

Ministers:  
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley  
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Sunday:  
8:00 AM: WGCY  
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:  
7:00 PM: Bible Study

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Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofChrist.com)

**This Past Week:**  
Worship—34  
Wednesday—12  
Contribution—\$1950

**For meditation:**  
Proverbs 28.13–14  
Read Psalm 32 to  
see how David  
illustrated Solomon's  
proverb in v 13. How  
are reverence and  
recklessness different,  
v 14d?

**Radio program:**  
WGCY FM, 106.3  
Sundays at 8 AM

## *The eloquence of silence*

I'm not sure that "we" (and I don't know who'd I include in this plural beyond myself) have done a good job of articulating a *Biblical view of suffering*—a Scriptural framework to rely upon when trying to get a grip on the "sufferings of the present time." But if we haven't done so, we need to do so; we need at the ready passages and promises to comfort us when tragedy strikes. 2 Corinthians 4.16–18 should be memorized, as should James 1.1–4, 1 Peter 4, et al.

One thing a Biblical view of suffering does is teach us there are times when silence is golden. Job 2.13 says of Job's friends that "They sat upon the ground with him silently for seven days and nights, no one speaking a word; for they saw that his suffering was too great for words." This was the best thing they did, because when they opened their mouths they became miserable counselors. Often in the presence of suffering, the best thing we can do is to say nothing. Sometimes suffering is greater than our ability to hear—sometimes there's nothing we can say to ease the pain, and we certainly don't want to add to it. Like Job's friends, we may (innocently and inadvertently) say the wrong thing (Job 16.2). When I lost my father and mother, I didn't feel like talking, and I didn't need to be told, "They're in a better place"; I already knew that. My greatest comfort came from knowing that someone I wanted to talk to was close and would listen when I was ready to talk.

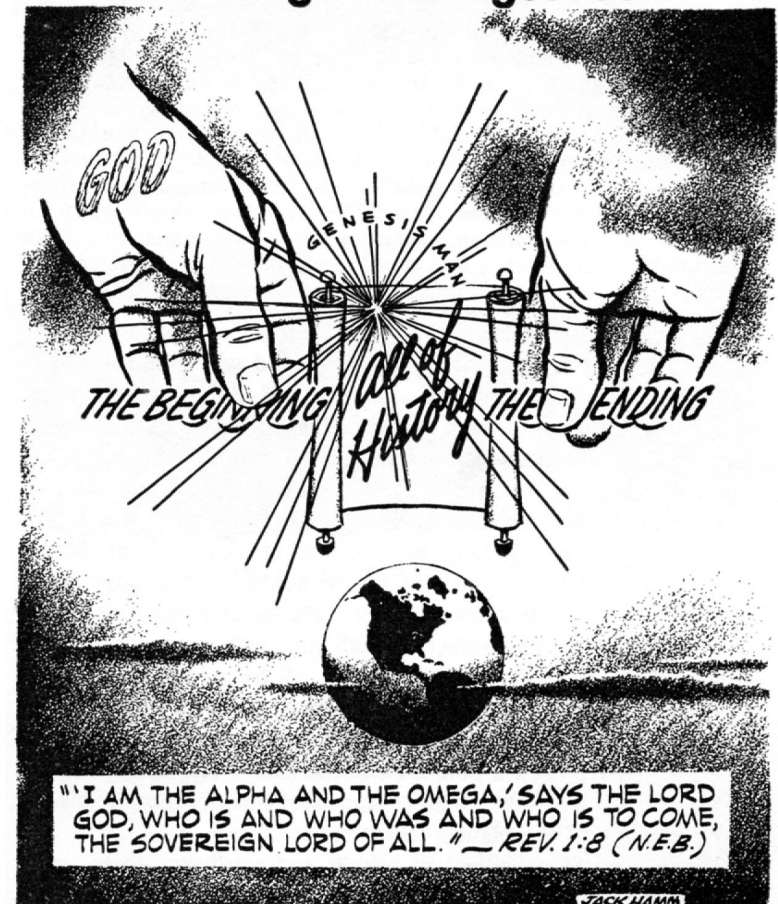
When in the presence of suffering, do no harm; when in doubt, say nothing. And if you must speak, speak as the oracles of God; nothing you can say can improve on what the God of all comfort says.

kenny

# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

## Blazing Star of Ages Past



Sermon: 1 Peter 5.1–4

## Leadership for troubled times

17 December 2023

## Christ's authority

### By what authority are you doing these things?

It's not surprising Christ was asked about the cleansing of the Temple (vv 15–18). Since the guardians of the Temple (v 27) hadn't authorized Him to do what He did, who did?

