

THE GOLGATHA TRIUMPH

The Lord's TRIUMPHANT Death, Resurrection, Descension, Ascension, Glory ON HIGH

(No. 5 Continued from page 49)

CHAPTER 3

In John's Gospel we read this extraordinary and deeply significant record:

"When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples.

And Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples.

Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, "**Whom seek ye?**"

They answered Him, "**Jesus of Nazareth**".

Jesus saith unto them "**I AM**". And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them.

As soon then as He had said unto them "I AM" they went backward and fell to the ground.

Then asked He them again, "Whom seek ye?" And they said, "**Jesus of Nazareth**".

Jesus answered, "**I have told you that I AM: if therefore ye seek ME, let these go their way**"

That the saying might be fulfilled, which He spake, "*Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none*".

(John 18:1-9, KJV).

WHY did the soldiers and officers and all the others go "*backward and fell to the ground*"?

To see that, we must consider the literal Greek:

Jesus...said unto them, "**Whom seek ye?**"

They answered Him, "**Jesus the Nazarene** [*Iēsous ton Nazōraion*]

He tells them "**I AM**" [*Egō eimi*]...

When therefore He told them "I AM" they went away back and fell on the ground.

ὡς οὖν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι **Ἐγὼ εἰμι** ἀπήλθον εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω καὶ ἔπεσον χαμαὶ
hōs oun eipen autois hoti **Egō eimi** attēlthon eis ta opisō kai epeson chamai

The Divine Author is *completely* precise and explicit in providing *the reason*, ensuring that we may fully understand this;

[“when”: *hōs* is an adverb of comparison, “as, like as, even as etc.” but *also* assumes the nature of a *conjunction* of time, purpose and of consequences” – *Thayer*.
The versions therefore, correctly and nearly universally, translate “when”;

“therefore”: *oun*; “therefore, then; marking the logical or formal inference” – *Bullinger*; “a particle expressing sequence or consequence” – *Vine*; “then, therefore, accordingly, consequently” – *Thayer*;

“He told them hoti “I AM””; none of the versions actually translate *hoti*, which is a conjunction meaning “that, because, since”, for the reason that *hoti* is sometimes joined to verbs of *saying* or *declaring*, as a demonstrative conjunction.

We can only bring this out in the English by either emphasis “When therefore He *told* them”, or by adding e.g. “When therefore and because He told them”, or “When therefore He told them and for that very reason”.

However, *hōs oun* – with *hoti* as an added demonstrative - carry the clear and precise reason expressed.

“they went away back” *aperchomai eis opisō*; *Thayer* has the phrase meaning: “to go backward”;

Vine has the meaning “back,” “backward,” in the phrase *eis ta opiso*, literally: “unto the things behind”;

eis is a preposition denoting entrance into, or direction and limit: “into, unto, to, towards, for, among” – *Thayer*, and also therefore meaning “with a view to”, implying immediate purpose;

aperchomai is literally “to go away” (*apo*, “from”; *erchomai*: “to go or come”).

“they fell on the ground”; *piptō* means “to fall down” and *chamai*: “on the ground, on the earth”.

But how or in what manner did they fall down?

Both *Thayer* and *Vine* specifically cite John 18:6 to mean falling down on the ground as “in the act of prostration, to prostrate oneself” (*Vine*); “to be prostrated, fall prostrate: of those overcome by terror or astonishment” (*Thayer*).

The scene painted by the words of the Divine Author is done with so few brush-strokes and so few words – and stands out in strong and magnificent contrasts:

The dialogue is very brief.

Our Lord, we know, had a commanding presence and authority when speaking, as Scripture often testifies - and *maybe* some of the current contingent of officers had experienced a previous occasion, when they were likewise sent to arrest Him; and when they came back empty-handed, they answered the furious chief priests and Pharisees who asked: “*WHY have ye not brought Him?*”

“The officers answered, “Never man spake like this Man” (John 7:45-46, KJV).

Now, here they are at it again, this time more emboldened by one of His disciples taking them to arrest Him, and thus – whilst no doubt still apprehensive – they put on an arrogant and somewhat contemptuous air, so that when the Lord asks “*Whom seek ye?*”, they say with a sneer:

“*Jesus the Nazarene!*”

[because this is an impolite answer, instead of the normal, polite: “Jesus of Nazareth”; it may also be insulting because apparently Nazareth had a bad reputation, cfr. John 1:46, when Nathanael says skeptically: “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?”].

