

THE CLEANSING OF THE SANCTUARY

(Discourse by Brother Jerry Leslie)

Today we wish to pay tribute to our heritage of truth. We will do this by tracing the course of endurance by which the truth has come to us. It requires a travel in time.

The scene is set in Daniel's vision when he was in Babylon. Speaking of the *little horn* that supplanted the four horns on the head of the goat, he says: "And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered. Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Dan. 8 :10-14.

We see here Daniel's great concern was for the SANCTUARY and the HOST. The "sanctuary" is that which is **consecrated, dedicated, holy**, i.e. God's faithful, the bride, the little flock. The "host" finds its setting in the realm of the symbolic "*heavens*"—the nominal church, Christendom.

Prior to these words we see with Daniel a two horned ram, and a one horned goat doing battle. The goat breaks the two horns of the ram and tramples him. This one horn of the goat is replaced by four others. Out of these comes this "*little horn*" that causes Daniel so much distress.

The interpretation of these things involves the history of nations. This is the purpose of Bro. Russell's chart on page 131 of volume 3. The two horns of the ram are the kings of Media and Persia (V. 20). The one horned goat is the king of Greece (V. 21). We have all heard the expression "Grecian goat." This one horn is the first king—**Alexander the Great**. His death is pictured as the horn being broken (V. 22).

Four of his generals assumed territorial rule in his stead, "*but not in his power,*" as a **dictator**. Dan. 11:3, 4 also tells of Alexander and his generals. These were **republics**.

It was out of these powers, (Cassander's original territory), that this little horn grows to superiority; the one that cast down the truth; the one that took away the "*continual sacrifice,*" cast down the base of the sanctuary, the one that usurped the title "*Prince of the Host*" (V. 11). Vss. 23-24 identify Papal Rome as the destroying power.

Verses 23-25 partly interpret these matters, but history is clear. Rome as one of the territories in the four powers, rose to universal power. It was not an external power, coming in to conquer, but one gradually rising to supremacy; and so is pictured as coming up **among the others**.

Daniel is informed how long it would be that God's people would be oppressed by this Roman horn. He is told it would be 2,300 days and they would be clean and free. Because of the Jewish concept of a day being called an evening followed by a morning, this vision is called the vision of evenings and mornings in V. 26, in reference to the 2,300 days.

The interpretation requires a parallel comparison. This is found in Dan. 9:23-25, where we are told that 70 weeks were to be set aside **from the forepart of this vision**, and that Messiah was to be cut off in the middle of the 70th. This 70 week prophecy is said to measure from the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. We hear that commandment in Neh. 2:3-8. Knowing that the 70th week ended 3-1/2 years after our Lord's death, or A.D. 36, we can easily measure back 490 years (a year for each of the days in 70 weeks), to know the commandment concerning Jerusalem occurred in 454 B.C.

Now the point is that this 70 week vision leads to the first advent and is the **forepart** of the 2300 days vision. So they begin at the same point. So now take the 2300 year duration of Daniel's vision, subtract the 454 years before Christ. This leads to the year 1846 when we should expect the sanctuary class to be clean.

With the assurance that God has had His faithful in every age, we would like to trace this class during the period of pollution (after the Apostles fell asleep) and the later cleansing which prepared the church to receive Christ's second advent. Once the sanctuary was pure. Jesus gave a pure message. That is the proper place to begin viewing the sanctuary.

In the first century there were few great names other than the apostles. Yet here **persecution of the Church began**. Most all the apostles experienced martyrdom. Yet converts grew in every city. Doctrinal issues of dissent and difference remained mostly within the sphere of the church, while the total concept of Christianity grew more repulsive to Pagan rulers.

In the second century Christianity became a real irritant in the eye of the civil powers. In these years Polycarp died under Nero for his loyalty to Christ. The church for the most part was a small body of pure and blameless men, engaged in an intense religious life, watched over by quiet bishops, inspired by fearless martyrs.

