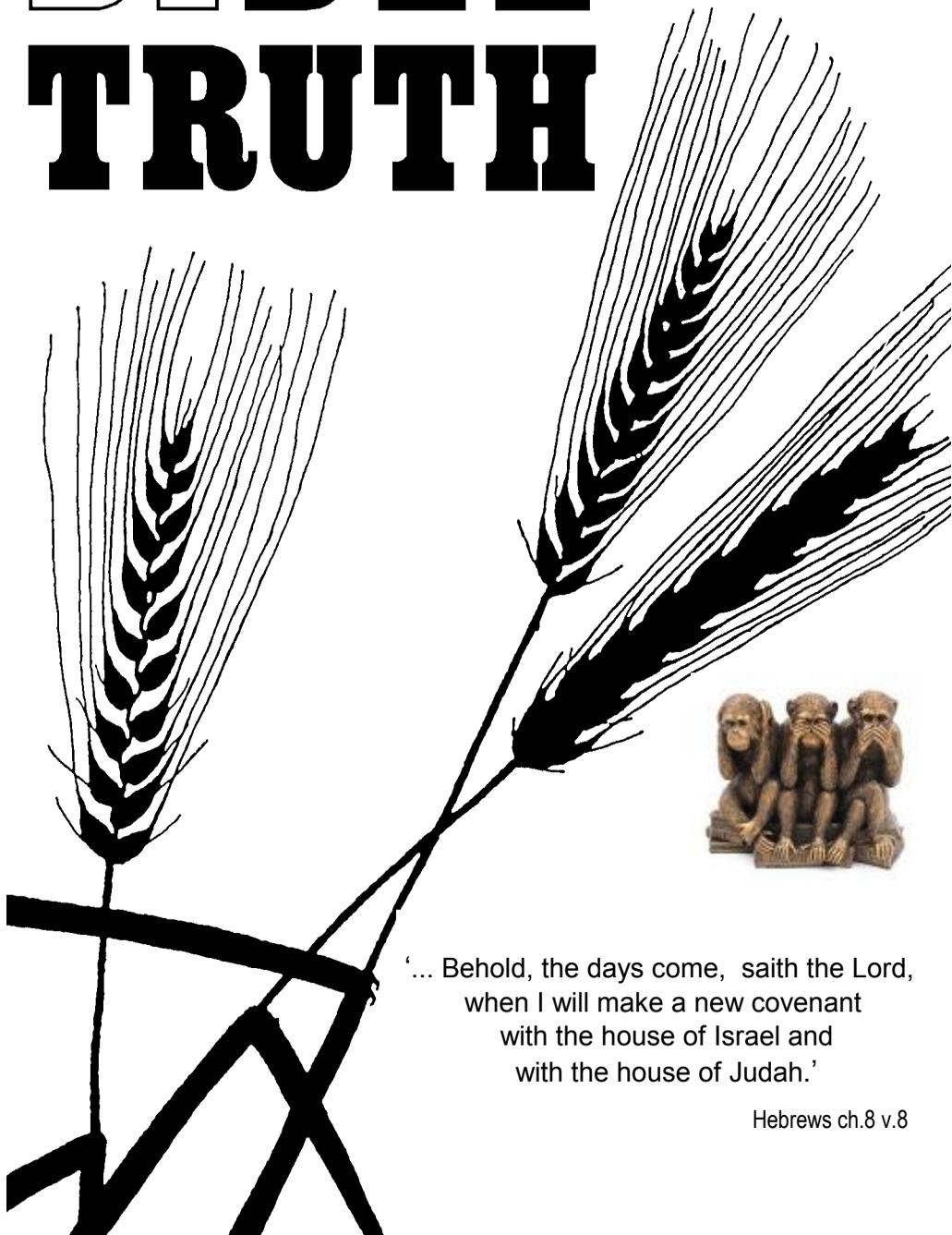


BIBLE TRUTH

No. 293
January/March
2019



'... Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel and
with the house of Judah.'

Hebrews ch.8 v.8



DISCERNMENT

by John Trotter

Study 1 Kings ch.3 vv 1-14; Jeremiah ch.4 v.22; Amos ch.5 vv 14-15; Malachi ch.3 vv 16-18; 1 Corinthians ch.2 vv 14-16 & ch.12 v,10; 2 Timothy ch.3 vv 15-17 and Hebrews ch.4 v.12, ch.5 vv 13-14.

One of my dictionaries defines the word 'discern' as, 'to perceive, detect, discriminate, to perceive differences, make distinctions, from the Latin "discernere" that is: to separate by sifting'.

The above definition is very interesting as the opposite is happening today. We are urged to come together, be more ecumenical, to unify, we are not to discriminate, we are expected to see the world as one and the authorities through the education system are teaching the children to see ourselves as part of the human race and that there are no great differences. The definition of discernment is being discouraged and yet we are being told that by being free with our thoughts we can steer our own destiny. It is no wonder that the youth of today are turning to the gods of man's imagination.