As said, the dialogue was brief:

“*Tina zēteite?*”

“*Iēsous ton Nazōraion!*”

“***Egō eimi!***”

And at THAT, the officers, soldiers, and the others all involuntarily - terrified and astonished - reeled a few step backwards, as if *hit* by something – and instinctively fell face down on the ground, prostrating themselves;

BECAUSE our Lord Jesus Christ absolutely, there and then, declared to them that HE WAS **JEHOVAH** –

the Mighty GOD of Israel, the GOD of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;
the great and terrifying and Almighty God, WHO declared HIS NAME to Moses:

“**I AM THAT I AM**”

[“***Egō eimi!***”]

And for us to *see* and fully *understand* this, it is of course required that *we* do not fall into the so very common snare that our Lord warned so strongly about, and that we take to our hearts *this* solemn warning set out below.

His warning goes to the heart of much teaching today, *dissociating* the New Testament from the Old – even

- elevating one part of Scripture to be more “important” than another, or
- imparting to the “words spoken by Jesus Himself” a higher degree of “authority” than other words spoken by God, or
- relegating the Old Testament to mere myths and fables of a small Hebrew tribe thousands of years ago, on the basis that “*we* believe in *Jesus*”, and the Old Testament is “for the Jews”.

This way of handling God's word is wholly unscriptural and part of *the* Falsehood which the great deceiver and father of all lies, even Satan, malignantly uses to deceive unsuspecting believers and the world alike.

Our Lord squarely emphasizes this:

"IF you believed Moses, you WOULD believe ME, FOR he wrote **about ME**"
(John 5:46, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

["FOR" *gar*: particle of affirmation and conclusion denoting "truly therefore, verily as the case stands" – *Thayer*].

THEN the Pharisees read Moses – and if they had *believed* what Moses said, they would *also* have believed what the Lord Jesus Christ said, because Moses wrote about HIM.

TODAY the second part of our Lord's statement is particularly relevant:

"But SINCE you do NOT believe what he [Moses] wrote, HOW are you going to believe **what I say?**"
(John 5:47, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

[*literally*: "but IF his [Moses'] writings ye believe not, HOW shall ye believe MY sayings?" – *Young*; similarly e.g. KJV, ASV, ESV, NASB, Rotherham, Darby, Webster;

The Greek translated "since" or "but if" is *ei* ("if": a primary particle of conditionality) and *de* ("but": a contrasting particle) here connected with "not": *ei de...ou* ("not"), thereby expressing (by this connection to *ou*) that the *verb* (here: "believe") is denied emphatically (*Thayer*) and is antithetic to the thought which follows (as also *Thayer* notes, citing this particular passage).

Hence Rotherham's translation is particularly fine:

"But if in his [Moses'] writings ye are *not* believing, *how* in My sayings will you believe?"

– the implied answer being: "you *can not*", it being clearly denied in the Greek that we can believe our Lord's sayings, and at the same time reject believing Moses' writings.]

If we therefore – today – do *not* believe what Moses wrote in the Old Testament, how can we *then* believe what our Lord is saying in the New Testament?

Emphatically, our Lord Jesus Christ tells us here that we cannot.

We may think – in our foolishness and own thoughts – that we *can* believe in the Person and words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament – and willfully remain ignorant or even reject, what the Scriptures says about our Lord and God in the Old Testament.

Moses wrote “*about ME*” (emphatically).

The Old Testament is *all* about the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we want to *know* HIM, we must know *both* the Scriptures *and* the power of God.

Let us not be accused by our Lord of being slow of heart “*to believe*” ALL “*that the Prophets have spoken!*”

Or even worse – being even slower of heart to not even *know* about “*all that the Prophets have spoken*” because we have relegated Moses (The Law), as well as the Prophets and the Psalms, - *the very Scriptures our Lord says testify of HIM* - to being the “Old” Testament (and thus of “less” or no “real” importance or relevancy, or “for the Jews”) in complete contradiction to the attitude of the very Lord and Saviour we profess to believe.

And one of the many things we do find in *Moses’* writings in Exodus “about ME” - even our Lord and God Jesus Christ - is THIS, namely the record of when Moses met with HIM for the very *first* time:

“I AM the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob”,

and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God”

And Moses said unto God:

“Behold when *I* come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them ‘**The God of your fathers** has sent me unto you’, and they shall say unto me ‘*What is His name?*’

What shall I say unto them?”

“And God said unto Moses: “I AM THAT I AM”.

And He said:

“Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: **I AM** hath sent me unto you”

(Exodus 3: 6, 12-14, KJV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

“I AM [*Ego eimi*] THAT I AM”.

[“A name indicating rather the *unsearchableness* of God, than His mere *existence*, as commonly supposed” – *Young’s Concordance*]

Ego eimi is the Greek translation in the Septuagint (LXX) of the Hebrew in Exodus 3:14.

