



The Ryburn Christian Clarion

BIBLICAL STUDIES RESOURCE

Upholding the Accuracy of the God-Breathed Word

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The Ryburn Christian Clarion, 420 Ryburn Avenue, Suite C-2, Dayton, Ohio 45405-2552, U. S. A.;
ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net; www.godslivingroom.com

Unless otherwise stated, all passages are quoted from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible. All explanatory remarks by a writer within scripture verses are enclosed in brackets [].

INSIDE AT A GLANCE

OUR RESOLUTION IN this brand new year is to keep on doing what we've been doing, and to do it better this year. You can help with prayer, fascinating article submissions, and/or financial support. What do you say? Can you help?

“RESCUED ONES”, that’s precisely what we are. Each of us, being God’s child, has been delivered from a living death by the grace and love of our Father. This is something He wants us to reflect upon from time to time.

by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....1

“GOD’S MATCHLESS WORD”, the Bible, is essential if God’s people are to know what they have, and what they are to stand against. “The Scriptures: A Safeguard” takes a sobering look at foretold events yet to come on planet Earth.

by Maurice Goulet.....3

“FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT”, in “The Bible After Dark: The Sordid Side Of Scripture”, shows the travesty from which God wills to set men free. Along with great glory, His Word depicts the worst side of mankind.

by Joshua Shaffer.....5

“FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT” took a look, in our last issue, at the Devil (Fall, 2008; Vol. VI, No. 1). Shall we not give our God equal time? In “ ‘The Most High God’ ”, we do just that.

by Keith Jamison, Columnist.....6

“INVESTIGATING CREATION SCIENCE” brings to light wonderful truths from Genesis. “Whispers Of Celestial Conflict” notes, from Genesis 1, possible couched references to the “war in heaven” of Revelation, and elsewhere.

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RESCUED ONES:

Standing On The Rock!

RUMEROUS TIMES IN verses in the New Testament, the child of God is counseled to renounce past behavior, and now live his or her life according to scripture. We are instructed in Philippians 3:13 to be “...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before....” Paul, by revelation, had these words recorded, and if anyone knew their value in walking with God, it was he.

The remaining Church Epistles are also sprinkled with exhortations to “put off” old, worldly conduct, and to “put on” a manner of life that becomes saints (Rom. 13:14, Eph. 4:22-24, Col. 3:8-14, etc.). In II Corinthians 5:17, we are told that as new creations in Christ, “...old things are passed away...” and “...all things are become new...” and, thus, we should adjust our thinking accordingly. Galatians 5:6 and 6:15 further declare the old, carnal lifestyles to be void of merit and worthless in light of the “new creation.” That God would have His children abandon past ways of living is undeniable, but are there things in our pasts that God desires us to remember?

Indeed, there are many things that our Father wants us to recall from our pasts, and the Bible is full of illustrations for us to follow. For example, on the night before Israel was delivered from the slavery of Egypt, the Lord instituted

continued on next page...

among them the feast known as Passover (Ex. 12:3-50). God established it as an annual memorial so the Old Testament saints would *remember* how He had rescued them from cruel captivity, and set them on the road to something better.

In chapter 4 of the Book of Joshua, we find another example where God directs His people to set up a physical reminder of something He has done for them. When Joshua and the Israelites crossed the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land, they did so on dry ground, for God parted the waters of the river in the same way He had divided the Red Sea. At God's command, therefore, according to verse 9, "...Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests...stood: and they are there unto this day." Verse 7, of the same chapter, makes it clear that this was done to serve as "...a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." God wanted them to *remember* how powerfully He had opened their way and led them into Canaan. Although He wants His children to forget their unprofitable past lives, it's plain that God does want them to *recall* His acts of deliverance that have saved them.

