

Tabernacle Addresses

By Wilbur Glenn Voliva

The Kingdom of the Heavens and The Church

INVOCATION

Almighty God, we pray that Thou wilt inspire the thought and the words, and that Thy Word, as we read and study it, may be made plain; and that this meeting may result in a closer walk with Thee on the part of each and every one here. Hear us, Father, in Jesus' Name and for His sake; Amen.

ADDRESS

In this address, I shall be dealing with beginnings, but I do not propose to leave you there. I may start with the alphabet, so to speak, but I want to take you far beyond that.

I would remind you, beloved, that you are living, according to current chronology, nineteen hundred and seventeen years beyond the time when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea.

I would remind you that you are living almost nineteen hundred years this side of the Cross, and the Crucifixion, and the Day of Pentecost.

I would not have you, for one minute — no, not for one second — think that you can neglect the study of ANY PORTION of God's Word, any phase of the Person and life of Jesus the Christ, and not be the loser.

I do not believe it is possible for any one to get even a general understanding of the New Testament, unless he has a general understanding of the Old Testament.

THE PREEXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST

In ZION, we believe unreservedly in the preexistence of Christ. We have only words of the severest and the strongest condemnation for the statement, no matter by whom made, to the effect that Jesus the Christ was simply Human; that He was no more than a Good Man. If such a statement were true, we would be in our sins, utterly without hope; and death would end all.

I will talk about some things that I do understand, and I will talk about some things that I do not understand — things that are far and away beyond the reach of man to understand. How God could be manifest in the flesh is a mystery. But all that I have read I believe with all my heart — and with unwavering faith in God I stand and worship.

"IN THE BEGINNING GOD" — Three Persons.

Think of a time when there were no such titles as "Father," "Son," "Holy Ghost" — God in Three Persons, but one essence.

In the First Chapter of Genesis, in a conference — a council meeting — these words were spoken: "Let Us make man in OUR image, after Our likeness." If you cannot understand it, do not talk about it; but THINK about it and PRAY about it.

JESUS CHRIST THE AGENT IN CREATION

I refuse any longer to repeat the statement in the "Apostles' Creed" (so-called): "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;" because it is not true.

If you will look up the references, you will find that the Person in the Godhead Who became *God the Son* was the Agent in Creation. That is declared over and over again.

Therefore, it is not true to say that God the Father Almighty was the Maker of heaven and earth; for the Bible expressly teaches that it was God the Son (or the Person in the Godhead Who afterwards became God the Son).

Jesus Christ was God. He existed through all Eternity. Therefore, we have the declaration in the Gospel according to St. John:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Some were very greatly offended when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

In the Seventeenth Chapter of John, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and, among other things, prayed:

"And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (St. John 17:5)

Paul, in the Second Chapter of Philippians, exhorts, saying:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

"Who, being in the FORM —"

THE WILLING CONDESCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST

The word used there stands for those essentials which go to make a thing what it is — not the external appearance, not the veneer, but the essentials, ingrained, that go to make a thing what it really is.

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God —"

Or, as it is sometimes translated, He did not look upon that as something to be held onto and clung to; but He put it aside, and took upon Himself the form of a servant.

Now, of course, that transcends human comprehension. We have a present-day illustration, but it is so very

weak that it conveys next to nothing. That is the Czar of all the Russias. We can scarcely realize the distance that he traveled from the palace, where he was Czar, to his humble quarters in Siberia — we can scarcely realize the magnitude of the step; but that is a very poor illustration.

If the mightiest ruler on earth were to surrender the magnificence with which he is surrounded and become the lowest peasant or slave, and take up his dwelling in the meanest hovel, even that would not convey any idea of what it meant when HE — Who was God, Who was in the form of God, Who counted it no robbery (that is, taking nothing away from God) to be on an equality with God — took upon Himself the form of a *servant*, "and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

As we read the Old Testament, starting with the first intimation of a Deliverer in the Third Chapter of Genesis, and then continue, we find two golden threads — which remind us, oftentimes, of the electric wires in this organ — so close together that even the prophets themselves did not understand the first coming and the second coming.

THE TWO PHASES OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

In numerous places we find prophecies referring only to His first coming; in other places we find prophecies referring only to His second coming back to this earth with the saints in glory, and to the establishment of the earthly, Israelitish, THEOCRATIC KINGDOM, and the beginning of the Millennial reign.

Bear in mind that there are to be two distinct phases of the Second Coming of Christ — He comes at the beginning of the Seven Years (Daniel's Seventieth week) for the saints, and then at the end of the Seven Years with the saints in glory.

You will find as you read the Second Chapter of Matthew, that the very place of Christ's birth was foretold.

You will find in the Book of the prophet Isaiah the plain prediction that a virgin should bear a child, and that His Name should be called Immanuel, which means "God with us."

In the Ninth Chapter of Isaiah, the Sixth and Seventh Verses — two passages of Scripture that are so little understood by the theological world and the apostate churches that I would not give the snap of my finger for anything they have written on either of them:

"For unto us (that is, unto Israel) 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, Counsellor, —"

There are some people who try to make out — and there is nothing in it — that this should read "Wonderful Counsellor;" there are others who want to put the word "Counsellor" only. There is nothing in it. The Hebrew settles it.