Ego eimi is an *unusual* and *heavily emphasized* expression in Greek.

[The pronoun “I” is usually contained within the verb. “I am” is simply *eimi*].

The significance of *Ego eimi* is that it was *immediately* recognized by EVERYONE as the Holy Name of Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – the God of Moses Who said:

“I AM THAT I AM”

“**Whom seek ye?**”

They answered Him, “**Jesus the Nazarene**”.

Jesus saith unto them “**I AM**”. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them.

As soon then as He had said unto them “I AM” they went backward and fell to the ground.

Then asked He them again, “Whom seek ye?” And they said, “**Jesus the Nazarene**”.

Jesus answered, “**I have told you that I AM: if therefore ye seek ME, let these go their way**”

Three times the Holy Spirit emphasizes to us, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the “I AM” [*Ego eimi*].

THEN:

“Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him,
And led Him away...”

It was indeed God Himself, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Son of God, Who *allowed* Himself to be taken and led away.

It is indeed HE - Who allowed Himself to be taken - Who says:

“**The Scriptures...testify... of ME**”

This statement by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is unequivocal.
The Scriptures testify of HIM.

Self-evidently, if we want to *know* Him – we have to know the Scriptures testifying *about* Him.

We will therefore “*search*” and “*examine*” the Scriptures for a better understanding of

- (a) some of the things *our Lord* testifies about *Scripture*, and
- (b) some of the things *Scripture* testifies about *our Lord*.

When we search God's Word, let us keep firmly in mind, that what we read and examine is indeed “*the Word of GOD”*, the *same* Word regarding which the Psalmist says in Psalm 33:

"By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens created
For the Word of the Lord is right
For **HE** spake and it was done".

We are examining the Word of our *God*, the Almighty, GREAT God, our CREATOR, Whose Presence and Majesty we love *and* fear, and regarding Whom the Psalmist also says:

"Let **all** inhabitants of the world **stand in awe of HIM**".

And in Psalm 119: "...my heart **standeth in awe of Thy Word**" (Psalm 119:161, KJV).

Because *the Scriptures* are about HIM, and if indeed we seek to truly *know* our Lord, then the *only* source today of such knowledge which can make us wise unto salvation, is the Lord Himself imparting this to us through HIS own words.

As it is written:

"And that from a child thou hast known **the holy scriptures** [*ta hera grammata*] which are able to make thee wise unto salvation **through faith which is in Christ Jesus**.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, [*literally*: "Every Scripture: God-breathed"] and is profitable:

- for doctrine,
- for reproof,
- for correction,
- for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be **perfect**, thoroughly furnished **unto all good works**."

(2 Timothy 3: 15-17, KJV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

We note that the Scriptures – provided that we *know* them - are able to make us *wise* unto *salvation*, but that this can only happen "*through **faith** which is in Christ Jesus*".

We emphasize that this reference to "Scripture" and the other references in the Bible to "Scripture" are *predominantly* references to the *Hebraic* Bible, i.e. the Old Testament.

It is particularly self-evident, that when *our Lord* makes reference to "the Scriptures", this means *only* the Hebraic Bible.

This can also be seen from the reference to Timothy having known "the Holy Scriptures" [*ta hiera grammata*] since he was a *child*;

[Though at the time of Paul writing his *last* letter, i.e. 2 Timothy, there were now also most – but not yet all - New Testament God-breathed writings in existence, including Paul's letters. *Christian* scholars – by fairly common consent – date 2 Timothy to around 68 AD (written during Paul's second imprisonment in Rome), which would mean that *all* of the New Testament books and letters had then been written, *except* John's Gospel and – maybe - the Revelation.

As can be seen in the dictionary references below, there are instances where New Testament writings are included in referring to "Scripture".

As regards the dictionaries, we have e.g. the following:

"Scripture" - *Bullinger's Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*

1. *graphe*, that which is written, the writing. The NT uses *he graphe* to denote the collection of the *graphe hagion*, "the Holy Writings", (Romans 1:2); *theopneustoi*, "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16), one part of which is called *prophetikai*, "prophetical" (Romans 16:26) *ton propheton*, "of the prophets".

Matthew 26:56 implies a reference to the authoritative character of the Scriptures as a whole.

Used of a single text: Mark 12:10, Luke 4:21; John 13:18; 19: 24, 36, 37: 20:9, 6; Acts 1:16; 8:35.

Used also of Him Who speaks in Scripture, Romans 9:17; Galatians 3:8, 22 4:30.

