

WASTED WONDERS

Gabriel L. Mancino

Whether it was with "the God of the Old Testament (OT)," or during the short ministry of the Lord Jesus, miracles were far from a cure-all. **The pre-eminent purpose of Christ's miracles was not achieved,** for in the main, Israel rejected Him.

Israel was rebellious, disobedient and idolatrous throughout the OT. As the Lord's ministry and earthly life were about to close, we get a vivid picture of the dangerously-misleading overemphasis on miracles. John wrote: "But though He had done so many miracles in their presence they kept on not believing on Him" (Jn. 12:37). **That more-literal translation shows determined rejection of the Light, the Life and the Lordship of Christ.**

Make no mistake, **I long to see people healed** just like Jesus. No big advertising, no amplifiers, no glitz and glitter or big names. Yet, I know that the *greatest* miracle and healing takes place when a person truly finds full and free salvation from sin and becomes a true child of God. Though Christ healed people, He put salvation from sin in *shocking* supremacy by comparison (Matt. 5: 29, 30; 18:7-9).

Last month, I quoted Jesus' story of the rich man in hell and the beggar "in Abraham's bosom." The rich man asked that the beggar be sent to his five living brothers so they do not end up in hell, too. Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if

one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'" (Lk. 16: 19-21).

Read this! "A notable miracle had been done and it could not be denied, YET!!! Yet, what? (Acts 4:16,17). They saw the healed man right in front of them and so could not deny it, but they still fought against the Lord, His disciples and even against their very people who were healed! This shows the insanity of determined, rejecting unbelief. "Watch, brothers, that there is not, by any means in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God...So we see that they could not enter in" [the Promised Land] "because of unbelief."- See context Heb. 3: 7-19. Unbelief will keep us from God and bar us from heaven. Repentance and faith bring us in to obey and walk with God, keeping our eyes on Christ and the heavenly city.

FAITH IS THE EVIDENCE!

Genuine faith is not some easy cop-out. Jesus asked: "When I return, shall I find faith on the earth?"(Lk.18:8). And so, some say: "Faith is lacking since religion is irrational & illogical!" From strict Jews to philosophical Greeks, **faith in Christ, His Way & His Salvation was deemed a stumbling block and foolishness, says St. Paul (1 Cor. 1:23). He asked: "Where are the wise?" (v.20), but they had disappeared back into the morass of worldly "wisdom."** Peter says, "They think it strange that you run not to the same evil overflow that sin is, speaking wickedly of you" (1 Pet. 4:4). **But "Faith IS the evidence!" (Heb. 11:1) "without which, we cannot please God" (v.6). It doesn't always "see results," yet faith "rests" in hope & trust in the promises & Person of God (Rom. 8: 24, 25; Heb. 11:1, 13-16)... & it acts!**

UNBELIEF: Many knew the truth, yet refused, rejected & resisted the Lord. They would not admit, confess & turn from their sin. To such unyielding opponents He said: "'Serpents, offspring of vipers! How can you escape the damnation of hell? (Matt. 23: 33). Sin/unbelief face a terrible end, whether active (as above) or seemingly passive & mild. Heb.2:1-4 extends an appeal to all: "For this reason" [Yes, there IS reason!] "we should pay closer attention to the things which we have heard lest we should let them slip and we drift away. For...how shall we escape if we neglect [are indifferent to] so great a salvation?" Adam & Eve went from unbelief to fig leaf, & man has been hiding ever since. But there is RELIEF for your UNBELIEF! Come to Christ today!

Registered Charity #1092050

MAY 2014

The

A paper for all people everywhere... and with a personal touch!

To read, consider, apply, then share with others!

The London LIGHT—

Free!

London Christian Standard ...and Provincial

"Lift up a standard for the people." Isaiah 62:10

Gabriel L. Mancino - Editor. Printing in London since 1983
421 Watford Way, Hendon London NW4 4TR Phone: 020-8202-0806
Website: www.londonchristianstandard.com

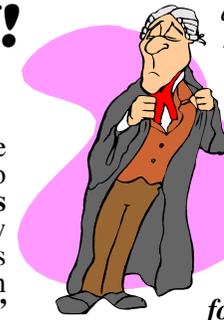
INDUBITABLY!

