

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55: 1 0 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES
FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE LORD'S DAY IN REV. 1 :10

Those who follow my written ministry are familiar with the fact that in the days of my youth I was an ardent *Scofield Dispensationalist*. If there should be any of my readers to whom this term is unfamiliar, it is used to designate one who adheres closely to the dispensational teachings set forth in the *Scofield Reference Bible*. I accepted almost without question all that Dr. C.I. Scofield taught. However, in a few years I had made some advances in my knowledge of God's Word, and I also had in my possession the tools wherewith I could put all teachings to the test of Scripture. As a result, I was somewhat shocked to find numerous errors of fact in the notes of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, also to find numerous doctrines that were built upon erroneous translations found in the *King James Version*.

As to errors of fact, the footnote on Acts 3:21 can be cited as an example. The truth is that the Greek word translated "restitution" here is found only in this passage, while the word translated "restore again" in Acts 1:6 is found eight times. And while this is a very small matter, yet when numerous errors of fact are found, one realizes that he should check out every statement, especially if he purposes to build positive Biblical theology on it.

In regard to errors of teaching based upon erroneous translations, I can point to his handling of 1 Cor. 10:32 which he used more than once to teach that all mankind has been divided by God into three groups: Jew, Gentile, and the church of God.

One look into an analytical concordance would have shown Dr. Scofield that the word translated "Gentile" here is *Hellesin*, which means "Greeks." This incident alone showed me the necessity of checking any man's teachings before full acceptance. That which any man says concerning the truth of God must be submitted to the test of "all Scripture," an exercise which I recommend to all who read my writings.

One teaching which I received, because it was almost a test of orthodoxy among dispensational premillennialists, was that "**the Lord's day**" spoken of in Rev. 1:10 was

simply another name for Sunday, a new designation for the first day of the week. Since all the leading dispensationalists held to this view, I went along without question. However, about 1930 I came upon an article written by Dr. Donald Barnhouse, published in his own magazine, *Revelation*, in which he insisted that "the Lord's day" of Rev. 1:10 was not just another name for Sunday, but was "the day of the Lord" spoken of in many Biblical prophecies. He brought forth many clear-cut arguments in support of what was, to me, a radically different interpretation that logic forced me to say, "He could be right." I had to decide.

First of all I went to the writings of all the teachers that I had followed for so long to find their reasons for saying this term meant Sunday. I found these to be vague and unconvincing, and they did not show that any real work had been done on this matter. Some made much of the fact that the word "Lord" here is an adjective, and intimated that this demonstrated the correctness of their interpretation, which it most certainly did not.

I then turned to the arguments of those who took the position that this term meant "the day of the Lord," and found their reasons for so believing to be lucid and convincing. Furthermore, they showed that they had actually worked on this passage. Quotations from these men will make this quite clear. We will look first at the words of Joseph A. Seiss, who in his monumental work, *The Apocalypse*, says as follows:

He says he "was in the Spirit in the Lord's day," in which he beheld what he afterwards wrote. What is meant by this *Lord's day*? Some answer, *Sunday-the* first day of the week; but I am not satisfied with this explanation. Sunday belongs indeed to the Lord, but the Scriptures nowhere call it "the Lord's day." None of the Christian writings, for 100 years after Christ, ever call it "the Lord's day." But there is a "*Day of the Lord*" largely treated of by prophets, apostles, and fathers, the meaning of which is abundantly clear and settled. . . And in that day I understand John to say, he in some sense was. In the mysteries of prophetic rapport, which the Scriptures describe as "in Spirit," and which Paul declared inexplicable, he was caught out of himself, and out of his proper place and time, and stationed amid the stupendous scenes of the great day of God, and made to see the actors in them and to look upon them transpiring before his eyes, that he might write what he saw, and give it to the Churches.

This is what I understand by his being "in Spirit in the Lord's day." I can see no essential difference between *he Kuriake hemera-the* Lord's day, and *he hemera Kuriou-the* day of the Lord. They are simply the two forms for signifying the same relations of the same things.

With these words I am in complete agreement. For if John wrote what he says he wrote, that is, the things he saw and heard (Rev. 1: 19; 22:8), then he had to be in the day of the Lord, for what he wrote deals preeminently with things that transpire in that day.

