase of the impression he had of these glories). "But we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2:9).

The Vessel descending out of Heaven (Acts 10- 11).

We have seen how the apostle Paul had been called and sent by the glorified Lord in heaven. Although the apostle Peter had been appointed by the Lord Jesus here on earth, he too received further instructions from heaven (cf. Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:4). That certainly was not always easy for him, as we can see in these two chapters. Once he had received a revelation from the Father about the Son of the Living God, and the Lord Jesus had subsequently spoken about His Assembly that He would build (Mt. 16:18). This was in connection and based on the Lord Himself, who is the Source of life, revealed and manifested in His resurrection from among the dead (See also Rom. 1:3), the true and solid basis for the Assembly of God.

Now the Lord Jesus shows Peter (who had also received the keys to the kingdom) from heaven, *the heavenly character* of His Assembly (he too sees the heavens opened — Acts 10:11) in its heavenly origin and destination. These two aspects are suggested by the fact that the great sheet was let down from, and afterwards taken up into heaven (Acts 10: 11; 11:5,10). The four corners point to the universal character of the Assembly according to God's counsel, whereas the animals speak of what the believers who now belong to this Assembly had been in themselves on earth; even that is given in a fourfold presentation.¹

Thus they had been bound in various ways in slavery, but they have been delivered and "incorporated" into the Assembly of God. In the Epistles of the New Testament we can find the doctrinal explanation of these things; in them we read too of our heavenly origin (in Christ, according to God's counsel, according to His eternal purpose from before the foundation of the world). Besides we find in these Epistles an exposition of our condition in the (recent) past, but also of our future, of the rapture of the Assembly into heaven, of its blessed hope, etc.

What riches of grace and glory do we find presented in all these details! But let us not forget that the way to enter into that great sheet (to become part of the Assembly of the living God) is conversion (repentance, turning about) from our side (Acts 11:18) and the gift of the Holy Spirit and (eternal) life from God's side (vv. 16-18).

The second part of Acts 11 explains the relationship between the universal, or heavenly Assembly on the one hand, and the local assembly on the other. The former is displayed by the great sheet, the latter is presented in its "prototype," Antioch. It is very important to understand the relationship between the universal Assembly and the local expression of it we find in the various localities on earth. It is equally important to realize that the principles we find in Scripture are still the same today. Even today every local assembly (1 Cor. 1:2) functions, according to God's thoughts, in the framework of the truth of the universal, or heavenly Assembly which we find expanded upon in the ministry of Paul. The doctrinal exposition of this truth we find therefore especially contained in his Epistles. May God help us to function in accordance with His plan, in the place where we live, to His glory and for the blessing of His own.

United with Christ in the glory and walking in the light of this union (both vertically and horizontally — Eph. 4), we can rightfully be called "Christians," who by the grace may display here on earth a little of the beauty and glory of Him... until He comes.

What does heaven mean to you?

The End

THE MINOR PROPHETS (14)

—R. Been Sr.

Hosea 8

Sowing Wind, Reaping Storm.

¹ 1) *Useful for man on earth, the quadrupeds of the earth*"; 2) *wild and untameable, as the man in Mark 5:3 was*; 3) or *"creeping," characterizing man in his low moral state*; 4) *and proud and haughty, being at the same time under Satan's control, "the birds of heaven."* These are the four aspects we find in Acts 11:6.

In the previous chapter we found Israel presented by several types which, each by itself but also collectively, depict the condition of the people. It was so sad, that morally speaking, nothing remained for them but judgment. We read of a hot oven, of a cake that wasn't turned, of a simple dove, of a treacherous bow. The condition of the people didn't change for the better, sin had thoroughly entrenched itself, with moral decline as its result. Their mixing with neighbouring nations demonstrated how stubbornly they refused to be taught. There was neither turning nor repentance despite their regret about a loss of social affluence.

The eighth chapter opens with the announcement of imminent judgment. The trumpet could already be set to the mouth to warn the people that the Assyrian was just about to descend as an eagle upon the ten tribes. In verse one we read that this eagle would turn itself against *the house of the Lord*. Among the ten tribes, however, there was no house of the Lord. The prophet speaks of the temple because he sees Ephraim and Judah as one *as far as the judgment is concerned*. Later, in the days of Hezekiah, the Assyrian went up against Judah, and he would not have spared the house of the Lord, had not God protected both temple and city.

