

REVELATION

(By Don Baker (Moody Monthly, December 1981. pages 9-12)

The Christmas story began in Eden as a vague, mysterious, impossible promise. Humanity had just collapsed, all its hopes and dreams shattered. Humanity in the person of a lonely, bewildered, helpless couple found itself imprisoned by its own sin. The brilliant noon-day sun with all its warmth and illumination had just set in their lives, and in its place was unbelief- cold, impenetrable, dark.

God's enemy, Satan, had just achieved his greatest victory- man and God were separated.

In this awesome, bewildering moment, when Heaven had become silent, God whispered a promise.

The promise was vague, obscure, almost meaningless. Yet it became the first whispered promise that someday, somewhere, somehow, God would send a Deliverer. God does not name Him- describe Him, or even indicate when He would come. He simply says to Satan,

" . . . I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

A seed- just a seed- that's all. Yet a seed contains life; and from that moment on, the heart of man beat just a little faster, as he looked forward to the fulfillment of that promise.

But no matter how hard he looked, his eyes could not see. No matter how diligently he listened, his ears could not hear. No matter how he stirred his imagination, his heart could not sense what God had prepared for him.

Thousands of years of silence followed. And then God whispered again- this time to a man called Abraham- and said to him,

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

To Abraham's son Isaac and to Isaac's son Jacob the same whispered promise was made. And then, to Jacob's son Judah God said, *"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10).*

Again the heart of man quickened. A Man was coming; SHILOH, His name- the resting place, the Messiah, the Deliverer- and He was going to be born into the family of Judah.

But when? - No answer.

Where? - Silence.

How? - Nothing.

Humanity looked- but could not see, listened- but could not imagine,

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that Love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Another long, agonizing period of silence- 600 years, and a strange little man spoke the words of God without knowing what they meant. He said,

"I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel. . ." (Numbers 24:17).

A Star from the family of Judah?

A Sceptre from the nation of Israel?

A Star- a light.

A Sceptre- a ruler.

A Seed

A Son

A Star

A Sceptre

Not much to solve a mystery. But enough to make men look, listen and dream. Yet, no matter how diligently they searched,

Their eyes could not see

Nor their ears hear

Nor their hearts imagine the things that

God was preparing for them that love Him.

Moses caught just a glimpse of God's Deliverer. Just before his death, he announced to the people of Israel,

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethern, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15).

A Prophet who will tell the truth, A Brother from among the people of Israel,

A Seed

A Son

A Star

A Scepter

A Prophet

A Brother

and yet even with these added words, man's eyes still could not see nor his ears hear nor his heart perceive what God was about to prepare.

King David deepens the mystery as he looks from his vantage point in history. He sees a Deliverer- he sees him as a Son- but not just the son of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah. He hears the Lord say, He is My Son.

"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" Psalm 2:7).

A seed

A son- with a small "s"

A Son- with a capital "s"

Judah's son

God's Son

A Star
 A Sceptre
 A Prophet
 A Brother
 A MYSTERY!

The prophet Isaiah sees the Deliverer and yet knows not His name nor His birth date, nor His birth place, but says the day is coming when there will be no more gloom for Israel;

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined . . . For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace".

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:2,6,7).

A Seed

A Son
 A son of Judah
 The Son of God
 A Star
 A Sceptre
 A Prophet
 A Brother
 A Light

A Deliverer
 A Child
 A Governor
 A Counselor
 A Prince
 A King
 A God
 who lives and rules forever.
 What a promise!
 What a prospect!
 What a mystery!

Oh, how they longed to see and hear and understand-
 "But eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love him."

Even more bewildering was Isaiah's statement that this God was going to be born just like any other baby-
 and yet unlike any other baby-

to a virgin mother-
 an unknown woman, says Isaiah.

In an obscure little village called Bethlehem, says Micah- and in His birth He'll be
 worshiped by some and hated by others, says Jeremiah. What a mystery!

A Seed

A Son

A Star

A Sceptre

A Prophet

A Brother

A Light

A Deliverer

A Child

A Governor

A Counselor

A Prince

A King

A God

A little Baby!

A mystery!

For "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man,
 the things that God hath prepared for them that love him."

But God has revealed them unto us by the Spirit.

For "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a
 woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might
 receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4,5).

Yes- in the fulness of time-

In the fulness of time the Mystery unfolded.

For "it came to pass . . . that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all
 the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor
 or Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went
 up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is
 called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed
 with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they
 were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought
 forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a
 manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same
 country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And the
 angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which
 shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior. . ."

A Seed

A Son

A Star

A Sceptre
 A Prophet
 A Brother

The Light
 The Deliverer
 A Prince
 A King
 A God

"which is Christ the Lord".

"And this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'"

"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, 'Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.'"

"And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" (Luke 2:1-20).

Yes, God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.

For this Jesus

This Seed

This Son

This Star

This Sceptre

This Prophet

This Brother

The Light

The Deliverer

This Child

This Governor

This Counselor

This Prince

This King

This God

is our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has come into the world to deliver us from our sin and become the author of eternal salvaton.

O COME LET US ADORE HIM!