

BIBLE EXPLORATIONS

Aug 1998
Volume 12, No. 4

...to know the love of Christ
which passeth knowledge
that ye might be filled with
all the fulness of God Eph 3:19

The Deity Of Christ # 13

Who is "the Almighty"? We say it is a term commonly used of God. We find the term in references that are made to Christ. Therefore, Christ must be God. He could not have this very exalted title otherwise.

The Almighty: Who is the "Almighty"? The Hebrew word given is Shaddai. Most times, it is linked to the word El. This is to reveal to the people another facet of God: God, the Giver, the Bountiful, the God of grace. It is Shaddai Who is seen as the supplier of all needs. He is kind and giving, and the One Who takes care of everything. The first reference to God by this title is found in Genesis 17:1, and this is the reassurance that Abram receives: **"...the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.'**" Thereafter, it occurs frequently throughout the Old Testament. Its meaning becomes still clearer in the second reference made in Genesis 28:3. Isaac is blessing Jacob before he sends him on his way, and Isaac says, **"God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;"** In Genesis 35:11, it is God Who, in turn, blesses Jacob, and He reminds him, **"I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply"**. Naomi, in the book of Ruth (1:21) thinks that the bountiful God has dealt "bitterly" with her, but she will find, instead that she is blessed. In Job, there are many references to the Almighty, and there is the famous Psalm (91) which begins, **"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"**.

In the New Testament, we see the epithet used in 2 Corinthians 6:18. However, in Revelation 1:8 this very epithet is used of Christ: **"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," saith the Lord, "Which is, and Which was, and Which is to come, the Almighty."**

Also look at Revelation 11:15-17, 15:3, 16:7,14 & 19:15. The final reference in Revelation (21:22) incorporates God and the Lamb, the glory of God and the light, and refers to God as the Almighty.

God Almighty knows His creatures inside out: In 1 Samuel 16:7 we read that God does not need to judge men by outward appearance and what they appear to be because He knows them inside out, man being His creation. The Lord Jesus Christ also had the same ability, for the same reason. See John 2:24,25 for an example of this. He is the Creator and looks into the hearts of men in the same way: **"But the Lord said unto Samuel, 'Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'"** **"But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man."**

We find the same thought in 1 Chronicles 28:9, 1 Kings 8:39, Jeremiah 11:20, 17:9,10, Revelation 2:23, and Luke 9:47, the ability of the Almighty to read our minds: **"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou**

the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts:" **"Then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart Thou knowest; (for Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)"** **"But, O Lord of hosts, That judgest righteously, That triest the reins and the heart, let me see Thy vengeance on them:"** **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."** (Also see Jer 20:12) **"These things saith the Son of God..."** Rev. 2:18) **"And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He Which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."** **"And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him."**

There is one aspect more that will be included in article 14 of this series, "God, the Judge". However, that does not mean that the topic has been exhausted. Far from it. Consider this only a beginning and we must all continue to study to find other aspects, epithets, references that will add to what we have covered here.

L.A.

Resurrection #12

In the previous articles we noted that Jesus Christ is the first and only one who has risen from the grave to immortality. That wondrous event is indicated at point 1 on the line found on the next page.

We also suggested that the next resurrection to occur would be that of the Church which is Christ's Body. When this present age, which is undefined in length, comes to an end, Christ and his Body will appear in heavenly places. That marks the closure of God's calling to the Body of Christ. It is the fulfillment of the plan, which God kept secret in his heart, his plan for a family with Him above all heavens. That event is indicated at point 2.

When God closes his calling to the Church for heavenly places, He will resume his plan for earth and its heaven. He will take up again his plan for Israel and the nations on earth. Though God chose Israel to be a kingdom of priests and to teach the nations about Him, they turned away from Him and from that ministry. Because of this, God determined 490 years of subservience for them.

Twenty-one years remain unfulfilled of that 490 years. The last three and one half years of the 21 is called "Jacob's trouble," or the "great tribulation." The end of that tribulation of Israel ushers in several resurrections and the "Day of the Lord." At that point, Christ will return to earth and reign in righteousness and over the nations with a rod of iron. Resurrections related to the start of the Day of the Lord are indicated at point 3, one of which is that of "My two witnesses."