The reason for Assyria's descent as an eagle upon the ten tribes was that these tribes had transgressed the covenant of the Lord and had rebelled against His law. Of course, this was not the reason as far as the Assyrian himself was concerned, he was driven by his lust for conquest and robbery. But this was why God used the Assyrian as a rod of discipline for the ten tribes.

When this judgment would be executed over them, Israel would, according to verse 2, cry in agony to God, saying: "*My God, we know Thee; [we], Israel.*" But this knowledge, by them adapted to and mixed with the worship of the calves at Bethel and Dan which Jeroboam had introduced, would not avail them. To the contrary, it would condemn them. And so it will be with the Jews in a future day when they will go through the Great Tribulation. Then too, they will plead: "We have eaten in Thy presence and drunk, and Thou hast taught in our streets." But He will say: "I tell you, 'I do not know you whence ye are; depart from Me, all [ye] workers of iniquity'" (Lk. 13:26-27). The same will come over those who are Christian in name only, the ones without life and without the Holy Spirit, when they, standing before a closed door, will plead: "Lord, Lord, open to us." And He will reply, "Verily I say unto you, 'I do not know you'" (Mt. 25:11-12).

The big question about each confession is this: *Is it produced by true humiliation?* If the heart is not broken and the spirit cast down, confession has no moral value. Such confession will not stay the judgment, nor will it cause the sword to return to its sheath. In the days of King David the angel of death smote Jerusalem and seventy thousand men of Israel died. But as soon as David humbled himself, the angel was told to put the sword in its sheath. In Hosea's days such humiliation was lacking and consequently the judgment was not stayed. Verse 3 tells us that Israel has cast off good; the result is that the enemy will pursue him.

vv. 4-6

The ten tribes had acted in the same manner as the nations. They had appointed kings and princes apart from God. Therefore, the prophet had purposely left off mentioning all kings that had succeeded Jeroboam II. Apart from Zechariah, who was murdered after a six-month reign, none of these kings had ascended the throne of Israel on the basis of their descent as it was in Judah; nor had they done so on the basis of a clear promise of God as it had been in the case of Jehu. Revolution and murder caused these kings to appear and disappear.

Moreover, Israel had used its silver and gold to make idols for itself; this became the cause of their destruction. Both in the appointing of kings, and in the setting up of the idol worship, God had been entirely set aside. The worship of calves would not benefit Israel in the time of judgment. The prophet wonders how long it will be before Israel can be cleansed of this calf-worship, for these calves were nothing but the work of men's hands, of an Israeli craftsman, and they would be destroyed.

v. 7

When we survey the ways of God of which Scripture speaks, we will discover this principle in them: *All that a man soweth, he will also reap*. This principle has proven to be in force for the ten and for the two tribes of Israel. It will also prove to be in force for Christendom, to which so many privileges have been entrusted but which behaves worse than Israel ever did, for the latter rejected the *law*, but Christendom ignores the *grace* of God. Again and again this principle proves also to be applicable for individuals, and even for believers. The sour fruits of a carnal walk are already ours in this life (Gal. 6:7-9). But, fortunately,

the reverse holds true as well! Who walks according to the Spirit will reap that which belongs to eternal life, fruits that remain. Happy he who -- though he must reap the fruits of what he sowed earlier — has learned to do so in subjection and with a humbled heart. God pours balm into such a heart.

The judgment announced in verse 7 restricts itself to hunger. There would be a lack of corn. If something would grow, it would not produce flower: And if per chance a little flower would be produced, it would be swallowed up by strangers. Scripture often mentions three judgments: *hunger, pestilence, and the sword (war)*.

vv. 8-10

Israel's strength had been consumed by their mixing with the gentiles, and now the gentiles had cast it aside as a thing no longer wanted by anyone. Voluntarily it had given up its high and glorious place of separation from the nations. As a result of its doing so, *it had become despised*. When, long ago, Israel conquered Canaan, the Lord had charged it to cast out and destroy the Canaanites. God had endured these nations for four hundred years, but then the measure of their sins had been filled. So that Israel might not be affected and defiled by the filthiness of their sins, the Canaanites had to be destroyed. But Israel had not obeyed this command of God. True, it made the inhabitants of the land tributary, but it didn't cast them out. Then the Canaanites became a snare to Israel, and finally Israel had to bow under *their* yoke. And here we read that Israel was despised by the gentiles. When the Lord's people are despised for the Lord's sake, it is a grace, a real honour. "If any one serve Me, him will the Father honour" (Jn. 12:26), so the Lord has said. But to be despised because of *failure to maintain the separation of God's people, that is sad indeed*.