Gabriel L. Mancino

As I was growing up, the above title became the perfect word for trying to imitate a **traditional Englishman's accent!** I likely heard it in films I saw years ago. Our English son in law finds my rare attempts to imitate an English accent dreadful. Anyway, "indubitably" means "unquestionable, 100% sure, patently evident or certain, without a doubt."

All this month, Christians...as well as others...should deeply consider and personally apply details of Christ's appearances to His disciples *after* His resurrection. "Easter" was glorious, **but only the start!** Listen to how "Dr. Luke" (Col. 4:14) sums it up:

"The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive



after His suffering-death by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God"- (Acts 1:1-3).

Note the reference to those "forty days." "The former account" refers to Luke's Gospel. "Theophilus" was a convert to Christ, and likely held a high rank or office. His name means "friend of God," making him sound like "a New Testament Abraham!" (James 2:23).

The word "infallible" (above) means "Indubitable;" the root-word of this article title. Review the meaning of that word (in first paragraph) to get the impact of those appearances prior to the Lord's Ascension. (Ascension Day, 29 May, 2014)

The Lord Jesus is "in a league of His own," with no equals nor superiors in human history. Likewise, the post-resurrection appearances are in a league of their own.

(continued inside)

"HOW COULD YOU JOIN THAT LOT?" That question got a man executed. It happened to the loving uncle of our 102 yr old lady friend. Her cousin "informed" on his father for questioning why he joined the Communists when they took over. It reminded her of Matt. 10:21. You may not get shot for going "all-out" for Christ, but other consequences from friends, family, etc. may seem like execution. Never fear! The death-conquering Christ, at the end of 40 days of post-resurrection appearances to His formerly fear-filled followers, gave them specific directions (e.g. Matt. 28:18-20; Lk. 24:44-49). And He sent them (and us) out with His promised constant accompaniment (v.20), and His twice-stated legacy of peace (Jn.20:19,21), though they face death as they go!

INDUBITABLY

(continued from front page)

All other alleged “appearances,” outside, or even within “Christianity” fall flat on their face, just as the idol god, Dagon, did when placed in front of “The Ark of the Covenant” (1 Sam. 5).

The post-resurrection appearances occurred to individuals and to variously made-up groups, at different times. None of these disciples/witnesses expected the Lord to be anything else but dead. **For them, it was over.**

These appearances involved various types of interaction. The Lord ate with them. Some touched Him. He taught them extensively regarding the truth and meaning of the Scriptures. All of this was not for the very first time! This was the One they had walked with for three years, therefore they were not deluded...mised...fooled...in error...as to Who this was. They could not ALL be deceived, especially since **they were not even quick to believe each other!**

The Lord’s disciples were not in some pre-planned agreement to falsely claim He had risen from the dead. But Jewish religious leaders DID falsify the record by “buying off” the Roman guards; giving them the story to tell their bosses, and promising them their support if they got into life-threatening trouble (Matt. 28:11-15). In stark contrast, **first of all**, the disciples were pre-eminently honest. Yes, Peter denied his Lord in that critical, emotion-filled drama. **Secondly**, they had no heart to make up the story that He had risen from the dead. They were ready to go back to fishing and to their former lives.

Yes, just before the Lord ascended,

Matthew records that “*When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted*” (28:17). This was at the end of the **forty days** of post-resurrection appearances. The chief question is not *why* these doubted, but *who* were the “**some**” that “**doubted**.” For me, there is no chance at all that it was even “*doubting Thomas!*” Thomas’ unbelief had been thoroughly and radically cured- (Jn. 20: 24-29). I question whether the “**some doubted**” were *any* of the eleven original disciples. More likely, they were from people like those 500-plus that Paul refers to in 1 Cor. 15: 6.

Let’s make a connecting step.

Note the following verses regarding a post-resurrection appearance of the Lord:

“*Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen*” (Mk. 16:14).

“*But while they still did not believe for joy, and marvelled, He said to them, ‘Have you any food here?’*” (Lk. 24: 41).

First of all, have mercy on these disciples. They were going through such upheaval of emotion with every additional bit of information. And think about it, they were dealing with the most Unique Person in history and His unique mission. They were “centre stage” in it all! This was the greatest event ever: the coming of the *long*-promised Messiah-Saviour of the world, and the completing of His *longer*-planned, soul-saving mission.

Nevertheless, the Lord rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. Unbelief is pre-eminently of the **heart**, though the **head** is surely involved.