In response, Jesus asked a question based on the principle that turn-about is fair play; fairness demands that they who expect answers should be willing to give answers. "The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?" Note two things about Christ's question, First, the answer to His question would give the Jews the answer to theirs. Second, Christ's question hung the Jews on the horns of a dilemma, and they knew it.

"If we say, 'from heaven,' He'll ask why, then, weren't we baptized by John (Lk. 7.30), but if we say, 'from men,' the people might kill us because they believe John was a prophet (Lk. 20.6). We better take the Fifth."

"We do not know" (v 33a), they answered.

It was an embarrassing answer that stunk to high heaven, framed by calculation rather than conviction. Here's why. First, it was an admission of incompetence, because it was their business (at least, it was the priest's business, Lev. 10.10) to distinguish between the true and the fraudulent. If the Jews were too incompetent to reach a decision about John, they were likely too inept to draw a valid conclusion about Christ. Second, if John was a prophet, he answered the Jews' question about Jesus, for John—a prophet of God—identified Jesus as the Messiah (Jn. 1.29–36). If John's authority came from heaven, so did Christ's (Jn. 5.33–34).

Answering with, "We don't know" wasn't an answer, and Christ refused to spend further time on this bunch.

If the question put to Him had been honest, maybe the Lord would have gone into detail about the sources of His authority, such as the self-evidencing authority of truth (Matt. 7.29), the authority of a holy life (Mk. 6.20), the authority of knowledge (Lk. 20.40), the authority of miracles (Jn. 5.36, 20.30–31), and the authority of Scripture/the prophetic profile (Matt. 1.22, 2.5–6, 23, etc.; Jn. 5.39). Perhaps the greatest authority Christ wielded was the authority of love (Eph. 5.25).

Jesus had authority coming out of His ears, but the darkness refused to see it, and thus exposed itself in the process.

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## Herodian Masada, 6

*Continued from last week . . .*

When it became apparent that the walls of Jotapata would not be able to withstand the Roman battering, the Jews made a daring raid against the Romans. Charging out from the protection of the citadel in large numbers, they caught the Romans by surprise and set Roman screens, shelters, catapults, and the huge battering ram on fire.

The Romans initially panicked, but recovered and responded by bringing up more troops to press the siege. Another battering ram was set up and put to work. The catapults were put back in working order. More archers and slingers were brought up. Hundreds of Jews and Romans were killed in the fighting.

The citadel wall eventually gave way in a crash of wood and stone, creating an opening large enough for soldiers to enter. Before sending his men through the broken wall, Vespasian gave them a brief rest. He then arranged his cavalry, slingers, archers, and artillery in a tight cordon around the citadel so that no Jew could escape. The next morning at dawn, Vespasian gave the order for the attack. Trumpets blared, the troops shouted, and the bowmen let loose so many arrows that the sky was darkened.

But before a single Roman could enter the citadel, the Jews rushed out and gave battle, fighting with swords, daggers, and their bare hands. Jews on the wall rained down arrows and stones on the Romans. The Romans again retreated, only to counterattack with fresh troops. The irresistible Roman force pushed the Jews back into the citadel, whereupon the Jews poured boiling oil on the attackers. Again and again this scenario was repeated, until the Jews ran out of boiling oil.

The only thing left the Jews was food. They cooked up green vegetables that they threw at the Romans, causing the Romans to slip and fall into a mass of confusion. So many Romans were killed during this melee that Vespasian ordered a withdrawal.

And the Jews began repairing the breach in the wall.

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*Continued next week . . .*

### News about us

- With the holidays here, a number of us will be on the roads traveling. Everybody be safe.
- Singing at Normal this afternoon at 4 p.m.