2. *gramma*, that which is written, a letter of the alphabet, a book, letter, bond etc.

Ta hiera grammata, "the Holy Scriptures" is a name distinct from No. 1 describing them as an object of study or knowledge, whereas No.1 describes them as authority.

"Scripture" - *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (excerpt; *our emphasis*)

"Scripture": *graphe* akin to *grapho*, "to write" (English, "graph," "graphic," etc.), primarily denotes "a drawing, painting;" then "a writing,"

(a) of the OT Scriptures,

1. *in the plural*, the whole * [of Scripture], including Romans 1:2 where "the prophets" comprises the OT writers in Gen 15:4; Gen 16:26, *literally*, "prophetic writings," expressing the character of all the Scriptures;

2. *in the singular* in reference to a particular passage ** including 1 Tim 5:18, where the second quotation is from Luke 10:7, from which it may be inferred that the apostle included Luke's Gospel as "Scripture" alike with Deuteronomy, from which the first quotation is taken; in reference to the whole, e.g. James 4:5;....

... in 2 Pet 1:20, "no prophecy of Scripture," a description of all, with special application to the OT in the next verse;

(b) of the OT Scriptures (those accepted by the Jews as canonical) and all those of the NT which were to be accepted by Christians as authoritative, 2 Tim 3:16.....

....The Authorized Version [KJV] states truth concerning the completed canon of Scripture, but that was not complete when the Apostle wrote to Timothy.

The Scriptures are frequently personified by the NT writers (as by the Jews, John 7:42)

(a) *as speaking with Divine authority*, e.g., John 19:37; Romans 4:3; 9:17, where the Scripture is said to speak to Pharaoh, giving the message actually sent previously by God to him through Moses; James 4:5 (see above);

(b) *as possessed of the sentient quality of foresight, and the active power of preaching*. Gal 3:8, where the Scripture mentioned was written more than four centuries *after* the words were spoken.

The Scripture, in such a case, stands for its Divine Author with an intimation that it remains perpetually characterized as the living voice of God. This Divine agency is again illustrated in Galatians 3:22 (cp. Galatians 3:10; Matthew 11:13).

2. *gramma* "a letter of the alphabet," etc. is used of the Holy Scriptures in 2 Timothy 3:15.]

* (Matthew 21:42; 22:29; John 5:39; Acts 17:11; Acts 18:24)

** (Mark 12:10; Luke 4:21; John 2:22; 10:35 (though applicable to all); John 19:24, 28, 36, 37; 20:9; Acts 1:16; Acts 8:32, 35; Romans 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; Galatians 3:8, 22; 4:30)].

The Scriptures are wholly uncompromising on the issue of inspiration – because the Bible is the *revelation* from GOD about *Himself*.

Hence man is left with no grey area: ALL Scripture is “*God-breathed*” - or not.

It is the same as with creation: God is the Creator and Upholder of all things – exactly as stated - or not.

In particular modern mortal man often willfully closes his eyes to these solemn facts; he cannot bear it.

However, it is an equally solemn fact that “there is **NO** God else beside Me”.

Through His prophet Isaiah, God addresses those that have “*no knowledge*” (setting up graven images and praying to a god “*who cannot save them*”) and declares:

“Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together:

Who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time?

Have not **I the LORD**?

And there is **no** God else beside Me;

A just God and a Saviour, there is **none** beside Me.

Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:

For I am God, and there is **none** else.

I have sworn by Myself, **the Word is gone out** of My mouth **in righteousness**, and **shall not return**”

(Isaiah 45:23, KJV).

Or, as the apostle Paul says (quoting Joel 2:32):

“For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the LORD shall be saved!”
(Romans 10:13, KJV).

It is also a solemn fact, that apart from looking unto God and thereby being saved, namely “*through faith which is in Christ Jesus*”, there is *no other way* for man to be delivered from final death and extinction.

Again: in particular modern mortal man often willfully closes his eyes to this; he cannot bear it, and – sadly – will not understand that:

“**THE LORD killeth, and maketh alive: HE bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up**”.
(1 Samuel 2:6, KJV).

It comes down to *faith* – not believing *in* something, but looking unto and believing on SOMEONE, namely our Savior, Lord and God, Jesus Christ, because ALL Scripture testify of HIM.

And “**faith** cometh by hearing, and hearing **by the word of God**” (Romans 10:17, KJV).

Hence the apostle Paul says:

“For I delivered unto you first of all [*protois*] **that which I also received**,
how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;
And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”
(1.Cor.15: 3-4, KJV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

Or as well translated (by Holman Christian Standard Bible):

“For I passed on to you as most important [*protois*] **what I also received**:
that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”
(Holman).