(continued on next page)

We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon (NW4) at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central.

The Lord’s rebuke was for not believing the report of the eye-witnesses. Will He not judge us likewise? The question to consider is, “Will we be *cured* of our unbelief as these disciples were?” **The fact that they were temporarily “stuck”** in unbelief confirms that they were not trying to concoct some resurrection fairy tale. Atheists and other antagonists surely see this. It is obvious.

The Lk. 24 verse (left) is like a grounded aircraft finally lifting off the runway and climbing higher. Their faith had been thoroughly shattered, but with the latest appearance by the Lord, Luke wrote “*while they still did not believe for joy, and marvelled*.” In other words, they were saying, “**This is too good to be true!**”

In what is called the Lord’s “High-Priestly Prayer” (Jn. 17), He prayed that His *already*-converted disciples would be instantly made holy (v.17). This happened at Pentecost, about ten days after the Ascension; less than two months after He prayed that Prayer. In that Prayer, He also prayed for a unity among His followers. *That* unity would be built upon the receiving of a sanctified/purified heart through the coming in of “The Promised Gift” of the Holy Spirit..

Furthermore, this holiness of heart was not only to *unite* them among themselves, but *thrust* them out to be effective witnesses to a sin-soaked world. **Christ’s ultimate goal** was for the world to have “**the best opportunity possible**” of believing that God really did send Him to save them from sin (and hell). In that Prayer, Jesus prayed for Himself, then for His first disciples, then also for those who would later believe on Him through their testimony **as the centuries rolled on.**

This brings us to London, England 2014. The Lord’s resurrection was **indubitably** demonstrated and witnessed. Yes, He reprovved the disciples for unbelief, though they had been told by other of their friends that had seen Him for themselves. But He carried on, in patient love and instruction to these *already*-converted followers, promising

them the soon-coming, heaven-sent Gift of the Holy Spirit, purifying and filling them (Lk. 24: 44-53; Acts 1:8; 15:8,9).

The same Saviour-Sympathy we see extended to these slow-to-believe disciples is extended to all of those living here in London, and all across Britain. It is time to cast away all pretentious “**reasons**” for unbelief, and confess the hard-hearted inner “resistance” that keeps us from surrendering to the Lord. *That* “resistance” is linked to various key issues in different people. Yet, at the end of the day, the result is the same.

The Lord said that when the Holy Spirit comes, “**He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me**” (Jn. 16: 8, 9).

Conviction for sin, we see, is linked to unbelief— not believing in Christ. “*Believing in Christ*” 1) refers to the Christ of the Bible—*Who* He is and *What* He came for, and applying this directly and personally to oneself, 2) is based on 100% sure evidence, and 3) does not rest on mere head knowledge, but results in a heart change and life change that is a 100% resurrected life from our own deadness in sin.

“**Convict**” is also translated *reprove* and *convince*. In Jn. 16: 8,9 (above) it means “**to demonstrate by argument, to prove, to persuade anyone to do a thing by presenting reasons.**” In this case, and as it occurs in the life of every person on earth, it is the Holy Spirit of God Who is presenting this “**convicting**” argument, not man.

St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, spoke of man’s tendency to “*resist the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 7: 51). To wrongly deny guilt in *man’s* court is one thing. To lie to *God* is another! (Acts 5:3,4). Was Christ’s death and resurrection true? **Indubitably!** Is the Holy Spirit’s loving, yet “convicting” argument to each of us accurate? **Indubitably!** Is it possible for anyone to be resurrected from the deadness of sin and to new life in Christ? **Indubitably!** Should you start *even now* like the convinced disciples did? **Without a doubt! Indubitably!**

ANTI-CHRIST FAILURE: Pilate gave to Jesus’ enemies the soldiers they wanted to guard Christ’s tomb in order to prevent His disciples from stealing the body and falsely claiming that He rose from the dead. Pilate said “*Make it as secure as you can!*” (Matt. 27:65). This is what mankind has generally tried to do—in vain! They guard their brains, their time, their interests & pleasures, all in an attempt to keep Christ buried under their feet. But in Matt. 28:6, the angels tell the ladies: “*He is risen as He said. Come see!*” “*Man’s efforts to prove Him not risen are as futile as those he employed to prevent Him from rising.*” He is risen, indeed!