Once again, the great evil of uniting with the Assyrians is pointed out. But who is Assyria? The Lord will tell these Israelites. It didn't matter what Israel thought of the Assyrians, or how they presented themselves to Israel, all that mattered was what God thought of them. God compares the Assyrian to a wild ass living only for himself, with whom one can only have connections at great cost. Now Israel had sent gifts to this Assyrian (2 Ki. 15:19), in an effort to ally it with Israel, and so to strengthen the ten-tribe nation. Though Assyria had accepted these gifts, Israel had nothing to expect from this king of princes. God would give those who longed for the help of Assyria into the hands of the Assyrian. It may be true that God, after using this proud, rapacious Assyrian as a rod for chastising Israel, will visit and destroy this wild ass, but that does not diminish the fact that everyone who looked for help from Assyria would experience the damaging and humbling effects of doing so.

vv. 11-14

In these last verses, the sin of idolatry, the main sin of Israel, is brought once more into the limelight. Ephraim had multiplied altars. For the true Israelite there was, besides the golden altar of incense in the holy place of the tabernacle or temple, only one altar: the brazen altar of burnt-offering in the court. Only the sacrifices which were brought there had value to Jehovah. All other altars, no matter what their purpose might have been, were false. But for political reasons, that one altar had not been enough to Ephraim. Jeroboam placed his golden calves at Bethel (in the South) and at Dan (in the North). This, however, had become sin to Israel, at least in God's books.

Don't think that these altars were built as a result of Jeroboam's and Israel's lack of understanding. God's law with its excellent ordinances was in their midst, but that law had become a foreign sound in the ears of the people. Other laws, e.g. political ones, those thought to be expedient for the existence of the ten-tribe nation, those of a self-willed religion, were better understood by the people. And although there was a partial holding on to the worship of the Lord, the Lord could not be pleased with this mixture. To the contrary, it increased the weight of their guilt. They could have known better, and they will be judged accordingly. Their iniquity and sin in these things would be visited upon them. They would return to Egypt.

This *returning to Egypt* is a figure of speech. Israel had forgotten their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. It had looked for help from Egypt against Assyria. Now it would return into the bondage — though this time under the Assyrian — of which they had once been delivered by their exodus from Egypt. A look at chapter 9:3 will show the correctness of this interpretation. There we read: "They shall not dwell in Jehovah's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and in Assyria shall they eat that which is unclean." And in chapter 11:5 we read that Ephraim shall not return into Egypt, but that Assyria will be their king, because they refuse to repent. The historical books of Scripture also confirm that the ten tribes never returned to Egypt. If then Hosea says that Israel would return to Egypt, it means only an exile under the yoke of the Assyrian caused by Israel's looking to Egypt for help.

Verse 14 summarizes these things. Israel, the ten tribes, had forgotten its Maker and was building temples, while Judah sought its salvation in numerous fenced cities. Both would be destroyed through the judgment. A sad end indeed! Israel taken into exile by the wild ass, Assyria, and later, the same fate would befall Judah from the hand of Babel.

To be cont'd

FAITH

—*J. Pilon*

"...Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" — 1 Pet. 1:8 KJV.

We read that when our Lord was here, that Thomas "saw and believed," but the Lord said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (Jn. 20:29 — KJV). What a blessed, glorious, satisfying portion is ours today: to see by faith our Lord and Saviour in the glory. Is it not this what fills our hearts and minds with "joy unspeakable"? Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you,... that your joy might be full" (Jn. 15:11 — KJV). It is His desire that we should hear what He says, learn of Him, and go on our way rejoicing. How often we fall far short of what our blessed Saviour has provided for us, through our own unbelief, and lack of occupation with that "Man in the glory." What a comfort it is to know that, though our love may grow cold, His is always the same, and ever seeking to warm our hearts afresh.

Yet, though we often fail, the Holy Spirit is continually working that Christ may be formed in us so that God's purposes might be fulfilled to reveal His Son in us. The more this is accomplished in us, the brighter will be our testimony for the Lord Jesus, and the more also the fruit for our God and Father. May each of us yield ourselves more wholly to Him "Who works all things according to the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11).