[*protos*: “adjective (as though the superlative of *pro*: “before”) “foremost”,
hence: “first, the first” of place, order, time or dignity (like Latin “*primus*”)” - *Bullinger*]

We are therefore left in no doubt that it is of first importance, yea even of the utmost importance (as indeed emphasized in the Greek) that:

and that: “*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures*”,
“*He was buried...and raised...according to the Scriptures*”.

Let us therefore take heed that this is exactly *how* we preach and teach – and let us not fall into error by *not* knowing the Scriptures, or by making *assumptions* based on our own imaginations.

No-one knew the Scriptures better than the Pharisees, but notwithstanding this, they fell into grievous error, as stated by our Lord, *because*

“You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.”

And He said to them:

“You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!”

(Mark 7: 8-9, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

Let us not deceive ourselves that this was only true at the time of our Lord Jesus Christ– and is not true today as well.

We *know* from the Scriptures that:

- “The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times”. (Psalm 12:6, KJV)
- “As for God, His way is perfect: The word of the Lord is tried”. (Psalm 18:30, KJV)
- “Every Scripture: God-breathed” [*pasa graphae Theopneustos*] (2 Timothy 3:16);
- “Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17, KJV)

We also know *how* the Divine Author ensured that the human authors spoke and wrote *His* words and not their own words:

“***Above all***, you must understand that ***no prophecy of Scripture*** came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things.”

For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as *they were carried along* by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20-21, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*)

“Carried along” is *pheromenoi* from *phero*: to “be driven”.

To get the full force of this word being used about men when speaking “*from GOD AS they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*”, we go to Acts, chapter 27.

There we enter the large ship carrying the apostle Paul (and 275 others) near Crete:

“Before very long, a wind of hurricane force....swept down from the island. The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven [*phero*] along.

As we passed to the lee of a small island... the men...then...passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together...they lowered the sails and **let** the ship be driven [*phero*] along.

We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard.

On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard **with their own hands**.

When **neither sun nor stars** appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

On the fourteenth night we were still being driven [*phero*] across the Adriatic Sea”.

(Acts 27: 14- 37, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

THIS is how God's spokesmen – when providing words “*from God*” – were “*carried along*” by the Holy Spirit, namely like the irresistible force of a storm driving a ship without sails helplessly on the wind and currents.

Or, as the Lord God said to Jeremiah, who said that “*I do not know how to speak; I am too young*”:

“BEFORE I formed you in the womb I knew you, BEFORE you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations...
... **I have put My Words in your mouth**”

It is the same Mighty God Who *also* says:

“I am watching to see that My Word is fulfilled.” (Jeremiah 1:4-12, NIV)

[“watching”; Hebrew *shaqad*: “watching over, to attend to” – *Strong/Gesenius*;
LXX translates with *egregora*: “to have been roused from sleep, to be awake; then – “to watch i.e. give strict attention to, be cautious, active” - *Thayer*].

Knowing therefore:

- that every Scripture is GOD-breathed;
- that HIS words, written and spoken “from God”, are pure and purified seven times;
- that GOD’S way is perfect and His word is tried;
- that GOD watches over His Word to see that it is fulfilled.

Praying therefore:

“**Open** Thou mine eyes, that I may **behold** Wondrous things out of Thy law”. (Psalm 119:18, KJV)

[“open”, i.e. “unveil”; “behold”, i.e. “discern; see clearly”].

Rejoicing therefore:

“Thy words were found and I did eat them;
and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart;
FOR I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of Hosts”.
(Jeremiah 15: 16-17, KJV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

“I rejoice at Thy word, as one that findeth great spoil”.
(Psalm 119:162, KJV).

We *search* and we *examine* the Scriptures as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ commands:

“**Search the Scriptures**; for in them **ye** think ye have eternal life: and **they** are **they that testify of ME**” (John 5:39, KJV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

[“of Me”; *peri*: that is “concerning Me”. The word “search” is ereunao in the Greek, namely “to seek out”, “trace”, “search” or “minutely explore”.
In classical Greek the word was used for lions or dogs tracking down game.

We also find *ereunao* in the apostle Peter’s first epistle:

“Though you have not seen Him [*Jesus Christ*], you love Him;
and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,
for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, **searched intently** [*eks-ereunao* – the prefix intensifying the word]
and with the greatest care,

trying to find out [*ereunao* : “searching with regard to” – *Young*]

- the time

- and circumstances

to which **the Spirit of Christ in them** was pointing

when He predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow.

It was revealed to them that they were **not serving themselves but you**, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you....