Later, in Joshua 24:1, not long before his death, Joshua called the people to Shechem, and addressed, "...the elders of Israel,...their heads,...their judges, and...their officers...," challenging them to remain faithful to the Lord God. As one man, the leadership of Israel vowed to avoid false gods, and to worship only the Lord. Then, Joshua, as recorded in verses 26 and 27, "...took a great stone, and set it up...under an oak,...by the sanctuary of the LORD..." and said, "...Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us;...lest ye deny your God." In this case, God had His man erect a monolith, a visible symbol that would *remind* His people of their commitments.

Besides memorializing His mighty deeds by the use of stones, God also engraved His first precepts upon them, leaving Israel a tangible *reminder* of His fiery visitation from Mount Sinai. In fact, throughout the Old Testament period, the Almighty insisted that, not only His commandments be recorded but, His "testimonies" were to be documented in writing, as well, for they would continually extol His wonderful works to His people. Israel was encouraged to *recall* His mercies, and to "...forget not all his benefits..." (Ps. 103:2b) In addition, by His Word, written or spoken, God "...delivered [*malat*, in Hebrew] *them* from their destructions..." causing them to escape their perils, and leaving them with more mighty works to *bring to memory* (Ps. 107:20). Are His methods any different under the New Covenant?

Time and time again across the pages of the New Testament, God reminds us, His children, of our former lost condition, and how, by His grace, He rescued us from the darkness of this world, bringing us as sons into His family. The Father shows us, from Romans 5:6 and 10, that even when we were "...without strength..." and "...were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..." He reminds us that, in the past, we were "...dead in trespasses and sins..." and were "...without God in the world..." but are now "...fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God..." (Eph. 2:1,12, and 19) God wants us to *remember* what He rescued us from, otherwise, all these reminders would not be peppered throughout His Word.

Galatians 1:4

Who [Christ] gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver [exaireo] us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and ["even"] our Father:

Here, in Galatians 1, God continues to depict our past condition as one requiring a divine rescue, for nothing short of Godly help would do. The word rendered "deliver" in this verse is from the Greek word *exaireo*, which specifically means, "to take up and out of." The idea of a "rescue" is implicit in its meaning. By the redeeming work of the Son of God, we were "taken up and out of" this evil world. At the time of our salvation, we were spiritually elevated into the Kingdom of God as citizens, and the Father's own dear children, but the fullness of the "rescue" will be realized at the return of Christ, when we are physically "taken up and out of" this earthly realm.

An entirely different Greek word for "deliver" is used in Colossians 1:13, where, again, God reveals how He has assisted those who have made Christ their Lord (Rom. 10:9). In this verse, God "...hath delivered [*rhuomai*, in Greek] us from the power of darkness..." transferring us as citizens into His kingdom. Perhaps the best English equivalent for *rhuomai* is "rescue," for it implies deliverance from a dire situation. You will note that the action in this verse is in the past tense, indicating that the rescue has already occurred, at the time of the new birth. As in Galatians 1:4, however, the Greek shows the fullness of the rescue taking place at Christ's return.

It's exciting to think that when we were saved, we were actually rescued from a dying world, and that, at Christ's coming, we will be snatched away and utterly rescued from all that will befall this planet. What's even more exciting is that *rhuomai*,

“rescue,” is used in verses that deal with our walk with God in the here and now! In II Corinthians 1:10, *rhuomai* is used three times, where it is once translated “delivered” and twice rendered “deliver.” This verse, for God’s people, covers all of life, for it states that God, “...rescued us [past tense]..., and does rescue [present tense]...,” and “...will yet rescue [future tense]...” (literal translation) The Father has His sons and daughters totally covered, for He is ever willing and able to rescue His children. We are, indeed, “rescued ones”!

With such assurance, and such *reminders*, we are free to confidently carry out our Father’s business, in whatever calling we find ourselves. At the *Clarion*, our aim is to present enlightening slices from the Word of God that will enhance the lives of everyone that is touched by them. In that regard, we are pleased to announce that, beginning with this issue, the “**For Your Spiritual Enrichment**” column will be a regular feature in every installment of the *Clarion*. When the column first appeared, it was only meant to be featured occasionally, presenting a variety of works ranging from essays, to Christian poetry, to testimonies, etc. The submitted materials, however, have been so abundant and so diverse that we’ve decided to carry the column in each issue.