The literature of the times was chiefly apologetic. The records that remain to us are mainly appeals to Rome. 1) That Rome had not been injured by the presence of Christianity. 2) Rome's strength had even grown. 3) And anyway none but the worst emperors were persecutors of the Christians. We think this was a weak point and a hazard for the early church. There was a tendency for peaceful co-existence, yet maintaining a religious difference with Rome.

But the persecution continued. With me this drives but to greater dedication. This was so with **Origen**. His sound childhood proved unshaken when he boldly exposed his convictions to minister to the holy ones about to suffer death. He urged his own father, "Take heed that you do not change your mind for our sake..."; his father being in prison condemned to death. He at all times practiced an ascetic life. He studied and taught Hebrew and Greek. In these difficult years he wrote several manuscripts and commentaries, giving special attention to the accuracy and explanation of certain discrepancies arising in the church. The essence of his teaching can be outlined in three points. 1) Man was created with a free will. 2) Man is to benefit from his experience with evil. 3) The Father and Son are separate in essence and substance, and the Father is to be addressed through the Son.

For his boldness, Origen was dragged half dead to a heathen temple. Bid to administer Pagan rites, he preached Christ. Expelled and exposed, he retired to Caesarea to open a new school, which became more famous than that at Alexandria. In the Decian persecution (A.D. 250) imprisoned, tortured, coming away with his life, he died shortly thereafter.

Toward the end of this century the church begins to organize for power against such persecution. There is a distinction in authority of local bishops, a centralization in authority, and the church assumes the power of excommunication. Gradually festivals are created, schools are established, and the faith is expressed more in sacraments and forms. So we see Satan using the times to draw the church into earthly elevation, and antichrist begins to take more definite shape.

Amid this presumptuous course of the "*host*" we would expect to find a standard bearer of the faith. **Irenaeus** now comes on the scene. We find him condemning compromise. In his extensive writings he attacks the current heresies, particularly on the adoption of certain Platonian views of the immortal soul. On the "Person of Christ," he says: "Christ must be a man, like us, if he would redeem us from corruption and make us perfect. As sin and death came into the world by a man, so they could be blotted out legitimately and to our advantage only by a man; though, of course, not by one who should be a mere descendant of Adam, and thus himself stand in need of redemption, but a second Adam, supernaturally begotten, a new progenitor of our race... He made himself equal with man, that man, by his likeness to the Son, might become precious in the Father's sight."

Isn't this our heritage of truth, a clear simple expression of the ransom? Irenaeus was also an ardent supporter of the Millennium doctrine. Though history cannot deny what he taught, it gives few details, and forgives him for his errors. But these and other clear perceptions were discarded as the darkness comes over the church.

The coming of the early 300's finds the church more powerful as an institution with a system of creeds, doctrines and forms carefully enumerated. The thinking was now firm. The question was: Be persecuted or legalized.

It was amid these conditions that Emperor **Constantine** faced a three-way split in his empire over a religious question. It began to flare when one Alexander in an address showed his audience: 1) that God and Christ were Co-eternal, 2) Co-essential, 3) and Co-equal. Arius openly challenged him. The controversy spread like fire throughout the Eastern empire, forming three parties: 1) "Orthodox," holding to the Deity of Christ. 2) "Arian Party," holding the humanity and separateness of Christ and Jehovah. 3) "Middle of the Ground"—those holding the Divinity of Christ, but avoiding the use of the term for the sake of the Arians.

Constantine found it necessary to bring the issue to a head lest he face a collapse of allegiance and lose political control. He first sought to drop the issue with the rationalization that they were "unessential points." Constantine did not understand the doctrine, indeed he believed no doctrine but of providence and spared no term of contempt as to the dispute.