...Even angels long to look into these things”.

(1 Peter 1:8-15, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham. Bold not italicized simply highlights*).

In the Greek, the word “search” in John 5:39 can be read either as a command: “*search!*” – or as a statement: “*you [are] searching*”.

The major versions are divided on which reading is the best.

Older versions (e.g. Tyndale, Coverdale, Geneva Bible, Webster, Wycliffe, KJV) read “*search!*” as a command (with which we agree, considering context and emphasis).

Later versions (e.g. Young, Rotherham, Darby, Holman, RV, ASV) translate as a statement.

This is less important, because – whatever the favoured reading – our Lord unequivocally declares that

“The Scriptures...testify of ME”].

The Pharisees could quote Scripture by rote, but they did not *know*

- the Scriptures
- *or* the Power of God.

By contrast, the Jews in Berea are praised for *their* attitude, because they were not (as implied about their brethren in Thessalonica) content by just passively receiving Paul’s message:

“Now **the Berean Jews** were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for

- they received the message with great eagerness, and
- examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

As a result, many of them believed....”

(Acts 17: 10-12, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

[They “*examined*” the Scriptures”.

The word “examined” is *anakrino* in the Greek, namely *krino*, “to divide, separate, make a distinction, come to a decision”, and *ana*: “up” prefixed: “to separate or divide up”; hence “to estimate carefully, judge of, sift” – *Bullinger*.

As a *result* of this careful examination of the Scriptures, “many...believed”]

Seeing, understanding and taking into our hearts the perfection, truth and inner connections of the Scriptures - even in their smallest details - surely works towards us taking serious note of this exhortation by the apostle Paul:

“Let **this mind** be in you, which was also **in Christ Jesus**”.

(Philippians 2:5, KJV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

Or, as The Living Bible has it:

“Your attitude should be the kind that was shown us by Jesus Christ”

We know with absolute certainty, what was the mind of our Lord and His attitude regarding the Scriptures:

“Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17, KJV)

“You diligently study the Scriptures.... **These** are **the Scriptures** that testify about Me”.

(John 5: 39-40, NIV, *emphasis Rotherham*).

“He said to them,
 “**This** is what I told you while I was still with you:
 Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in
 - the Law of Moses,
 - the Prophets, and
 - the Psalms.”

(Luke 24: 44, NIV, *emphasis Rotherham*).

Not only does our Lord Jesus Christ testify to the veracity of the Scriptures regarding Himself.

By using the formal phrase “*the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms*” He specifically and plainly verifies ALL of the Old Testament by His express - and then well known - reference to the Divine order of the Hebraic Bible.

The 24 books of the original Hebraic Bible (called the “Old Testament” by man) are organized as follows:

<u>The Law</u> (<i>Torah</i>)	<u>The Prophets</u> (<i>Nebiim</i>)	<u>The Psalms</u> (<i>Kethubim; Writings</i>)
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Proverbs
Leviticus	Samuel	Job
Numbers	Kings	Canticles
Deuteronomy	Isaiah	Lamentations
	Jeremiah	Ecclesiastes
	Ezekiel	Esther
	Minor Prophets	Daniel
		Ezra-Nehemiah
		Chronicles

The Law, Prophets and Psalms: “**these** are **the Scriptures** that testify about Me”.

These are the Scriptures which our Lord Jesus Christ explained

“**beginning** with Moses and all the Prophets” what was said in ALL of them “**concerning Himself**”.

“**He** said to them,
 “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!
 Did not the Christ have to suffer **these things** and then enter His Glory?”

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself”
 (Luke 24: 25-27, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*)

These are the Scriptures regarding which: “**Everything** must be fulfilled” that is “*written about*” our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are the Scriptures referred to by our Lord when He said:

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished”
(Matthew 5:17-18, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*)

These are the Scriptures referred to by our Lord Jesus Christ when He said:

"For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John [the Baptist]"
(Matthew 11:13, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*)

The Prophets precisely spoke about the Lord Jesus Christ related in particular to the fundamental matter of Christ's future sufferings and His entry into glory:

"He said to them.

“.....Did not the Christ have to suffer **these things** and then enter His glory?”
And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself”
(Luke 24: 25-27, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

"Jesus replied.....Why then is it **written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected?**"
(Mark 9:12, NIV).

"Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them,
"We are going up to Jerusalem, **and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled.**
He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They **will mock Him, insult Him, spit on Him, flog Him and kill him.** On the third day **He will rise again.**"
(Luke 18:31-33, NIV).

"He said to them....