Speaking of issues, you may recall that during 2008, we published only three installments (in English), rather than our customary four. The reason was that we were observing our 5th anniversary, and decided to

combine the spring and summer issues into a single edition. This freed up some much-needed time that was used to streamline and reorganize our procedures. This also means that in acknowledging this past year’s contributors to the “**God’s Matchless Word**” column (something we do in every winter edition), we have only three individuals to mention.

First off, “**Our Father’s Restoration Business**” led the way, written by Ann Barrentine of Bloomington, Indiana, appearing in our combined issue (Spring-Summer, 2008; Vol. V, No. 3). Secondly, we presented “**God: Our Refuge**” (Fall, 2008; Vol. VI, No. 1), by Rev. Kevin P. Guigou, who serves on the board of trustees of *Christian Family Fellowship Ministry* of Tipp City, Ohio. Last of all, “**The Scriptures: A Safeguard**”, by Maurice Goulet of Hailey, Idaho, is featured in this present issue (Winter, 2009; Vol. VI, No. 2). To these wonderful writers and teachers of God’s Word, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

In closing, there is one final item that needs mentioning. The very astute among you may have noticed that our fax number has not appeared on our masthead for the last two issues. This is because, finding it not worth the expense, we have discontinued the service. In the future, please contact us only by mail, phone, or e-mail. Our contact information appears in the masthead at the top of page 1. Until next issue, may God bless you abundantly.

-----by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief

GOD’S MATCHLESS WORD:

A Forum For Presenting The Light Of Life

(This column features a wide range of subjects from God’s Word as they are set forth by a host of preachers and teachers from differing avenues of Christian thought and various areas of Biblical study and concern.)

“The Scriptures: A Safeguard”

by Maurice Goulet

THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN so men and women might know truth. Most people, however, choose to believe what they have heard from others, and rarely check to see if what they were told is really so. In Berea, after the Apostle Paul taught, in Acts 17:11, the people “...received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” In Isaiah 8:20, we note that, “...if they speak not according to this [God’s] word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.” The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influences of false teachers, and the power of spirits of darkness.

Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining the knowledge of the Bible, for its

plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every true revival of God’s work, the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity, and is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is approaching, in which the Antichrist shall perform his marvelous works. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the genuine that it will be impossible to distinguish between them, except by God’s rightly divided Word.

Those who endeavor to walk according to the Word of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only *in Christ*. To endure, they must understand and live the will of God as revealed in His Word. They can honor Him only as they have a right conception of

His character and purposes, acting in accordance with them. Only those who have fortified their minds with the truth will stand through the crises to come. To every believing soul will come the searching test: "Shall I obey God rather than men?" Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable Word?

Before His crucifixion, the Savior explained to His disciples that He was to be put to death and to rise again from the tomb. They, however, were looking for temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and could not tolerate the thought that He, in Whom all their hopes centered, should suffer an ignominious death. The words they needed to remember, they banished from their own minds, so when the time of trial came, it found them unprepared. The death of Jesus destroyed their hopes, as if He had not even forewarned them. Likewise, in the Biblical prophecies, the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the Lord's disciples. The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble are clearly presented, but multitudes have no more understanding of these truths than if they had never been revealed. Satan has done an excellent job in deceiving God's people with the doctrines of man, and the times will find many unready.

When God sends to men warnings so important, He requires every person endowed with reason to heed the message. Masses of people, however, turn away their ears from the truth, and turn to fables. Paul, looking toward the last days, declared, "...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...." (II Tim. 4:3) It would appear that time has come. Many do not want Biblical truths, because they interfere with the desires of their world-loving hearts. All the while, Satan supplies the deceptions they love. God, however, will have a people upon the Earth to uphold His Word, and His Word only, the standard of all doctrine and basis of all reform. The opinions of learned men; the deductions of science; the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastics (as numerous and discordant as are the churches they represent); or the voice of the majority: not one of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of faith. Before accepting any doctrine, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support.

