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Volume 25
Issue 611

Blessings Among the Celestials

by — John H. Essex (1907-1991)

Part 1 of 2

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ (Ephesians 1:3, Concordant Literal Version).

One may well ask: Why are our blessings among the celestials? It is because the Prison Epistles open up details which have regard to a sphere other than the earth.

At first, it may not be readily appreciated why this should be so, or what necessity there is for such a change. The persistent reading of these epistles by the believer leads to an increasing measure of realization concerning their contents. It becomes plain that information here regards a wider field than that of which the Scriptures have hitherto spoken, in any detail.

That God's operations have an interest in creatures other than humans becomes evident as this group of epistles is pondered. Meditation makes clear that matters which elsewhere may be but casually or barely mentioned have been given a more distinct light. They merit consideration amidst the fresh aspect, and with an earnestness equal to that which has been accorded elsewhere.

Ephesians opens up the reason for the allotment accorded to Christ Jesus among the celestials, the reason for His headship, and the basic ministry position for the ecclesia which is His Body, the complement by which He will be completing "All in all."

The celestials are a sphere in which Christ is to achieve glory, and prior to Ephesians no reference of this kind had been made. The present administration is providing the complement necessary for that ministry through which Christ will complete the reconciliation of the universe. The celestials have a real interest in the purpose of the eons. Not alone are humans concerned in the purpose. It will become evident as we proceed that estrangement existed and characterized the celestials long ere humanity were created.

INVISIBILITY AND UNAPPROACHABILITY

Invisibility is a description of God, absolute and unrevealed. Prior to Him Who is the Image¹ of the invisible God, the invisibility was an absolute manner. So too, with the entrance of sin and estrangement, there arose the contrary feature of unapproachability.

This gave circumstances which, in a sense, dimmed the "visibility" of God. The Son is God's Creative Original. He *alone* was fully intimate with His God and able to approach Him. Such thoughts are basic, for their reference indicates the purpose which

1. [Editor:] For more information about Christ as God's Image, see:
- The Image of God, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [Bible Student's Notebook #362](#)

lies in the eons. It is to reveal God to an estranged creation.

BEFORE THE DISRUPTION²

Where were you when I founded the earth? Tell if you know with understanding. Who determined its measurements – for surely you know! Or who stretched out a tape upon it? On what were its sockets sunk? Or who directed its cornerstone in place, when the stars of the morning jubilated together, and all the sons of Elohim shouted with joy? Who shut in the sea with double doors? when it rushed forth, it came forth from the womb (Job 38:4-7, CLV).³

There was a point, mentioned in this passage, when the sons of God, termed stars of the morning, jubilated for joy at the occasion when the cornerstone of the earth was shot into its place. This is a matter prior to the occurrence of the disruption. The “*jurisdiction of darkness*” (Colossians 1:13) did not then exist. So too must we say in regard to the Adversary that he was not then in being. There must be a definite relation between the *jurisdiction of darkness* and the beginning of the office of the Adversary.

THE PROVERBS CONFIRM JOB

To find a parallel of the details of Job 38, we need to place them alongside the statements of Proverbs 8:23-26.

From the eon was I inaugurated, from the beginning, preceding the earth; when there were no abysses I was travailed, When there were no springs teeming with water. Ere the mountains were sunk in place, before the hills, I was travailed, when He had not yet made the earth and its open places, or the beginnings of soil for the inhabitation.

These verses in Proverbs, like the verses in Job, give

2. [Editor:] For more information about the disruption, see:
 - *The Disruption*, A.E. Knoch, [Bible Student's Notebook #522](#).
3. [Editor:] All Scripture references are from the *Concordant Version of the Old Testament*, and the *Concordant Literal New Testament*.

information concerning matters which attach to Genesis 1:1,

Created by the Elohim were the heavens and the earth.

Both of these passages precede the chaos and darkness of Genesis 1:2, which overtook the earth.

Yet the earth became a chaos and vacant, and darkness was on the surface of the submerged chaos. Yet the spirit of the Elohim is vibrating over the surface of the water.

Proverbs and Job are a reference to that which was prior to what is enumerated in the remaining verses of Genesis 1. Into these subsequent conditions humanity was installed.

To Job all of these matters were evidence of Yahweh's glory, whether connected with the original position of Genesis 1:1 or not. Equally, Proverbs 8 makes plain that all, both first matters and those subsequent, were directed in wisdom.

WHENCE DARKNESS

and darkness was on the surface of the submerged chaos.

There is a need to make *the jurisdiction of darkness* a first consideration, for it will give us the right aspect of the eons.⁴ Whence does darkness arise? What promoted it, since God is Light? How came darkness to be instituted in His universe?