"It is written: ‘*And He was numbered with the transgressors*’;
and I tell you that **this must be fulfilled in Me.**
Yes, **what is written about Me** is reaching its fulfillment.”
(Luke 22:36 37, NIV).

Take note that this (and we will revert to this later on) was *also* the subject matter of the discussions our Lord Jesus Christ had on the Mount with Moses and Elijah when He was transfigured:

“About eight days [*inclusive* Gentile reckoning – i.e. counting part of a day as a full day; Matthew and Mark say six days: *exclusive* Jewish reckoning, counting only full days] after, Jesus.... took Peter, John and James with Him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus.
They spoke about His departure, which He was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem
(Luke 9:28-36, NIV).

Our Lord – our God and Saviour Jesus Christ - IS the main subject of the Old Testament, including the foretelling and foreshadowing of His death, resurrection, ascension and glory. Hence:

**“everything” MUST be fulfilled “that is written about Me
in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms”.**

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life”.
(John 5:24, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

Here are some of the words by our Lord Jesus *Christ*, which should make today’s *Christian* take heed and be vigilant, when *man’s* “wisdom” seeks to reduce the Hebraic Bible to primitive fables and story-telling of a small Middle Eastern tribe thousands of years ago, and to reduce Almighty God’s work as Creator and in Creation to mere *myths* (and confer what 2 Timothy 4:4-5 below says about “myths”).

“How **foolish** you are, and how **slow of heart** to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken!”
“Are you not in error because you do not know
- the Scriptures,
- or the power of God”.

Similarly the apostle Paul strongly warns us:

“In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who will judge the living and the dead...I give you this charge: Preach the word with....careful instruction.
For the time will come when people will not put up with **sound doctrine**.

Instead, **to suit their own desires**, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.
They will turn their ears away **from the truth** and turn aside **to myths**” [Greek: *mythos*].
(2 Timothy 4:4-5, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

Similarly the apostle Peter warns in his second epistle:

“... there will be **false teachers** among you. They will secretly introduce **destructive heresies**...”
[genitive of quality: “destructive opinions or philosophical principles”; “sects”].

....Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.
In their greed these teachers will **exploit you** with fabricated stories”.
(2 Peter 2: 1-3, NIV).

[“**exploit**” is *em-poreuomai*; “to go a trading, to travel for business, to traffic, trade” (we have it in the English “emporium”); only here and in James 4:13: “buy and sell”; *Thayer*].

Jude issues this warning in his letter about individuals who have “*secretly slipped in among you*”:

“They are ungodly people, who **pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord....**
.....**shepherds who feed only themselves**”.
(Jude 4:12, NIV).

The apostle John solemnly tells us:

“Who is the liar? It is **whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ**. Such a person is the antichrist—**denying the Father and the Son**”.
(1 John 2: 22, NIV).

“.....many false prophets have gone out into the world.
This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God:
Every spirit that acknowledges that **Jesus Christ has come in the flesh** is from God,
but every spirit **that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God**”.
(1 John 4: 1-3, NIV).

“We accept human testimony, but **God’s testimony** is greater because it is the testimony of God, which HE has given about His Son.

Whoever believes in the Son of God **accepts this testimony**.
Whoever does not believe God has made Him out to be a liar, because they have not believed **the testimony God has given about His Son**.

And this is the testimony: **God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son**”.
(1 John 5: 9-11, NIV).

“....many deceivers, **who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh**, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist”
(2 John, 7, NIV)

We *have* been warned and it is for us to take heed thereof.

“Let Thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, **according as we hope in Thee**” (Psalm 33: 21-22 KJV) –

even our God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whose “*Holy Name*” “*we have trusted*”, and Who is utterly clear therein that HE

- verifies The Law, Prophets and Psalms and that everything written about Him must be fulfilled;

- affirms that God's Word is Truth;
- verifies that the Scriptures testify about Him;
- states that if we believe what Moses says, then we would believe Him, Jesus Christ, because Moses wrote about Him; and it follows, that if we believe our Lord Jesus Christ, we must also believe what Moses wrote, since Moses – according to our Lord - wrote about Him;
- affirms that all the Prophets and the Law of Moses *prophesied* until John the Baptist - namely spoke “*from God*” being “driven” by the Holy Spirit;
- confirms that He has come to fulfill the Law and the Prophets and that not the smallest part shall disappear until *everything* is accomplished;
- remonstrates against being slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken;
[and note that being *slow of heart* is the danger – not being slow of mind]
- states that being in error is caused by not knowing the Scriptures and not knowing the power of God.