Mr. A. E. Knoch, the translator of *The Concordant Version*, shows that he actually labored on this passage. In explanation of it he has said: In spirit, John is transported into the future day of Jehovah of which the prophets have often spoken. The Hebrew phrase "the day of the Lord" is changed to "the Lord's day" in order to shift the emphasis from the character of the day to the *time* which is the important point in this passage. This is done in three ways, by changing the grammatical form, the rank, and the order of the words. The direction of the thought is altered by putting "Lord" in the dative instead of the genitive case, so that it locates *rather* than describes the day. Its force is further weakened by making it an adjective rather than a noun, and by shifting it from its prominent place at the end of the sentence and giving that striking location to "day." (C.V. notes on Rev. 1:10).

In his book *The Apocalypse or The Day of the Lord*, Dr. E. W. Bullinger says emphatically: John was transported by spiritual instrumentality into the scenes which shall take place in the day of the Lord, and records what he then saw in vision: namely: the things that shall take place literally and actually in that Day. How this may have been accomplished we may learn from Ezek. 8:3: "**And he put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem.**" (page 152).

A most excellent witness to this truth is provided by one whose love for the truth forced him to speak contrary to almost all with whom he was in close fellowship. I speak of F.C. Jennings, associated with the *Plymouth Brethren*, whose *Studies in Revelation* was published by Arno C. Gabelien, Inc. (Our Hope Publication Office), in 1937. In this he says concerning Rev. 1:10:

So here the words "in the Lord's day" are closely connected with "in Spirit." In the power of the Spirit of God his spirit is raptured outside the region of physical sight or sense. He sees with another eye now than that of the body; he is in quite another surrounding. Patmos, with its persecution, *man's day*, with its evil spirit in ascendancy are gone; he is in the *Lord's day*, where his Lord is *all*, where He is even now judging in the midst of the churches.

This brings us to the next words, "in the Lord's day." This must refer either to the first day of the week, or be a close equivalent "to the day of Lord." It is, by the great majority of commentators, taken to be the former. So many, and so worthy of respect, are the names that can be marshaled in support of this-so very early in the history of the Church was the first day of the week called the Lord's day, that it is not hastily, or without hesitation, that one ventures to oppose what is so powerfully accredited. Yet, even if the truth depended on human authorities, names might be given in support of the other interpretation, that would represent neither poor scholarship nor inferior spiritual intelligence. If the "Lord's day" be the first day of the week, then of course it has little or no connection with the words "in the Spirit," for John must have been in the first day of the week, in any event, apart altogether from the Spirit. It is a mere note of the day on which these events occurred. Whether they suit that day or not, we will consider directly. Or, is it stated as a fact worthy of divine record that the aged saint was in a spiritual state of

mind on this day! Was that so unusual as to call for special note? Was it a strange condition for the beloved apostle to be thus in a spiritual condition of soul? Such a question is folly.

If these words mean our Sunday, then they would alter, and I may say alter in a way utterly out of harmony with their unquestioned bearing in chapter 4:2, the being "in the Spirit," which, in this case, would be little more than a spiritual state of mind, instead of a "transport," as is the literal force of the phrase. . . Surely the words, "the Lord's day," have, in themselves, and apart from the traditional meaning we have attached to them, greater affinity to "the day of the Lord" than they have to "the first of the week." No scholarship is needed to see that (Pages 33-35).

A final witness comes from *This Prophecy*, by Charles H. Welch, whose illuminating words reveal that he gave careful consideration to the matter:

There is no mystery about the meaning of John when he tells us that he "came to be in the day of the Lord in spirit." It cannot possibly mean that he felt in a specially spiritual frame of mind on a Sunday-such a suggestion is too trivial to require refuting. We should moreover, be thankful that the expression "I became" has been used in verse 9 in a sense that is literal. John *became* in Patmos literally and really. . . The book of Revelation is taken up with something infinitely vaster than days of the *week*. To read that John became in Spirit *on* the Lord's day (meaning Sunday) tells us practically nothing. To read in the solemn introduction that John became in spirit *in* the Day of the Lord, that day of prophetic import, is to tell us practically everything...If in Rev. 1 John is taken, in spirit, to the future day of the Lord, to see the visions and to write them in a book, ALL the book that he writes, including chap. 1, 2, and 3, must be future in their interpretation. There is no part of the prophecy or vision that is not 'in the day of the Lord.'

This study is made up almost in its entirety of quotations from other writers. I felt it important that my friends should have this material before them. Many more could be quoted, but these are sufficient to show that I do not stand alone in insisting that "the Lord's day" in Rev. 1:10 is the future "day of the Lord." We can expect no fulfillment of any prophecy in it as long as we are in the dispensation of God's grace. Neither does any of it have to do with "the day of Christ." See Issue No. **SB054** on "Four Great Days," and keep looking for another important study to come on "Before the Day of the Lord." There is much to take place before the great and notable day of the Lord comes.

End Issue No. SB110