My Two Witnesses

"And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, 'Come up hither.' And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud;" Rev. 11:12

The verse above is from the book of Revelation, which is a record of things that the Apostle John saw and heard concerning the "day of the Lord." That period is also called "the Lord's day" in Revelation 1:10. In that day neither men nor angels will have power or authority in earth and its heaven. Instead, the Lord will reign, absolutely over all.

We read in Rev. 1:10 that John was *in the Spirit*, that is by the spirit, John was carried forward in time and shown visions of events leading up to, during, and after the day of the Lord. John saw the future

tribulation of his people, Israel, and he saw God's ultimate purpose for earth and its heaven in the ages of time. Chapter 11 of Revelation records the vision John saw on earth of Jerusalem, the people there, and particularly of two men who, in the future will be servants of God there in the future.

John saw the temple, which will exist in Jerusalem before the Lord's day, and he was told that the Gentiles would, "**tread under foot**" that holy city for forty-two months. For three and one-half years the nations will have power over Jerusalem to bruise and crush her.

During that period of tribulation for Jews, some will cry up to the Lord for deliverance and He will hear them. He will raise up two men to speak His words. The Lord calls these two men, "**My two witnesses.**" (11:3)

These two individuals are mentioned only in Revelation chapter 11. There we read that these are two unnamed humans who will testify to those on earth saying that the time of the Lord's judgment is eminent. The Lord's People, Israel, will be comforted by their words. The nations, Israel's enemies, will be enraged at hearing that God's vengeance upon them is near.

Though the nations are enraged by the testimony of the two witnesses, they will be unable to harm them, for the Lord said He would, "**...give power unto My two witnesses...if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies.**" (11:3,5) Their words will destroy their enemies as fire devours wood. Such was the case when the Lord empowered Jeremiah saying, "**I will make My words in thy mouth fire, and this People wood, and it shall devour them.**" (Jer.5:14)

The two witnesses, like Elijah, will have power to withhold rain and cause famines in the earth. They will, like Moses, be able to turn waters to blood and send plagues whenever they choose to. They will prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, unto an appointed day on which their witness is completed.

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." (11:7) Only after their service is complete, can

they be touched. Like the Apostle Paul, who was in deaths often but was revived to finish his service, so the Lord will keep these two until their work is done.

Here is a note of encouragement for all that serve the Lord. He has predetermined good works for those who serve Him and He knows when those are complete. He will keep His servants until their work is finished. When the Apostle Paul's ministry was complete, he said, "**I have finished my course.**" (2Tim.4:7)

The murderers of the two witnesses will not permit their bodies to be buried. Their corpses will be left out in an open place in Jerusalem for three and a half days. There they will be prey to birds and animals and will be seen by all people who pass by. The ungodly world will celebrate because the two who tormented them are dead.

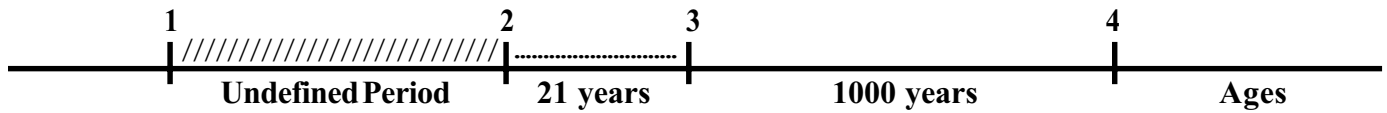
But God will breathe life into his two witnesses who have been dead for three and one half days. They will stand up, causing terror among all that see them rise. The two will hear a call from heaven saying, "**Come up hither,**" and they will ascend in a cloud. They will have been raised to immortality, in spiritual bodies, which do not have the limitations of flesh.

