

Come to Understanding

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24

April 14, 2012

Volume 11 Number 8

The Pride of Life

One of the greatest challenges that we have on this earth is found in the temptation to lift ourselves up in something that is called “the pride of life.” John writes:

16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. -1 John 2

James describes the briefness of our lives. Even as we spend much of it preoccupied with earthly gain, he says that it is only a vapor that soon vanishes away:

13 Go to now, you that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14 Whereas you know not what *shall be* on the next day. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. -James 4

The futility and brevity of a life deceived by a quest for glory was described by the well-known writer, William Shakespeare in the early 1600’s. Under the influences of evil spirits through the persons of three witches, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth set their sights on becoming the King and Queen of Scotland. Blinded by prideful ambition, Lady Macbeth led the ruthless destruction of all that were in their way to the throne. Finally, upon the tragic death of the Queen, Macbeth laments about the futility of such a life as his wife led:

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word:
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle,
Life’s but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.---

(see William Shakespeare, *Macbeth: A Tragedy*, Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, eds., London: Mathews and Leigh, Strand, 1807, Act V, Scene V, pp. 195-197.)

Shakespeare is believed to have produced *Macbeth* sometime between 1603 and 1607 (see *Ibid*, p. 7). It followed the publication of *Daemonologie* by King James VI of Scotland, which addressed the influences of evil spirits through witches on the course of human events. *Daemonologie* was published in Scotland in 1597 and then it was republished in England in 1603, after the author ascended as King James I to the throne of England (see James I, King of England, *Daemonologie*, London: Arnold Hatfield for Robert VValdgraue, 1603). Ironically, this was also the time during which the *King James Version of the Bible*, which was published in 1611, was being translated into English (see Kerby F. Fannin, *While Men Slept... A Biblical and Historical Account of the New Universal Christianity*, Addison, MI: Life’s Resources, Inc., 2002, p. 30).

Therefore, it is not surprising that Shakespeare was very familiar with the concept of the influence of evil spirits on the quest for earthly glory and power, as well as the biblical imagery that David used in describing our days upon this earth as a shadow, which in themselves is without hope. As David extolled the greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty of Yahweh, to whom everything belongs, he said:

13 Now therefore, our God, we thank you, and praise your glorious name.

14 But who *am* I, and what *is* my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things *come* from you, and of your own have we given you.

15 For we *are* strangers before you, and sojourners, as *were* all our fathers: our days on the earth *are* as a shadow, and *there is* no hope. -1 Chronicles 29

David continued, saying that all of the things that they had acquired to build a house unto the name of Yahweh came from Yahweh Himself:

16 O Yahweh our God, all this store that we have prepared to build you a house for your holy name *comes* from your hand, and *is* all your own. -1 Chronicles 29

That is because the earth and everything that is in it belongs to Yahweh. He allows us to use it for His glory, but we can never own it. David explains:

1 The earth *is* Yahweh’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. -Psalms 24

Nevertheless, Satan operates on this earth by offering things that he does not even own in exchange for worshipping him. Such was the case when he appeared to tempt Yahshua:

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

Come to Understanding

8 Again, the devil took him up into an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And said unto him, All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me. -Matthew 4

While Yahshua rejected his offer, there are many that yield to the temptation of receiving riches, power, or glory in exchange for their submission to Satan. Such was the case with Judas, who betrayed Yahshua for the promise of wealth in the form of a mere thirty pieces of silver:

14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests,

15 And said to *them*, What will you give me, and I will deliver him to you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him. -Matthew 26

27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Yahshua to him, That you do, do quickly. -John 13

Sadly, Judas had been deceived. He lost his life and the silver given by Satan's servants still belonged to Yahweh:

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. -Matthew 27

Likewise, idols are also believed by many to give favors in exchange for submission to them. When real or imagined benefits are received, worshippers are encouraged to continue to trust in them as rewarders of their sacrifices. Such was the case with the people of Judah that had fled to Egypt to escape the Babylonians. Thinking that Judah had been destroyed because they had stopped sacrificing to the "Queen of Heaven," they vowed to continue the practice:

17 But we will certainly do whatever thing goes forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for *then* had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.

18 But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all *things*, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. -Jeremiah 44

Come to Understanding is sent out twice per month free of charge. To add someone to our list of readers, please contact us at:

Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies
P.O. Box 12, 114 East Main Street
Addison, Michigan 49220 U.S.A.
biblical@ibiblical.org

You may view this and past editions online at: www.ibiblical.org
Scriptures are from the:
Proper Name Version of the King James Bible.



©2012 Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies. All rights reserved.
You may freely copy this publication, provided you acknowledge its source and inform us of your use.

They apparently forgot that it was this very practice of worshipping the "Queen of Heaven" that had led to their destruction:

17 See you not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

19 Do they provoke me to anger? says Yahweh: *do they* not *provoke* themselves to the confusion of their own faces?

20 Therefore thus says the Lord Yahweh; Behold, my anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched. -Jeremiah 7

In reality, the sacrifices offered to any god except Yahweh are really sacrifices to devils (demons):

17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new *gods that* came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. -Deuteronomy 32

Fewer people are willing to offer sacrifices directly to Satan than they are to an image that they think will reward their prayers. However, as Paul explains, since an image is nothing in itself, it has no power:

19 What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? -1 Corinthians 10

However, when sacrifices are offered to the image as an idol, devils (demons) come to receive them:

20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. -1 Corinthians 10

We know that Yahweh inhabits the praises of His people:

3 But you *are* holy, O *you* that inhabit the praises of Israel. -Psalms 22

Satan, described as Lucifer, the light-bearing King of Babylon, wants to lift himself up to be like Yahweh:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. -Isaiah 14

Therefore, it is no surprise that Satan, or his demons, also inhabit the praises offered toward other gods, whether they are to idols, possessions, or even ourselves. Satan claims those praises as his own in exchange for promises of fleeting pride-inducing gifts. Yahshua, however, asks:

26 For what has a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? -Matthew 16

All of the reasons for the "pride of life" finally disappear as a shadow in the noonday sun when we leave this world behind. That is when we can finally comprehend that no glory belongs to us, but only to the name of Yahweh!

1 Not unto us, O Yahweh, not unto us, but unto your name give glory, for your mercy, *and* for your truth's sake. -Psalms 115