4. [Editor:] There are a total of five ages (or eons) in God's revealed plan. We currently live in the third “*evil age*” which began with the flood of Noah and continues until the Second Coming of Christ. For a further look at God's plan of the Ages (or Eons) see:
 - A “*Handy*” *Chart of the Eons*, E. Lynwood Crystal, [Bible Student's Notebook 518](#);
 - *The Eons of the Bible* (with Concordance), Joseph E. Kirk, [Bible Student's Notebook 433](#);
 - *The Divine Calendar*, A.E. Knoch, [Bible Student's Notebook 434, 435](#), or see the order form for the book edition, same title;
 - *The Eons of the Ages* (a chart) [Bible Student's Notebook 353](#);
 - *The Purpose of the Eons* (a chart) [Bible Student's Notebook 352](#);
 - *The Ages: God's Time Periods*, Edward Henry Clayton, Part 1: [Bible Student's Notebook 371](#), Part 2: [Bible Student's Notebook 372](#).

The jurisdiction of darkness is certainly authority which is opposed to God, and equally it resists subjection to God. It is the sway of enemies, and actively resists the Subjector. What led to its institution?

Is the factor which caused darkness at all comparable to the function of the tree of knowledge of good and evil? If so, then the creation of the Adversary is the factor immediately prior to the coming of darkness and its corresponding event, the disruption of the world. The disruption becomes God's first recorded act following creation.

From the foregoing considerations, our thoughts are being guided to perceive that darkness did not just come to be in the universe.⁵ It was not due to an intruder, grasping authority without consent or reason. Its importance is too great to admit such thoughts, and so we will find it related to an event in the eons. This event comes to give character to the eons, and directs their course during three eons.

We will be assisted in our enquiry when we regard the Adversary as created at a point when the earth had come into existence. It was due to the creating of the Adversary that the disruption became possible and necessary. It surely occurs and corresponds with the counter-worker taking up his office, for at once does his work bear his character.

At this point came the initial effect of *the jurisdiction of darkness*. Out of it follows all of the features that led to the death of the cross, as well as the present activity of the Adversary amongst the world-mights

of this darkness, the stratagems of which operate to systematize the deception of the end time.

That we may by no means still be minors, surging hither and thither and being carried about by every wind of teaching, by human caprice, by craftiness with a view to the systematizing of the deception. ... Put on the panoply of God, to enable you to stand up to the stratagems of the Adversary. For it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials (Ephesians 4:14; 6:11-12.

WHENCE THE DISRUPTION?

It is certain that the disruption was not an unplanned matter. It did not come about at the caprice of a creature. The patient gleanings of our studies in the Scriptures have come to give us the equivalent of a direct statement in respect of the disruption. We have the very express statement that the disruption involved the slaying of the Lambkin.

the Lambkin slain from the disruption of the world (Revelation 13:8).

Such language can only be related to the entrance of sin. It gives cogent reason for it. Later, in the case of humanity, there was adequate cause for the entrance of sin and estrangement. It lay in the tree which God planted, the fruit of which was forbidden to them. This prohibition the Adversary employed to delude the woman and confuse her ►

5. [Editor:] *i.e.*, arbitrarily, outside of His control.



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by — E.W. Bullinger

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conscience. Forthwith did Yahweh Elohim intimate to the woman and to the man that there was need for sacrifice for sin.

We thus reach the equal position in regard to the Adversary that, because he was the Adversary, this promoted the disruption. The exercise of his office would be the minimum necessity to sow seeds of estrangement, and the disruption of the world, and it even carried with it effects amongst the celestials.

Estrangement is then a very definite matter in the circumstance of the celestials. It gives reason why they need to be cleansed, and also why they have need for a divine service. Estrangement certainly comes within the broad meaning of missing the mark, and, by looking particularly, we see offence as a major matter from which is the need for conciliation. This gives us the angle of matters around the celestials.

THE JURISDICTION OF DARKNESS

The jurisdiction of darkness must have ensued from the point when the Adversary entered upon his office. The Adversary must produce darkness even when it is a simulation of light. In effect, *the jurisdiction of darkness* denies concord. It indicates cleavage and division in the universe. Of necessity, this cannot affect God, but it must cast shadows and effects into elements of God's creation, for even those of the ecclesia, chosen amidst the light of the original creation, they come to need to be rescued

from the dominion of darkness (Colossians 1:13).

The reality of the Adversary's authority was attested by the Lord Jesus. When arrested in the freehold of Gethsemane, a garden on Olivet, He made the observation to the chief priest and officers on the sanctuary:

This is your hour and the jurisdiction of darkness (Luke 22:53).

To the same authority reference is made in Colossians 1:13, and the Son of God's love is shown as the Sovereign Who will yet bring *the jurisdiction of darkness* to an end, replacing it by the light of His kingdom.

