

172 Thomas meets His Lord and His God

In our two previous Reflections during this Easter season we have come across the work of those faithful Bible watchmen and their patient studies concerning the intricate calendars and chronologies set within the Holy Bible. Let us be humbly open to what they tell us, while retaining a degree of caution. They assure us, with many supporting arguments, that the dates figures they give are all biblically-based and are thus open to any checking, which they constantly urge us to do. When it comes to the conclusions they draw as to the significance of any particular figures, especially concerning any specific date predictions, things are slightly different, and we need to bear in mind, with all respect to them, that the watchmen may not necessarily be always "spot on".

As we engage in the findings explained in their two main books, ("The Restored Vision" by Arthur Ware, and "Miracle of Time" by Frank Paine), we can quickly work out their approach. First and foremost, they fully accept that every word within the original Bible texts is the inspired Word of God, and is given to us for a reason. Next, they are constantly looking for "types" and "anti-types", a "type" being a pointer towards something of great spiritual significance yet to come, and the "anti-type" being the fulfilment of that type; one obvious example concerns the annual slaying of the Passover lamb, pointing towards the slaying of the true Passover Lamb, the Lamb of God Himself.

Another part of their approach involves - not surprisingly! - numbers. Any reference to a specific date, or to a specific span of time, such as "after eight days", gets their noses twitching! The same applies to non-time numbers such as the 153 fish in the net or the 276 souls on board Paul's ship (John 21.11 / Acts 27.37). With any such date or number they ask, "Why are You telling us this detail here Lord?", and set to work with their sums. This last point brings us to what is termed "gematria" - the fact that every Greek letter is given a number, and hence every Greek word has a number, being the sum of its letter values; (for more on this, please see www.fsmins.org / Our Publications / 01 A Trusty Bible? / 5) The Subtlety of God - free to read online or download).

And so to John 20.24-31, when the risen Jesus met Thomas "after eight days". (I mention in passing my NIV gives this as "a week later", but the text doesn't say that, and so the point is entirely missed; how valuable it is to use a "Received Text" English Bible (eg., KJV or NKJV) with an "interlinear" Bible to hand too if possible, giving the Hebrew and Greek texts with the literal English beneath each word).

Now Thomas is a "type" of Israel and a scriptural "eight" represents RESURRECTION, so there is rather more going on here than meets the eye. (Incidentally the numerical value of "Jesus" in the Greek is "888"!). The

watchmen (see TRV pp 458ff) relate this passage back to the great "70 Weeks" prophecy of Daniel 9.24-27, the central Messianic time-prophecy of the entire Bible. 69 weeks of this prophecy have been meticulously fulfilled, to the very hour. The 70th Week - the 7 years of ministry of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ - took place, but due to the rejection of the Messiah by the Jews (typified here by unbelieving Thomas), God has cancelled that week, and will re-run it in times to come, after the removal of Christ's Bride, the true Church. The first occasion of that 70th Week was one of grace; the second occasion is to be a week of judgement on unbelieving Jews and Gentiles alike - the "Great Tribulation" of Revelation Chapters 4 to 19.

So Thomas now acknowledging Jesus as Messiah is a type, of which the anti-type is when Israel herself will finally acknowledge her Messiah at the end of the Tribulation, looking on Him whom they have pierced (Zechariah 12.10), and crying out, as did Thomas, "My Lord and my God!".

And the clue to our unlocking this precious type lies in that simple phrase, "after eight days". The Lord God in His mercy, far from being finished with His chosen people the Jews, is "working His purpose out as year succeeds to year", as the old hymn puts it, until truly "the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2.14).

It shall be so; and meanwhile, let us say it again - "Jesus is risen, He is risen indeed - Hallelujah!".

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