Satan constantly endeavors to attract attention to man in place of God, leading people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, instead of searching the Scriptures for themselves. By directing the minds of such leaders, Satan can then influence multitudes according to his will. When Christ spoke the words of life, the common people heard Him gladly. The chief of the priesthood and the leading men of the nation, however, were determined to condemn and repudiate His teachings. Although they were baffled in their efforts to find accusations against Him, and could not but feel the influence of the divine power and wisdom attending His words, they incased themselves in prejudice, rejecting the clear evidence that He was the Messiah. These were men whom the people had been taught from infancy to reverence, to whose authority they had been accustomed to bow. Would not

these pious men receive Jesus if He were, indeed, the Christ? It was the influence of such teachers that led Israel, as a nation, to reject its King and Redeemer.

The spirit, which actuated those priests and rulers, is still manifested by many who make a high profession of piety. Refusing to examine the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the unique truths for our day and time, they point instead to their numbers, wealth, and popularity. Meanwhile, they look with contempt upon the genuine advocates of truth as being few, poor, and unpopular (but, who, in reality, have faith that separates them from the world). Christ, however, foresaw that the assumption of authority by the scribes and Pharisees, and the like, would not cease with the dispersion of Israel. He held a prophetic view of the exalting of human authority, a practice that has been so terrible a curse to The Church almost since its inception. His clear denunciations and warnings, to avoid following these blind leaders, were placed on record by God as admonitions to future generations.

Even today, much of Christendom reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures, averring that ecclesiastics alone are competent to explain God's Word, a view not upheld in the Bible. Although the Reformation gave The Word to all, this doctrine prevents multitudes of Christians from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teachings as interpreted by their churches. Indeed, thousands dare not receive anything that is contrary to their established creeds, no matter how plainly revealed in scripture.

Many are ready thus to commit the keeping of their souls to the clergy, even though thousands of professors of religion can give no reason for adhering to certain points of faith other than they were so instructed by *their* leaders. They pass over Christ's teachings, giving them scant notice, and place implicit confidence in the words of *their* instructors, but are ministers infallible? How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we know from God's Word that they are light bearers? A lack of moral courage to step off the beaten path leads many to follow so-called learned men, and by their reluctance to investigate God's Word, they become hopelessly fastened in chains of error. Seeing that the truth for this time is plainly brought to view in the Bible, and sensing the power of the Holy Spirit attending these proclamations, they still allow the clergy to turn them from the light. Although reason and conscience are convinced, these souls dare not think differently than their ministers, and so their eternal interests are sacrificed to the unbelief and pride of others.

Many are the ways by which Satan works through human influences to bind his captives. He secures multitudes to himself by attaching them with silken cords of affection to those who are enemies of the cross of Christ. Whether the attachment is parental, conjugal, or social, the effect is the same: opponents of truth exert their power to control the conscience. Sadly, deluded souls held under their sway often do not have sufficient courage or independence to obey their own convictions.

The truth and the glory of God are inseparable. It is impossible for us to honor God by erroneous opinions.

Many claim that it matters not what we believe, if our lives are right, but life is molded by belief. If light is within our reach and we neglect the privilege of seeing it, then we have virtually rejected it. We are, in essence, choosing darkness rather than light.* **

(Mr. Maurice Goulet is the author of Lord Of Darkness; Lord Of Light: Unfolding The Signs Of The Times And The Hope Of A New World. A detailed juxtaposition of the Christ and the Antichrist, it defines the nature of a new leader who will ultimately bring the world to its day of destiny. To learn more about the book, or to follow Mr. Goulet's blog, please visit www.TheSecretFog.com.)

FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT

Essay

(This column offers our readers a variety of inspirational and edifying submissions. In this "grab-bag," you will find essays, book reviews, testimonies, poetry, compositions, letters, and other things designed to exhort and comfort God's people.)