Who rescues us out of the jurisdiction of Darkness, and transports us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

In this we see something of the glory and value of the blood of the Son of God's love.

The degree to which darkness spread in creation is part of the question before us, and the main point is to perceive what can reverse *the jurisdiction of darkness*. Headship, placed in the hands of One Who is able to receive such an office, will reverse that authority.

God's Son is well able for this task, for His love transcends knowledge, and He will operate the glories of



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His sacrifice and effect them. He is the Effulgence of God's glory and the Emblem of His assumption. The Son's preeminence will be shown in every respect and relationship. He will lead all back to Him Whose activity is defined by the title, *El Supreme*,

Blessed is Abram by the El Supreme, Owner of the heavens and the earth. And blessed is the El Supreme ... (Genesis 14:19-20).

It thus becomes evident that the activity enshrined in the title, Elohim, Subjector, was planned long before the point when the office of the Adversary was instituted. Such give point and purpose and reality to the many matters which correct cutting of the word of truth, together with a pattern of sound words, have made clear and sure to us amidst our faith in the word of our God.

LIGHT COUNTERS DARKNESS

With the occurrence of the disruption, unapproachability came to exist in regard to God, for that event introduced estrangement. This state of unapproachability continued until the sacrifice of Christ. That slaying, as to effect, undoubtedly corresponded with the fiat, "Let there be light" in Genesis 1:3, for God is light. Light was not confined to the physical, for the physical bears some intimation of the spiritual. The slain Lambkin provided the light in which the readjustment of Genesis 1 was really possible.

THE EONS REQUIRED DARKNESS

The eons had in view the working out of all of the problems related to the darkness which was to en-

sue at an early point in the course of the first eon. Moreover, the eons were to restore fully the Light which revealed God in the face of Jesus Christ.

For the God Who says that, "Out of darkness light shall be shining," is He Who shines in our hearts, with a view to the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:6).

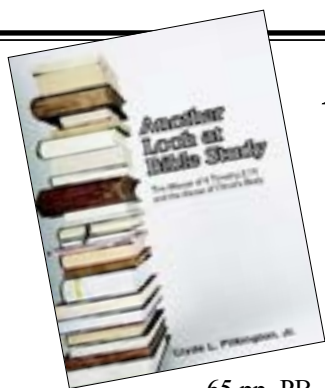
To the event which prompted and corresponded to the darkness, the Scriptures give the term "disruption," and to it are referred the planned details of God's ways. Some of these are said to be "before" and others "from" the disruption. This event is a most notable key, for it furnishes the reason for the darkness, and so moves the cause of darkness out of the will of the creature.

"CHOSEN BEFORE THE DISRUPTION"

According as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will, for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:4-6).

This is a heading corresponding to the earliest of the circumstances of the eons, and the words "in light" ("the Father, Who makes you competent for a part of the allotment of the saints, in light" Colossians 1:12) describe the character thereof.

Amidst that light, the saints of the present admin- ▶



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istration are said to be chosen in Him (Ephesians 1:4). This choice was made when there existed no outward cause or reason to make it. There was no immediate need for the choice. God's will and intention proposed the choice. No outside circumstance required it. Darkness did not exist to call for the choice.

These facts ought to be meditated upon. In God's intention, the choice anticipates those later happenings, yet they gave the need amongst the celestials, which required the allotment, in light, made to the Son of God's love. To this allotment is related that kingdom which will eventually displace *the jurisdiction of darkness*.

THE CELESTIALS NEED LIGHT

The celestials were first in the darkness. Their need for the sacrifice of Christ existed long before humanity was created. In fact, the making of Adam was with a view to Calvary, for humanity's existence provided the position whereby Jesus could be made "some bit inferior" to messengers (Hebrews 2:7, 9). Thus became possible the sufferings of death. The necessity existed prior to humanity, and for reasons, in the first analysis, outside of humanity. Yet they were reasons truly related to our God and His

revelation of Himself to His universe.

Yahweh brought forth His only begotten Son. In faith and obedience the Son carried forward the ways of His God and Father, so that the creating of humanity was in order that Jesus might taste death for the sake of everyone. It is clear that, through His blood, peace is effected for all – those on the earth and those in the heavens. It becomes obvious that celestials really have an interest in the multifarious wisdom of God which accords with the purpose of the eons.

... into which messengers are yearning to peer (I Peter 1:12).

That now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10).

In a very real sense, the celestials stand in need of the sacrifice of Christ. Darkness first came out on the celestial side, before it was on the earth. Yet darkness also involved the earth, and so events ensue thereon which bring to light God's glory in both spheres.

(to be continued)

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