"— And His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, 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."

That has no more reference primarily to the Church than something I wrote when I was in the primary grade in the country school. It refers to the THEOCRATIC KINGDOM, and it will be literally fulfilled when the KINGDOM is set up and established at the beginning of the Millennial reign.

You do not find anywhere else in the Bible, except in these two verses, the word that is translated here "*government*." It has the primary significance of a burden, something to be carried, and was often symbolized by a key.

THE UNION OF GODHEAD WITH MANHOOD

We believe in the incarnation.

How it was that Jesus was begotten in the womb of the sinless Virgin of the Holy Ghost, she being overshadowed by the power of the Most High, is beyond our comprehension. It is true, nevertheless.

He Who was God became incarnate in the flesh. He was born of a Virgin, in Bethlehem of Judea, in accordance with prophecy.

The fact that many of these wonderful prophecies have been literally fulfilled and have now become a matter of history, makes it sure and certain that whatever yet remains in the way of prophecy will, at the proper time, be fulfilled, and in like manner pass into history.

It will interest you to know that there are more than two hundred names to be found in the Bible applicable to Him Who was sent into this world and in Whom we believe as Jesus the Christ.

Each one of these names presents some aspect of His Person or mission. God would have us understand His Person, His mission, and His relations to Israel, to us, to the Gentiles, and so on.

"Thou shalt call His Name JESUS." The word "Jesus" means "Savior." It is the same as Joshua — "*Jehoshua*," shortened into "*Jeshua*," in the Hebrew language.

"Messiah" means the "Anointed."

"Immanuel" means "God with us."

"Wonderful" — why, it is all wonderful. A man who approaches these things with divine meekness and true humility is awed into silence. Wonderful all the way along, in every aspect — in His preexistence, in His Incarnation, in His birth, in His death, in His resurrection, in His ascension.

"Counsellor" — He is the Counsellor of counsellors.

He is the One to Whom we turn on thousands of occasions and through Whom many difficulties are settled. After prayer in His Name, impressions are made upon our spirits which make us satisfied and lead us to adopt a certain course.

"— And His Name shall be called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE."

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GENEALOGICAL TABLES

As we pass into the New Testament, — which must be studied in connection with the Old, as well as the Old in connection with the New — the very first thing we find is a genealogical table. If you have not read it, I would advise you to do so. You will find many wonderful things in it. It is just as important as any other chapter in the Bible.

In the Third Chapter of Luke, there is another genealogical table.

No part of the Word of God is uninteresting.

You will note that it is written, "And thou shalt call His Name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins."

The Wise Men who came from the east, inquired for Him Who was born "King of the Jews." This visit of the Wise Men is not recorded anywhere else but in the Second Chapter of Matthew.

You will find that Revelation, God's Revelation, is a process.

Today, we in the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in ZION are permitted to see, to hear, to understand, and to rejoice in many things which no other people in times past have been permitted to see, to hear, to understand, and to enjoy.

However, there are some who have never gotten beyond the Baby Christ in the Manger in Bethlehem. There are millions today who have never progressed an iota beyond the day Christ hung on the cross.

Beloved in ZION, claim your heritage!

CHRISTMAS DAY SHOULD POINT US TO HIM WHO IS SOON TO COME

As we approach the anniversary of the birth of Christ, born of the Virgin Mary — born of a woman, under the law — in the manger in Bethlehem of Judea; as we say to each other, "Happy Christmas," and as we make little gifts to those of our own household and to relatives and friends — behind all of which should be hearts throbbing with true love, reminding us of the Great Gift of God — this Christmas Day and Christmas Season, these salutations and gifts should point us to Him Who is soon to come, according to the Scriptures.

My brothers and sisters, I would not, for anything in this world, take you back into the Old Testament and let you stay there. I would not, for any consideration, take you back to the manger in Bethlehem of Judea and leave you there. I would not take you back even to the Cross, and leave you there.

I want you to know that He Who was God, He Who existed before His incarnation and birth of the Virgin Mary, He Who in due time was born of a woman and born under the law, He Who at thirty years of age began His public ministry, He Who preached and toiled and suffered and died and rose again — I want you to know, this afternoon, the Twenty-third of December, 1917, that HE sits at the right hand of God, upon the throne, in the third heaven; and that the next great event in that most wonderful Life ever lived among men will be His leaving that seat and descending "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," into the lower heaven where He will wait until the saints are caught up to meet Him in the air.

I would remind you that the Gospel of Matthew, in a very important sense, is the Jew's Gospel — it has a decided Jewish coloring.

"— And thou shalt call His Name JESUS: for He shall save HIS people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." (John 1:11)

(To be continued)

Lord's Day, April 21, 1918

In

Shiloh Tabernacle

Should be, by the Grace of God and the Cooperation of All Officers and Members of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, the Greatest Lord's Day in Zion's History.

Let All Rally to the Meetings — Especially to the Meeting at 2:30 P. M. — and, by Your Presence, Prayers, and Earnest Cooperation, Make the Day Mean Much for the Onward Movement of Zion Ecclesiastically, Educationally, Commercially, and Politically.