We therefore seek to:

“Let *this mind* be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”
(Philippians 2:5 KJV).

and to examine the Scriptures regarding some of things which Moses and others wrote about our Lord Jesus Christ.

“But do not think *I* will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is is Moses, on whom *your* hopes are set.

If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote ***about Me.***”
(John 5: 45-47, NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

Reverting then to Moses' writings in Exodus 3:14 “*about Me*” - namely our Lord and God Jesus Christ -, when Moses met with Him for the first time, God gave Moses His Name, as stated:

“I AM THAT I AM”.

And this is translated in the Greek Septuagint (LXX) by “***Ego eimi***”.

As stated previously, the significance of *Ego eimi* is that it was immediately recognized as the Holy Name of Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – the God of Moses Who said “I AM THAT I AM”.

Before examining this, let us briefly consider the Septuagint (LXX).

As the reader may well know, the Septuagint (LXX) is the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, translated in stages between the 3rd and 2nd century BC in Alexandria.

It is the *oldest* of several ancient translations of the Hebrew Bible into Greek.

Jewish scholars first translated the Torah - the Law of Moses - into Greek in the 3rd century BC, as the legend is recorded in the Talmud:

“King Ptolemy once gathered 72 Elders. He placed them in 72 chambers, each of them in a separate one, without revealing to them why they were summoned.

He entered each one's room and said: "Write for me the Torah of Moshe, your teacher."

God put it in the heart of each one to translate identically as all the others did”

Hebrew is the original and inspired language of the Old Testament.

LXX is a *translation* – and as such a work by man, and *not* God.

However, the LXX was widely read, accepted and respected *and*, which is the importance for us here, whenever the New Testament – *including* our Lord Jesus Christ - is quoting from the Hebraic Bible (what man calls the “Old Testament”) namely the *Law, Prophets* and *Psalms*, the quotes are often taken from the LXX.

[Of the some 300 Old Testament quotes in the New Testament, approximately 2/3 of them are – in whole or in part - from the Septuagint (LXX)].

We thus perceive that God has - as it were – to some extent ‘endorsed’ the LXX as the permissible Greek translation of the Hebraic Bible for *linking* the Greek New Testament with the Old Testament in Greek, allowing *us* to discover links and connections between the Old and New Testaments we would otherwise simply not be able to discern.

But that does not make the LXX text “*God-breathed*”, and the words in the LXX are *not* God’s inspired words.

There is therefore this important *caveat* when referring to the LXX:

when the New Testament quotes from the LXX, the Holy Spirit – acting as His *own* translator or interpreter - often amends, corrects and/or even combines words from several passages in the LXX.

Sometimes the New Testament quotes *exactly* as stated in the LXX.

Oftentimes the LXX quote is amended or varied by the Divine Author, whereby we *today* are allowed (because the Lord *has* now come and Scripture is now complete) more clearly to discern the *purpose* of the original text in the Hebrew –

which God, in His purposes, partly veiled to the *then* readers of His Word when first recorded by the Divine Author.

The Holy Spirit *overrules* – as it were – the human translators of the LXX, and gives us the true meaning of a passage.

The Septuagint (LXX) is a massively important work in linking the NT and the Hebraic Bible – but must be used with discretion.

Only those LXX passages quoted in Greek in the New Testament, and the *exact* words used in the quote itself, are “*God-breathed*”.

[Let us mention, for the sake of completeness, that the Scriptures also record the words of others than those inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible quotes Satan, demons, unclean spirits, heathen writers, misguided words (such as Job’s three friends, regarding whom God said: “*Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right*” (Job 42: 7-8), as well as words spoken by clear enemies of God (Pharaoh, Herod, Scribes, Pharisees etc.) and many other persons.

Self-evidently, the Scriptures’ *record* of what is said by such persons is absolutely accurate.

However, the words themselves spoken are of course not words *from* God, except in those instances where Almighty God “*put His words in their mouth*”, so that they speak HIS words, however unwillingly (as, for example, happened to Balaam and Caiaphas)]

Therefore our Lord’s use of this specific phrase “*Ego eimi*” reflects His clear and deliberate claim that He Himself IS the great “I AM”, namely the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, even the Mighty God of Israel, the God of Moses.

Although many Christian readers may be aware that *Ego eimi* translates “I AM THAT I AM” in Exodus 3:14, it is considerably less well known that Exodus 3:14 is only one of several Old Testament passages referred to by our Lord Jesus Christ by the deliberate use of “*Ego eimi*”, as we will examine further on.

In the first instance we will consider some of occasions where our Lord refers to Himself as “I AM” [*Ego eimi*] – and the various *reactions* this brought about from those who heard this.

(Continued in our next)