“The Bible After Dark: The Sordid Side Of Scripture”

by Joshua Shaffer

SEX, LIES, SCANDALS, conceit, betrayal, bodily functions, and lust: also, mercy, justice, salvation, and everlasting love: the Bible concerns itself not only with our salvation and our waiting to hear the trumpet when the Lord calls us to His side, but also has a very human aspect to it. It is a historical witness of many of God's people in times before our own, but did human beings from centuries ago not have the same trials as people in our times, especially concerning the Word and will of God?

When one thinks about the Bible, many things come to mind, such as, God, Jesus, Adam and Eve, the Ten Commandments, the Old and New Testaments, Satan, and the Book of Revelation, but what about the human, fleshly side of things? The Bible also deals with these, with what God's beloved children will face in their lives. We must, then, fill our minds with the knowledge of the Bible, and replace our "...broken cisterns..." with HIS Word, or we shall be "...destroyed for lack of knowledge...." (Jer. 2:13 and Hos. 4:6)

God loves us so much, but when loved, especially with God's pure love, there must be unadulterated honesty. God provides just that in the Bible, telling us what can happen in our lives here on Satan's "stomping grounds." Whether regarding a private or public paradigm, it speaks to us about everything (II Pet. 1:3). God's Word also demonstrates cause and effect, and the consequences of actions, even with Biblical figures that served God faithfully for years. For example, Moses did almost everything God told him to do, but his human, fleshly side ruled him when he threw down the tables of stone (the only man in history to break all the Ten Commandments at once). Also, his striking the rock, rather than speaking to it, in the account of the "water of Meribah," resulted in him being forbidden by God to enter the Promised Land (Num. 20:7-13).

King David provides an excellent illustration of many of the examples I gave in the opening paragraph. He slept with Bathsheba, and when she became pregnant, he

tried to cover it up, before simply having her husband, Uriah, killed (II Sam. 11:2-24). David alone could supply enough scandal for a whole article, for when David made a mistake, he made a MISTAKE! God, however, loves us so much that if we are humble and meek enough to understand and confess our faults to the Lord, as David did, they will be forgiven.

The Bible also speaks about sexual taboos, ranging from incest, orgies, and bestiality to sodomy and adultery. In addition to David and his sultry lover, Bathsheba, let us speak of Samson, the Israelite judge and warrior, and of Delilah. Samson gave in to lust and fornicated with Delilah, who later betrayed him, resulting in his death (Judg. 16:4-31). Betrayal, also, is a very common theme in God's Word, including man's continual betrayal of God.

Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Galatians are books in the Bible that put the things we are to avoid in their true perspective. Regarding sexual taboos, Leviticus 18:6-24 depicts adultery, incest, bestiality, and homosexuality, among other things, in an unfavorable light. Some of these practices are also addressed in the New Testament, in a straightforward admonition of what NOT to do.

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

There is so much that God puts on the table that there should be no excuse or reason to not follow what is revealed in the Bible. At times, however, we must turn from the sunshine and lollipop pages on salvation, mercy, justice, and the everlasting love of God, and take the time

to look at the more sordid, human side of the Scriptures, where The Word concerns itself with sex, lies, scandals, and betrayal. How do we know what to avoid if we do not study what the Bible says? It is always easier to look at beautiful, wonderful things, and bypass the mud puddles and dirt piles, but, guess what? We are to study the whole Word of God, and that means both sides of the page, including “the good, the bad, and the ugly”!*

(Mr. Joshua Shaffer is a new student of the Bible, with a background and interest in illustration and graphics. His Biblical studies at present are in association with Christian Family Fellowship Ministry and Akribos Theological Fellowship (of Tipp City and Huber Heights, Ohio, respectively). Josh also serves as an office assistant for The Ryburn Christian Clarion, and may be contacted by e-mail at firstpeter120@yahoo.com.)

FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

(This column, featuring the work of Keith Jamison, the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion’s Research Department, examines God’s Word and how its application in our Twenty-First Century lives has been influenced by mythology, philosophy, and tradition.)