Here we see the principle of peace at the expense of truth. We are reminded of the importance of the admonition in James 3:17, "But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

As all the provincial synods only helped to fan the flame of strife, Constantine called a general council of bishops. This ecumenical council was held at Nice in 325 A.D., consisting of 318 bishops mostly from the east. Athanasius took the defense of the Divinity of Christ. **Arius** defended his own views with this clear, simple logic: "The Father is a Father; The Son is a Son; therefore the Father must have existed before the Son; therefore once the Son was not; therefore he was made, like all creatures, of a substance that had not previously existed."

The trinity heresy having made its first major victory, took the opportunity to reinforce the stronghold. The Church formed the Nicene Creed of twenty canons. The 5th: Bishops once separated from the church were not to be accepted elsewhere; The 6th:

Special grants to be given certain bishops; The 9th: All ordinations would be considered void without due investigation and confession.

The die is cast. Antichrist is destined for control. The Pagan emperors not only tolerated the church, but promoted it. It was to their political advantage. The population was as much Christian as Pagan. Though now colored by Pagan rites, the church lacks but one thing it desires: Power supreme—"Pontifex Maximus." The church did not have long to wait for this prize.

The final preparation was laid in the four hundreds. Imperial persecution stopped. Revenue was no longer gathered from faithful donations, but from government traffic and property confiscation. The church was allied with the state, while each of the bishops attempted to show their claim to supremacy. The dawning of the early 500s finds the emperor a self-appointed ruler, as in the past; but now the church made him her associate head. The Emperor called councils and meddled in church affairs, but the church was not permitted to meddle directly in civil affairs. Amid this transition period another controversy began to rage. This time it was over the worship of Mary. Emperor **Justinian I** feared a division in the empire, inasmuch as the church was so closely allied with the state.

Needing a strong figure and central authority to unite the empire, Justinian appealed to **Pope John**, then the most popular claimant to the title "Pontifex Maximus," and probably the most nearly in harmony with his own views on government and religion. In a most significant letter to John he wrote: "And so we have hastened to make subject to the See of your Holiness and to unite with it, all the priests of the whole Eastern districts. For in all points (as has been said) we are eager to add the honor and authority of your See... and the authority of your See will grow the greater; and the unity of the holy churches, which has been disturbed, will be preserved to you, since through you all the most blessed bishops will have learned the genuine doctrine of your holiness, as to those points which have been **referred to you.**"

Or in reality which were being "referred" to him in this letter. Here we see a clever strategy for political advantage, that upset the balance of rule in a most subtle manner. Civil power appeals to the church for power to control the people, and technically subjects itself to the church's decree, while still providing the military strength to enforce it. This letter was dated 533, yet the new position was not a practical advantage for the church. The new title "Pontifex Maximus" was only a name, for the Ostrogothic tribes dominated Rome, and much of Italy, and they were mainly Arians in faith.

Six years later (539) Justinian succeeded in sending an army to vanquish and conquer the Gothic king. It is here we recognize Antichrist set up to rule from Rome. It now had power to take away the "*Continual Sacrifice,*" Power to cast down the "*Base of the*

Sanctuary” (the Ransom), Power to set up the Mass, and power to make it the law of the land. This is the correct point to measure the three periods of Daniel 12: the 1260 years till Papacy’s power would be broken; the 1290 years till the Sanctuary could be cleansed; the 1335 years till that blessed expectation would come.

In 800 the Papal States are given to **Charlemagne**. This begins the counterfeit one thousand year reign. From the 800s to the 1100s the Antichrist system flourished in the Dark Ages. It blasphemed God for a time, times, and dividing of a time or 3-1/2 years— Dan. 7:8, 25. As 1260 days in symbol, this represents the same 1260 years shown in Dan. 12; the 42 months in Rev. 11:2; and the 3-1/2 times in Rev. 12:14. This is the season that the Church was oppressed yet nourished in the wilderness condition.