The two witnesses will ascend in a *cloud*, and not in a rain cloud. Moisture has nothing to do with this display of God's power and glory. Rather, this is a cloud of angels. When Christ ascended, "**...a cloud received Him.**" (Ac.1:9) We know that was a cloud of angels, for, when He returns to earth, He will come, "**...in like manner...**" (Acts 1:11) "**in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.**" (Mr.8:38; Mt.25:31)

The two witnesses are not the only ones who will hear a shout from heaven and ascend in a cloud of attending angels. Believers during the era of the Acts, who waited for Christ's return to earth and His kingdom expected to hear a shout from heaven. They expected to ascend and meet Christ in the air when He descended with clouds of angels. (1Thes.4:16,17) The expectation of those saints was not realized then but will find fulfillment in the future. This will be the subject of the next article.

On the time line we have suggested the place of resurrection for God's two witnesses be related to point 3.

Resurrection #13



In an effort to show the order of resurrections spoken of in Scripture, we have stated that the Man Christ Jesus is the first and only one who has risen from death to immortality. That wondrous event, His resurrection, is indicated at point 1 on the line above.

The next resurrection will be that of the Church which is Christ's body. Their rising to appear above the heavens is at point 2. That marks the end of God's present administration. He will then resume His purpose on earth for Israel.

God has chosen and called Israel to be His ministers to the rest of the nations of the world. However, because Israel refused to hear and obey Him, the Lord determined upon them 490 years of Gentile world rule, which we read of in the book of Daniel. Of those 490 years, 21 years remain unfulfilled and are marked on the line above.

When those 21 years begin at point 2, Jews throughout the world will be evangelized and will go to the land that God promised their fathers. They will worship the Lord in truth, although in the last three and one half years of that 21 year period, they will suffer great tribulation. (Mt.24:21) A great multitude will be killed for their faith. (Rev. 7:9-14) The Lord, Who will hear their cry for help, will come in power and glory and with His mighty angels to deliver the rest from their destroyers. He will restore Israel's kingdom and establish Israel as head over all the nations on earth. Christ will raise those martyred in the great tribulation to rule the world with Him for 1000 years.

John saw that future day in a vision. He wrote, "...I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (Rev.20:4) Christ's return and their resurrection is at point 3.

In addition, during the years of Acts, Paul told some saints that faithfulness through their tribulations proved that

they also were *worthy* of that kingdom. He assured those Jews, and Gentiles who had been grafted into Israel's program, that those who had died but were worthy, will rise and meet their coming King in the air. He said that at the sound of a trump, at the voice of the archangel, "**...the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.**" (1 Thes.4:16,17) The resurrection of the faithful of that era is also at point 3.

Others spoke of the resurrection, which will be a reward to faithful overcomers in Israel's program. David, Daniel, Luke, James, Peter, and even Jesus Himself spoke of entrance into that kingdom which is reserved for those worthy of it. They spoke of it as:

1. Awakening to everlasting life (not to shame and contempt) (Dan. 12: 2)
2. Standing (rising) in the congregation of the righteous (Ps. 1:5)
3. The resurrection of the just (Ac.24:15)
4. A better resurrection (earlier and to honor) (Heb 11:35)
5. Resurrection of the just for rewards (Lk:14:14)
6. Resurrection of life (Jn.5:29)
7. Resurrection of ones worthy of that age to come (Lk.20:35)
8. The former resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6)

During the time of Acts, believers who were in the churches of Asia faced testing and tribulations. The ascended Christ encouraged them to remain steadfast in faith. He told those at Thyatira, "**...he that overcometh (endures faithful), and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.**" (Rev.2:26,27) The Psalmist described that future kingdom, saying that the Lord's anointed, the Son, will break the nations,

"...with a rod of iron;" and "...dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Psa.2: 9)

Those martyred in Thyatira, and other faithful ones who died during the years recorded in Acts, will be rewarded with entrance into that kingdom. In addition, Abraham, Moses, and all in Israel who the Lord counted righteous will be rewarded with part in that kingdom. They will rise with those killed for their faith during the future great tribulation. They will rule with Christ over an imperfect world, over a world in which sin and death still exist. Their resurrection is also at point 3, when Christ returns to earth in glory.