“ ‘The Most High God’ ”

WELCOME BACK TO the *Clarion’s* Research Department. In the last article in this column, “**The Devil, You Say?**” (Fall, 2008; Vol. VI, No. 1), we briefly looked at the Adversary. This time, we have a loftier subject: “the most high God.” This phrase and similar references are used throughout the Bible. It’s a common expression, employed by many, but we usually don’t give it much thought. Maybe we should. Let’s take a look at this phrase, and its use, to see its importance.

In Hebrew, the words “most high” are the word *elyon*. The comparable Greek word is *hupsistos*. Both mean, “highest” or “supreme.” The meaning of the expression is clear; there is no power or authority above God. He IS supreme! With such an obvious meaning, there must not be much to research, right? Wrong! There is always more in the Bible than what appears on the surface. There are often layers of context to consider, which make the Bible the richest, most wondrous book on Earth.

The first occurrence of the phrase is in Genesis 14:18, in the record following Abram’s (Abraham’s) rescue of his nephew, Lot. This first use identifies Melchizedek, the King of Salem, as, “...the priest of the most high God.” It is used three more times in this chapter, in verses 19, 20, and 22. It is spoken twice by Melchizedek, once in blessing Abram, and once in blessing God, on account of Abram’s victory in retrieving Lot. Lastly, the expression is spoken by Abram, in a declaration to the King of Sodom. On two of these occasions, once by Melchizedek (verse 19) and once by Abram (verse 22), it is used with the additional phrase, “possessor of heaven and earth.” This is a very ponderous way of speaking, and begs the question: “Did they really talk like this?”

Perhaps they did; we simply do not know. What are important are the words that are attributed

to Abram and Melchizedek. You will recall that Moses, by divine inspiration, wrote the Book of Genesis, and it was written predominantly to Israel--Israel, which had just come out of the bondage of Egypt. The kingdom along the Nile had been a land of many gods, and the Children of Israel had lived under that influence for over four hundred years. God’s people needed reminding of the Almighty’s power, and the use in Genesis of the expressions “the most high God” and “possessor of heaven and earth” set a good mental image for them. Today, they still do the same for us, for we, too, are surrounded by many gods.

This phrase, “the most high God,” is also used in Daniel 3. In verse 26, King Nebuchadnezzar, seeing the delivering power of the Lord, called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego forth from the fiery furnace, declaring them to be the “...servants of the most high God...” Their miraculous survival convinced him that their God was higher than his gods (See also Daniel 4:2.). Daniel himself used this phrase twice, when he later explained to Belshazzar the meaning of the writing on the wall (Dan. 5:18 and 21). These uses, like the examples in Genesis, show God’s supremacy.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is addressed as the “...Son of the most high God...” (Mark 5:7) and the “...Son of God most high...” (Luke 8:28) In these accounts of the same incident, a possessed man, having many devil spirits and living among the tombs, spoke, or, more accurately, Legion, one of the spirits, spoke. Additionally, in Acts 16:16 and 17, a young girl, possessed by a “...spirit of divination...” (fortune-telling), followed the Apostle Paul and others, proclaiming them to be, “...servants of the most high God...” Even devil spirits acknowledge God’s supremacy.

These uses all serve as reminders of God's supremacy, but there is another point being made in some of these references. It is the relationship between men and God, in which the men are called "servants of the most high God," as we have noted in Daniel 3 and Acts 16. These verses not only remind us of God's supremacy, but also of the privilege granted to men, that of being permitted to walk with this highest God. As with these men, we, too, may walk with the Most High God. If we do, how then can we be discouraged? Is it not comforting to know that we have the highest authority backing us up in our lives?

God is supreme; He is the highest! There is NOTHING above Him! There are many verses

where He is called things like "...the Highest..." (Luke 1:32) or where He is described as "...the Majesty on high..." (Heb. 1:3), but in all of them, the same exciting, profound truth is conveyed. Although we have trouble comprehending how exalted God is, we can know *absolutely* that there is none higher. Praise God! We can have a relationship with this most exalted Being! We can be "of" Him, and can have everlasting fellowship with Him, indeed, with our Father, the Most High God! *

(Mr. Keith Jamison is the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion's Research Department. In this capacity, he regularly develops material for the "From The Research Department" and the "Investigating Creation Science" columns.)