The socialist/humanist does not accept the words of Jeremiah which say,

'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?'

Jeremiah ch.17 v.9

The result of the evil heart is expressed in Genesis.

'And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.'

Genesis ch.6 v.5

The *Septuagint* says, 'every one in his heart was intently brooding over evil continually'.

Despite the humanist viewpoint it is true that much generosity and kindness is done by mankind, even by many who are not followers of Christ. It is my view that the majority of goodness in the world has got to be expressed within the context of taking the fruit

from the 'tree of the knowledge of **good and evil**'. This was the tree that Adam and Eve were not to eat from (Genesis ch.3 vv 2-3) but there was the tree of Life from which they could partake. Understanding the meaning of these two trees would help us to discern the difference between good and evil. Satan has duplicated God's plan so well that good and evil can appear the same. He has his ministers of righteousness who can appear as 'angels of light' (2 Corinthians ch.11 vv 13-15). Strong meat is required to discern between good and evil (Hebrews ch.5 v.14).

Those people in their sixties or above can see that a deterioration in society has resulted in a world where the sowing of our seed is leaving bad fruit. In so many areas of daily life we can see changes; once you could leave your back door open and not be concerned and generally there was respect for those in authority. Children were raised in families where the boundaries were set by responsible parents. The courts today are full of cases where people have neither respect for themselves nor for others. Nevertheless, our leaders are telling us that the future is looking good and that any concern for the future is only a false perception that has no grounds. There is nothing new under the sun as shown in 2 Timothy ch.3 vv 1-9. To understand why change has occurred you need discernment.

Because the tendency is to fuse ideas and beliefs we have confused the masses. It is interesting that the word Babylon means confusion but one day it will fall (see Revelation ch.14 v.8). This confusion is going to get worse as the nations of the world try to achieve the impossible, namely, order out of planned chaos. The difference between right and wrong has become clouded (Isaiah ch.5 vv 20-21). There are many reasons given for the issues that are confronting society, with the expectation that governments will fix the problems. We are clutching at straws when we blame socio-economic surroundings, body genes, race, cultural upbringing, religious beliefs and lack of education. Even though these might have some impact on how we turn out, we are missing one vital explanation and that is the definition of sin which is the 'transgression of the law' (1 John ch.3 v.4).

'For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.'

Jeremiah ch.4 v.22

A great sin today is how many world leaders have redefined the Ten Commandments, but the discerning mind will result in some people taking deliberate steps to remove themselves from the world that in time past also hated Christ and His followers.

‘If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.’

John ch.15 v.19

As time goes by there will be great pressure to conform even from within the family. It is by stepping out and seeing the forest instead of the trees, that will allow you to discern with more understanding, the error of mankind’s ways.

The reference to sifting in the above definition is most interesting. Over many years I have used the sieve in my garden to remove small rocks. The smaller the sieve holes the more refined is the separation process. Separation is a theme that stretches from Genesis to Revelation. It is only by separating the tin from the dross that we will be purged.

‘Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.’

Isaiah ch.1 v. 5

The dross is the rubbish or refuse. Once we have been separated we can discern more clearly. It is interesting that the feet of the prophet Daniel’s image is a mixture of clay and iron. The makeup of the feet is weak in comparison to the other metals in the image. It is at the feet, that the Kingdom, that is made without hands, strikes and destroys the whole image.

‘Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.’

Daniel ch.2 v.34

Having read a number of books on the subject of ancient religions I have come to the conclusion, that the basis of these religions are reflected in some form in today’s Western Society. Rather than living in a totally atheistic culture we are living in the most religious period of human history. Rather than worshiping the one true God we, like the Greeks, have put in His place countless gods that reflect the imagination of man. The occult or pagan

religions are very attractive to a world that cannot separate good from evil.

It is my view that unless people comes out of this confusion of beliefs they will be unable to discern, for scripture tells us this.

‘Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,’

2 Corinthians ch.6 v.17

The context of this verse is better understood if one refers back to verse 15 where it says, ‘And what concord hath Christ with Belial?’ The battle is truly spiritual. The economic, financial and political features of Western Society, are merely the walkways of spiritual evil.

It is by separating, that you can clearly judge. The line has been drawn in the sand.

‘He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.’

Luke ch.11 v.23

The first few verses of Jeremiah ch.23 is worthy to read but ponder the previous verses in Luke which show the context of ch.11 v.23. It is similar to 2 Corinthians ch.6 v.17.

Luke refers to Beelzebub and the kingdom divided against itself.

‘But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.’

Luke ch.11 vv 17-18

Discernment is a gift like that of faith. It does not come easy, for we have to study the word of God.

‘And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.’

2 Timothy ch. 3 vv 15-17

Studying history is essential, for then we will understand not only how and why the tares entered the Kingdom (Matthew ch.13) but why we have not sought first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness.

‘But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.’

Matthew ch. 6 v.33

May we ask God for courage to discern between **good and evil** and to be in the world but not of it. By following the words of Amos God will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

‘Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.’

Amos ch.5 v 14-15