J.H.

Out of the Mouth of Babes...#1

(The following articles are a sample of some lessons written by Rob Oliverio when he was 12 years old. It started as a Bible Class assignment and resulted in several studies. One might think that a young mind can offer only simple thoughts. Yet, when we consider the words of an innocent heart, we can be blessed with profound truth.)

My first BIBLE LESSON that I wrote. Lesson: Love

Love is mentioned many times in the Bible. We are told to love God. This is found in Matthew 22:37. Jesus taught that we should also love our enemies. This is found in Matt 5:44. Paul has written a section about love in his first letter to the Corinthians. This section is in Chapter 13. I John 4:7,8 says that love is of God and that love is God. Actually it says that God is love. I Peter tells us to make sure that we love each other with pure hearts. This is in Chapter 1, verse 22. In 1 John 4:19 it says that God loved us first, and because of this, we love Him. I would like to close with this: no matter what we do, God will always love us. No matter what!

The Supreme Penalty

Thou Shalt Surely Die

Many of our readers do not have access to any libraries of much size. You might be interested in what some of the earlier writers believed. Such a study will show the beginnings and spread of apostasy and the creeping of heathen philosophies into the churches.

In "The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment" by Henry Constable (1868), we find a little table of early writers and their views on this subject. The death date of each is given.

Barnabas (90), Clement of Rome (100), Hermas (104), Justin, Martyr (164), and Theophilus, of Antioch (183); all held to the Scriptural view that the supreme penalty for all who did not have life was eternal death.

Then came a couple of minor writers, Athenagoras (190) and Tatian (200), who were steeped in the Greek philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. The Greeks got their ideas from Babylon. So these two advanced the idea of the immortality of the soul (**Thou shalt not surely die**, the lie of Satan). Their writings were not taken too seriously and they were considered more or less as heretics.

Two more writers, true to the Word, came in about this place. They were Irenaeus, Martyr (202), and Clement Alexandrinus (212).

Then the Greek influence again was felt. Tertullian (235) not only came out with the theory of the immortality of the soul, but he also taught the eternal conscious torment of the lost. This idea

came especially from the Greek myths, which they themselves did not believe. They were simply stories to entertain. Hippolytus (240) followed with the same ideas.

This was so revolting to Origen (253) that he invented the idea of universal restoration of all. He also put forth the idea that our Lord was a created being, not deity. He fell into the error of universal restoration because he accepted the theory of the immortality of the soul. Something had to be done with this soul. Since man had become as God, (another lie of Satan), and had immortality and could not die, even God not having power to destroy him, there was a question of what to do with man.

Arnobius (303) still held to the teaching of the Scriptures. He was about the last of those who had the truth. Then followed Augustine (430). He fastened both false teachings, the immortality of the soul and the eternal conscious torment of the wicked, on to the church and it has stuck till now. It is so strongly imbedded that no reformation can eradicate it.

Now you can begin to see why there is so little said today about resurrection. It is not needed by an immortal soul. Why bother with a body? And not only is the deity of Christ denied, but His work as well. How few today believe that He died for sinners, for the ungodly! And even sin itself is denied. What a mess!

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Out Of The Mouth Of Babes...#2

Lesson: *Honesty*

Honesty is very important. Without it, we wouldn't be able to trust each other. Honesty is called "uprightness" in the Bible. In Psalms 7:10, David says his defence is God and that God saves the upright or honest in heart. Psalms 25:8 says that the LORD is good and honest. Psalms 112:2 says that the honest generation will be blessed. The LORD's judgments are honest. (Ps 119:137). A few times in Proverbs it says that the honest people's honesty will guide and deliver them. Proverbs 15:8 says that the prayers of the honest are the LORD's delight. The honest will have good things to own. (Pro 28:10)

We must be honest. The things I have written can be used as good reasons to be honest. We receive more privileges when we are honest and we also get help. So whenever we make a promise, we need to keep it always.

Rob Oliverio