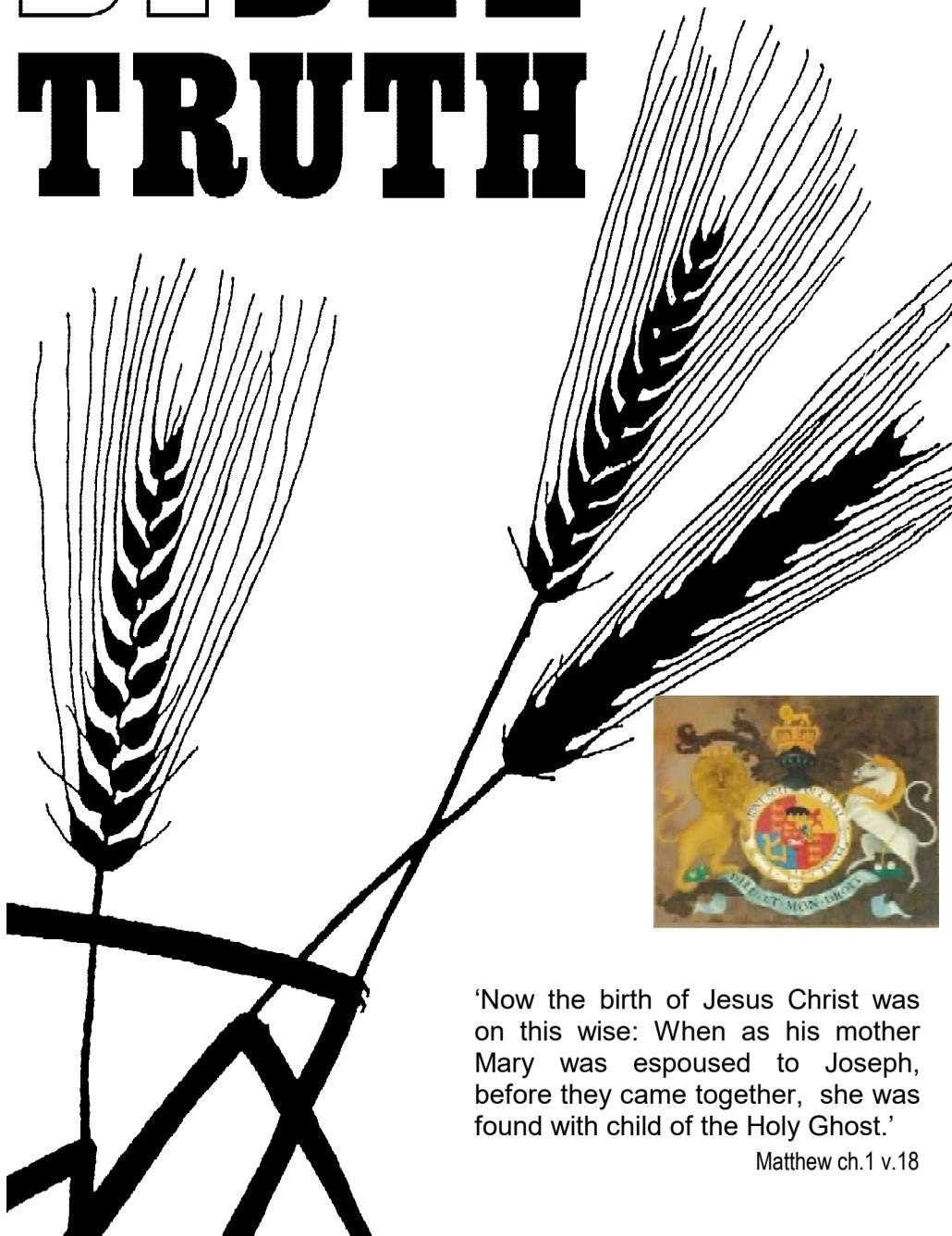


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'Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.'

Matthew ch.1 v.18



The Middle Man of Tyre

by Arthur Sedle

The City of Tyre consisted of two parts in the day of Ezekiel's prophesying. The mainland portion was thereafter destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the island stronghold by Alexander the Great, in pursuance of his prophecies. What was Tyre like? We may learn a lot from reading Ezekiel chs 26-28. In a nutshell it was the cosmopolitan centre of world trade from before the days of King David until about 320 BC. Ships of Tarshish (ocean-going vessels), would bring their goods to the island harbour for sale, as well as caravans that would cross desert regions with their merchandise. Others would come to Tyre to purchase goods for their daily needs and so Tyre was a Middle man. There is nothing wrong in this as long as it is carried out in a humane fashion. We are told that 'the labourer is worthy of his hire'. But the Tyrians were not labourers.



In the manufacturing industry there are producers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers. The wholesalers and retailers place a 'mark-up' price on the goods they purchase from producers, and it is neither wrong nor unjust, so long as they do so within acceptable limits. Each group has to make a living. But when the human desire of greed begins to assert itself, this is when God's anger is spelled out through His prophets. This was the case with Tyre, perhaps more than anywhere else in the world. The people of Tyre were masters of

deception and intrigue, making false claims to those who came to purchase, demanding 'mark-up' prices far greater than conscience should demand. Hence Tyrians did no work, but creamed off vast profits as the Middle Man, and as a result became one of the richest cities in the world. A bit like modern banking !

God sent His prophet to Tyre with strong words of rebuke. The system had got out of control. The only just outcome was for total destruction of the city. But why had the situation grown like this over the centuries? The prophet speaks about the Prince of Tyre and the King of Tyre, both human beings. But then he intertwines his message with the 'red print', showing that they were being egged on by a spiritual being behind the scenes, who was himself intent on building up a vastly rich empire for himself. This spiritual being is referred to as 'the anointed cherub' (Ezekiel ch.28 v.14), and cherubim were spiritual beings, four of which are named in Scripture, so presumably he is a fifth. Once again we see the workings of Satan. '... every precious stone was thy covering...' (Ezekiel ch.28 v.13).

The prophet said,

'By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, ... thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness:'

Ezekiel ch.28 vv 16 & 17

The judgment of God is for the destruction of both the city of Tyre and the spiritual being behind it all. One has to separate the human judgment from the spiritual judgment in Ezekiel's words.

The lesson I want to bring out of this is simple. I'm addressing all those who, as Christians, are in business of one sort or another. Are you smitten with the inhuman desire to create unjustified 'mark-up' prices for the work you do? Is your goal that of making a mint for yourself at the expense of others, usually those you have never even seen? Is your goal in life to own a big mansion, have an up-market car or go on expensive holidays abroad? If so, then the spiritual being who worked on the Tyrians is still at work, and you are becoming his target. Just as he corrupted himself, so he seeks to corrupt you.

The Babylonian middle men worked on the spiritual side of life, whereas the Tyrian middle men worked on the human side of life. We need to pray that the demon of riches will be kept at bay from our brethren who are business men.