Early in the twelfth century we can see the first faint rays of light on the horizon, and to that extent the beginning of the cleansing work, which in time would progress to the full. **Joachim** was born about 1130 A.D. It is here that we will begin to trace the spreading influence of truth. He opposed and denounced in the strongest terms corruption in the Roman hierarchy, indulgences, crusades, vices of the clergy, and the temporal power of the pope. Joachim taught that in the year 1260 A.D. the Christian era would close, when a new era would commence under another dispensation. Though in error on the terminal point, what is important to us is that he saw the use of ages in God’s plan, and began to use the year-per-day rule. His attempts at reform were premature. His views were condemned, and in 1260 the Council at Aries finally pronounced all followers of Joachim heretics.

In the early 1200s we see **Peter Waldo** on the pages of history. In the vein of a true reformer type he turned from commercial pursuits at an early age to teach religion. His doctrines were still of a negative nature, in the sense of casting off the errors of the “Whore of Babylon.” Among the simple inhabitants of the Piedmont valleys, he found those with a hearing ear. But persecution is far from outdated at this time in history, for in the words of the Roman Pontiff, Rome was bent on “exterminating the whole pestilential race.” Waldo and his followers were forced to flee to the hills to form a community. There too, they faced slaughter, and so spread to Switzerland, the Netherlands, England, Germany, France and Denmark. The descendants of Waldo became the well-known Huguenots, who we think, not accidentally, but in the Lord’s providence, were among the first to come to America as Pilgrims.

By the 1300s a transition era emerges. Europe, previously semi-barbarous, is flushed with civilization. At first with a missionary and literary culture, then theology became the chief and sole science of the day. Even languages and philosophy took on a decidedly religious coloring. The masses became awake to the prominent religious questions, and the political conditions of the country greatly stimulated religious debates. Through all these fluctuations of civil power, the Roman Pontiff watched at a safe distance like a

vulture sniffing the field of battle, ever ready to pounce upon the weak or wounded on either side.

These political turmoils created and fostered the spirit of free inquiry into human rights, civil rights, and ecclesiastical rights. This was the condition when **Wycliffe** came on the scene. Being an educated man, his life was checkered with positions and titles: Warden of Ballard College, then rector of two other colleges, the King's Chaplain, Archbishop of Canterbury. Early in life he became known as the "Public opponent of the Mendicant Friars who infest England." Aided by the title, "Doctor of Theology," he had the ideal circumstances and opportunity for reform. Wycliffe's eyes were more opened to Papal error than those before, and he wrote and taught without reserve, rejecting the doctrines of Transubstantiation and the Mass. His great concern was for scholastic culture, and sympathy for the lower classes. In this environment he was motivated to make the first translation of the scriptures into English. For this he is called the "Morning Star of the Reformation."

By the fourteenth to fifteenth century a cleansing is truly visible. A reformation is ripe and flushed Europe with **Zwingli** in Switzerland and **Luther** in Germany. It is significant to note that now the issues of reform are more than opposition to confessions, the Mass, etc., but positive issues are formulated. Justification by faith is explained. Mortality of man is the 27th of Luther's 95 theses.

A significant character comes to our attention contemporary with Luther. His name is **Melanchthon**. He entered the University of Heidelberg at the age of twelve. At fourteen he received a Bachelor of Arts degree for distinction in linguistics and Greek. While supporting himself as a tutor, he devoted his mind to the study of Greek, Latin, Literature, history, logic, math., medicine, law and theology. Having excelled in each he received his Master's Degree in 1514 at eighteen years old. Melanchthon was called to Greek professorship at Wittenberg at twenty-one. Martin Luther was at his inaugural lecture, and two days later he wrote, "I really desire no other teacher of Greek so long as he lives."

In philosophy he sympathized with Luther's antagonism to Aristotle, yet he soon learned to distinguish between the use and abuse of that author, and declared he had never understood the use of philosophy until he had apprehended the pure doctrine of the Gospel. He wrote extensively on the books of Romans and Corinthians. It was later said of these works: "It explains its doctrinal statements in such appropriate and accurate terms, and by a methodical treatment, renders them so clear and strong, that it is injuring the papal power more than all other writings of the Lutherans."