CAN YOU HELP US MOVE GOD'S WORD?

*If you are interested in submitting an article for our "God's Matchless Word" column or, perhaps, an essay, some original Christian poetry, or a testimony for our "For Your Spiritual Enrichment" column, please note that it is best to send them on a 3½" floppy disk, using a standard Microsoft™ Word® format. You may also e-mail your submissions, in a "plain text" format, sending them to ryburnclarion2@sbcglobal.net. For more information, feel free to call us at (937) 275-3316. If you would like to send a letter to the editor, you may use our e-mail address, or simply write **The Ryburn Christian Clarion**, 420 Ryburn Avenue, Suite C-2, Dayton, Ohio 45405-2552, U. S. A. If you would like to support our outreach work financially, please make your offerings payable to "The Ryburn Christian Clarion," and mail them to the same address.*

INVESTIGATING CREATION SCIENCE

(In this column, which appears in every winter and summer issue of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, members of the Clarion's research team explore the timely and unfolding evidence that supports the Biblical assertion concerning the Divine creation of all things, visible and invisible. Join us as we take a journey into scripture and science alike to investigate the latest, compelling proofs.)

"Whispers Of Celestial Conflict"

by Rick Heeter

EVER SINCE WE INTRODUCED this column in the Spring, 2005 installment of the *Clarion* (Vol. II, No. 3), it has been our desire to lay before our readers a deeper and more accurate understanding of the origin of man and, indeed, the universe itself. For any Bible student or scholar, this would be a daunting task, by any standard. Thankfully, much of the groundwork has been laid by those who have gone before us. This groundwork, however, has not been the result of the diligent work of cosmologists or astrophysicists in the scientific community. As a matter of fact, the very nature of scientific study itself makes it impossible for the pure, analytical researcher to grasp the truths behind the physical realm. We know from God's Word that the basis of the material realm is spiritual, and the scientist, looking for obvious, empirical evidence, will never acknowledge it, because it exists only beyond the scope of the five senses.

Traditional Christianity has fared no better. Its stubborn adherence to well-worn paths of dogma discourages scriptural investigation, relegating the so-called "Creation Story" to the category of fairy tales, along with Sleeping Beauty and Peter Pan. The result is a body of saints with no real answers and, thus, no stamina for standing against the evolutionist propaganda of modern society. As noted in our second article in this column, " 'Without Form And Void' " (Fall, 2005; Vol. III, No. 1), both science and mainstream Christian thought have elements of truth, but neither are able to approach the answer, and both for the same reason: they will not come to the Word of God!

Independent of these two camps, we, at the *Clarion*, are able to avoid the shortcomings of both. While one group looks for answers in the wrong places and the other fears to look beyond its own self-imposed confinement, we choose to follow where God leads.

We do not claim to have all the answers, but God does, and since He "...is light [*phos*, in Greek]..." (I John 1:5), He certainly does not desire His people to wander in darkness. Of course, what could better bring us to our topic than the mention of "light" and "darkness"? In that regard, let us turn to Genesis 1.

In " **'To Give Light Upon The Earth'** ", from the Spring, 2007 *Clarion* (Vol. IV, No. 3), we examined from Genesis 1 the Hebrew words for "light." As noted, "light," as physical luminaries like the sun and stars, is the word *maowr*, "light givers." On the other hand, when it comes to the "light" God spoke into being in Genesis 1:3, or regarding God as "light," the Hebrew word is *owr*. *Owr* is light in its fullest sense and widest application. Scientifically speaking, this would be the entire electromagnetic spectrum. The corresponding Greek word for this "light" is *phos*, which is also used of God Himself (I John 1:5). In Genesis 1:3, God, Who is "light" (*owr* and *phos*; light in its widest application), spoke into being "light." This spoken "light," as we have said, is ALSO *owr* in Hebrew and *phos* in Greek, light in its widest application. God, it would seem, to establish order, found it necessary to speak into being more of what He is, His own nature! Why would He do this?