Though he never entered the ministry, the care of the reformation rested mainly on Melanchthon during Luther's absence at the Wartburg. Though his method was clear and

simple, his great modesty did not suit him to withstand the storm of fanaticism which arose among some of his former friends, and the defiant stance the Reformation required. This is Calvin's tribute to him: "O, Philip Melanchthon!... A hundred times, worn out with fatigue and overwhelmed with care, thou hast laid thy head upon my breast and said, Would God I might die here. And a thousand times since then I have earnestly desired that it had been granted us to be together. **Certainly thou wouldst have been more valiant to face danger, and stronger to despise hatred, and bolder to disregard false accusations.**" And so too with us.

The reformation so boldly begun might have progressed rapidly to full purity, but Satan had a decoy: Dan. 11:34,35, "*Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help; but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for a time appointed.*"

The German princes were admirers of these bold reformers, for they attacked the system at which even kings trembled. And now the aid of these kings seemed indispensable. So Papacy's deadly wound is healed for a time, for Protestantism becomes daughters in strategy of the system they had protested. But God's plans cannot be frustrated, for the Sanctuary must be clean by the 2300 days.

With the sixteenth century dawns the age of reason. In the dark ages even science was doled out by Papacy. Free thinking in this led to greater church independence. Such was the impact of **Galileo**. Soon we see **Isaac Newton**, a student of Galileo. He was a greater student of scripture than his posterity has generally known, and his efforts have dramatically affected the quest for truth, and the sanctuary eventually reaching it. Though he excelled in mathematics, natural science, and metaphysics, these seem only sidelights to his theological endeavors. He wrote five volumes on chronology and church history. In another on "The Existence and Nature of the Deity" he writes concerning two notable corruptions of scripture, viz. 1 John 5:7 and 1 Tim. 3:16. His explanations sound like present truth.

Here might be a good place to present some quotes from his lectures and studies. Most of these references are from David Brewster's biography and McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia. Remember this is Newton's thinking from 1691 to the turn of the century:

Dan. 7, I take to be the same with the Word of God upon the white horse in heaven, (Apoc. 12) for both are to rule the nations with a rod of iron... When a beast or man is put for a kingdom, his parts and qualities are put for the analogous parts and qualities of the kingdom... The Image (Dan. 2) represents a body of four great nations which shall reign in succession over the earth, viz. the people of Babylonia, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans; while the stone cut out without hands is a new kingdom which should

arise after the four, conquer all those nations, become very great, and endure to the end of time... The Lion with eagle's wings was the kingdom of Babylon and Media, The Bear was the Persian empire, and its three ribs were the kingdoms of Sardis, Babylon and Egypt. The Leopard was the Greek empire, and its four heads and four wings were the kingdoms of Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. The fourth beast with its great iron teeth, was the Roman empire, and its ten horns were the ten kingdoms into which it was broken. 1) Kingdom of the Vandals and Alans in Spain and Africa. 2) the Kingdom of Suevians in Spain. 3) The Kingdom of the Visigoths. 4) the Kingdom of the Alans in Gaul. 5) The Kingdom of the Burgundians. 6) The Kingdom of the Franks. 7) The Kingdom of the Britains. 8) The Kingdom of the Huns. 9) The Kingdom of the Lombards. 10) The kingdom of Ravenna... Some of these Kingdoms fell, and new ones sprang up; but whatever was their subsequent number, they still retain the name of the ten kings from their first number... The prophecy of the 70 weeks, which has hitherto been restricted to the first coming of our Savior, is a prediction of all the main periods relating to the coming of the Messiah, the times of his birth and death, the time of his rejection, the duration of the Jewish war by which he caused the city and sanctuary to be destroyed, and the time of his second coming... Prophecy is not given to gratify men's curiosity, by enabling them to foreknow things, but that after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event, and afford convincing arguments that the world is governed by providence.

Just before his death, Isaac Newton wrote, "I know not what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all before me."