According to Genesis 1:2, the Earth "...was [*hayah*] without form, and void..." In the King James Version, the Hebrew word *hayah* is rendered "was" in this verse. *Hayah*, however, may be translated "existed," "become," "became," "came to be," "came to pass," and any of the forms of the verb "to be." How it is rendered, therefore, is influenced by the context, immediate and remote. In light of verses like Genesis 1:28, where Adam and Eve are commanded to "...replenish ["fill again"] the earth...", and Hebrews 11:3, where God states that the "...worlds were framed [*katartizo*, in Greek; "mended" or "completely repaired"] by the word of God...", it is necessary, in Genesis 1:2, to translate *hayah* as "became." This would describe an Earth in need of replenishing and repairing, and would place Genesis 1:2 in harmony with the rest of God's Word. Now, the question that remains is, "How did the Earth BECOME without form and void, requiring repair?"

In past articles, we have asserted that the rebellion against God by Lucifer and his minions is what caused the calamity that befell the Earth, making it, "...without form, and void..." (Gen. 1:2) The celestial conflict is briefly referred to in Revelation 12:7, where it is called, "...war in heaven..." The verse tells how "...Michael [the archangel] and his angels fought against the dragon [Lucifer, Satan]...", and of how "...the dragon fought and his angels..." Verse 8 then reveals that the dragon, Lucifer, and his angels, "...prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." The rebellious

Lucifer was "...cast out..." of Heaven, along with the third of the angels that served under him (verse 9). Interestingly, the name "Lucifer" means "light bringer," for he was the angel of light, but when he was expelled from his exalted position, according to Genesis 1:2, "...darkness was upon the face of the deep." Since the material realm is a direct reflection of the spiritual, the Earth suffered a cataclysm that left it in utter disarray, and in need of restoration.

This is the first use of the word "darkness" in the Bible, and, as such, it holds great significance. It comes from the Hebrew word *choshek*, which denotes the *full range of darkness*, from literal and figurative to physical and spiritual. Its Greek counterpart is *skotos*. When the Earth endured the calamity of Genesis 1:2, not only was it formless and empty, but darkness, both physical and *spiritual*, was upon everything! According to verse 3, God's response to this full range of darkness (including spiritual) was to command into being more light (in its widest application), and "...there came to be light." (literal translation)

Just what are we seeing here? If *choshek* denotes both physical AND spiritual darkness, are we to understand that Lucifer and his "cast out" minions are here, too? Furthermore, after God brought more light to pass, according to verse 4, He divided "...the light [*owr* and *phos*] from the darkness [*choshek* and *skotos*]." God played an active part in separating this light (in its widest application), which includes God Himself, from the darkness (both physical and spiritual). Is this the point at which Lucifer and his forces are routed and expelled?

Only God can say for sure, and so our Biblical research continues, illuminating the corners of our minds with the rich tapestry of truth, and a greater reverence for our Heavenly Father. The Bible says, in II Peter 1:3, that the Scriptures contain "...all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness..." Bearing that in mind, we will never exhaust the cache of treasures yet to be mined from the depths of God's wonderful, matchless Word.*

(We encourage you to join us in every winter and summer edition of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, as we explore the riches of the Bible in "Investigating Creation Science.")

(Mr. Rick Heeter is presently the editor-in-chief, a columnist, and the book and music reviewer for The Ryburn Christian Clarion.)

**Articles and columns submitted to The Ryburn Christian Clarion are edited to ensure correct spelling and punctuation, proper grammar, and clarity of expression. Furthermore, no article or column herein should be construed to be a comprehensive study of the subject under consideration.*

***The Biblical research book, Lord Of Darkness; Lord Of Light: Unfolding The Signs Of The Times And The Hope Of A New World, by Mr. Maurice Goulet, was reviewed in the Fall, 2004 issue of The Ryburn Christian Clarion (Vol. II, No. 1).*