Others followed such as Professor **Bengel** in the 1700s, with a proper application of philosophy to scripture. He also used the correct key for the 1260 days. **Edward Irving** is seen in the early 1800s teaching the coming of Messiah in glory and majesty, for which he was excommunicated. But still errors had to be cleansed from the Sanctuary.

Alexander Campbell organized the "Disciples" in 1827 and advocated Apostolic church simplicity, equality of members under one head—Christ, the abrogation of ecclesiastical titles, D.D., Rev. etc. He claimed no creed but the Bible. All this was good so far as it went, but each reform stopped in a rut, as those that had gone before. Each was content with the form they had found, but failed to use the liberty wherewith Christ made them free.

The church must endure one more reform. This is under the influence of **William Miller**. He left the Baptists to develop his personal convictions of time features. By 1833 these were spreading among all denominations. His beliefs as ascertaining the truth are: 1— Prophecy was currently being fulfilled.
2—Christ is Abraham's seed, returns to possess his inheritance in the land.

- 3—As the son of David, to reign over the house of Judah.
- 4—To inherit the uttermost parts of the earth.
- 5—To have dominion over the nations.
- 6—That Christ's pre-millennial return would involve the conversion of the world during his second advent.
- 7—That he is to reign 1,000 years.
- 8—The promises to Israel regarding the land are literal.

These teachings awoke a kindred anticipation and expectation among Daniel's "HOLY ONES." There were some 5000 followers of these teachings, though some 2/3 abandoned the fellowship when the Lord failed to appear in 1844. Though Miller was in error as to the time, manner, and object of Christ's return, the designed effect was fulfilled. The Virgins trimmed their lamps—Matt. 25:1-5. Bible study became independent of the traditions of error.

Now as to mark the events, an opposition was formed to isolate these changes. The Evangelical Alliance was formed in 1846, with the old creeds of the immortal soul and eternal punishment for the wicked. But this fence of error only served to make distinguishable the nucleus of truth, and the holders thereof. Though the truth was available, probably only from various quarters, all that was necessary was there, somewhere. The SANCTUARY WAS CLEANSED in this representative sense. Daniel's vision of the 2300 days is accomplished.

Brother Russell says in Volume 3, page 118, "When we say the Sanctuary was cleansed of this defilement, we must remember that in scripture, a part of the Church not infrequently stands for the whole." It is the same principal in Rom. 4:17, "*God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.*" This is accomplished through God's foreknowledge. Bro. Russell expressed the same thought in Volume 4, page 621, "The kingdom, **as represented** in our Lord, and the sleeping saints already fitted and prepared and found worthy to be members of 'his body' the 'bride,' was *set up* in 1878."

Now that "wise and faithful servant" was able to sort and sift truth from error. This was not another reform, but the organization and presentation of the "Divine Plan of the Ages." This he did at the blessedness of the 1335 days—beginning in 1874. The new things he brought forth from the Lord's storehouse, appear to be the result of foregoing truths, such things as were overlooked by the reformers for viewing only segments of the whole. Therefore we have the two salvations and natures separate and distinct further clarified for us. Bro. Russell has helped us to see the beauty and harmony of the whole plan in Tabernacle Shadows, the Covenants, Chronology, the Sin Offering and Ransom, prophecies concerning Israel, the Church and the world.

So we have the vessels returned to the temple from captivity, and returned to original Christian purity as from the Apostles. As we stand on the threshold of the kingdom, we can see how our Lord has taken great care to protect our heritage, which he has cleansed for us. This has been done by bringing His servants into the searching of truth with a mental excitement that only truth can reward. He has made of their lives a sublime example of dedication. Truth has been defended with blood and tears.

LET US TAKE GREAT CARE TO ABIDE UNDER THIS GIFT OF DIVINE GRACE;
REALIZING THE PRIVILEGES OF PARTICIPATION WITH CHRIST IN HIS
DEATH, AND INHERITANCE IN LIGHT, THE TRUTH, WHICH IS FOR YOU WHO
BELIEVE.