

# Norwich and the Scriptures

## Contents

1. Adam's Sin Was the Greatest
2. Sins of the Chosen
3. The Ground of Our Beseeking
4. All Shall Be Well. Haps and Adventures
5. Despised and Laughable
6. We Should Take Our Trials Lightly
7. Everlasting Joy

**I**NTRODUCTION. There is an admirable harmony between certain passages of Scripture and the revelations given to Julian of Norwich, England, in the 14th century.

## 1. Adam's Sin Was the Greatest

**O**UR Lord revealed to Julian that the first sin, the disobedience of Adam, was the greatest sin ever committed. He revealed unto her that when Christ died on the cross, he made up for and atoned for the greatest sin and evil. The revelation is similar to Romans 5:12, "Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men."

Our Lord told Julian that just as he made well the greatest evil (the sin of Adam) by his atoning death on the cross, so he would make well everything else, and that she would see it.

He also told her that not even the least thing would be forgotten, that all manner of thing would be well, and that she would see it.

Adam's sin was the greatest, because through it, death, destruction, calamity and misery spread to all men. Because of his disobedience, the entire earth was put under a curse (Gen. 3:17, 5:29).

Paul wrote that the gift was greater than the offense. (Rom. 5:15)

"But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many..... for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous." The 5th chapter of Romans is like a commentary to Julian's revelation. Also First Corinthians 15:21-22. "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."

## 2. Sins of the Chosen

**I**T was revealed to Julian that in Heaven the sins of the chosen (the saved) will be turned to worship. Christ called to her mind David, Peter, Mary Magdalen, those of Inde (Thomas and Jude) and others who are known in the church for their transgressions. God sees the souls of the saved as if they are like angels, that have never sinned. All these truths are based on Scripture.

It is written: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Psalms 103:12. "He will again have compassion on us; and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19.

"For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sins I will remember no more." Jeremiah 31:34. Hebrews 8:12. Isaiah 43:25.

If the sins of the chosen, the saved, are removed as far as the east is from the west (that is, an infinite distance), if they are cast into the sea and remembered no more, then it is as if their transgressions had never existed.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." Psalms 32:1-2. Paul quotes this passage in Romans 4:7, declaring that this blessedness will come upon all the saved, whether Jew or Gentile.

Paul also writes: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8:1. No condemnation, no accusation, no guilt, no blame --the blood of Christ, of infinite value, removes it all. The souls of the saved are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:11. See also Jeremiah 50:20

Julian wrote: "But if anyone should think, therefore I will sin, so that I will have the more meed, let him beware, for this stirring is not of God. For a kind soul hath no hell but sin."

Paul wrote: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!" Rom. 6:1.

### **3. The Ground of Our Beseeching**

**I**T was revealed to Julian that God inspired the prayers of the saved and granted them. "I am the ground of thy beseeching. I will that thou shouldst have it. How then shalt thou not have it?"

Scripture declares that God inspires our petitions. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." Rom. 8:2

The psalmist says that those who fear the Lord will obey Him and fulfill his desire; then he answers by fulfilling their desire: "He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them." Psalms 145:19

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." 1 John 5:14-15.

"He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee." Isaiah 30:19

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah 65:24

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jeremiah 33:3

"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Psalms 34:17

### **4. All Shall Be Well. Haps and Adventures**

**T**HE Lord said: "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and thou shalt see, that all manner of thing shall be well." The Scripture witnesses, that for those who love God, all things, even misfortunes and accidents, work together toward a happy ending. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God." Romans 8:28. Even humiliation and injustice work toward good.

"But as for you (Joseph's brothers) you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." Genesis 50:20

The Scripture states that, for the souls of the righteous, a period

of affliction and humiliation is followed by a period of joy and spiritual prosperity: "And the Lord restored Job's losses; indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, and the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning." Job 42:10

"His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." Ps. 30:5

The Lord told Julian that some events seem to be haps and adventures, but that they are ordained by the wisdom and providence of God, who declares the end from the beginning. (Is. 46:10)

In Genesis 40 it is related that Joseph interpreted the dream of the chief butler, and then petitioned him, "Remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me, and get me out of this dungeon." But for two full years the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

This forgetfulness was not by chance; rather it was ordained by the all-foreseeing providence of God, who determined to release Joseph from the dungeon at a particular time, and in particular circumstances, in order that he might be set over all the land of Egypt, and so that God could make him forget all his toil, and so he would be made fruitful in the land of his affliction. Gen. 41:41, 51

In the book of Esther it is related how Haman plotted to kill all the Jews living in Persia and Media, and how God intervened to save and deliver his people. His intervention did not consist in performing great signs and miracles, as in the days of Moses, but rather by directing the minute events of daily life. It was not by chance that queen Vashti disobeyed king Ahasuerus and had to be deposed. It was not by chance that Esther, a Jewess, was chosen to be the new queen. It was not by chance that the king promoted Haman to be above all the princes. It was not by chance that Esther invited the king and Haman to a banquet. And finally, it was not by chance that the king could not sleep that night, that he had chronicles read to him and that he promoted Mordecai and had him receive honors.

Then followed one of the most dramatic scenes recorded in the pages of Scripture. Esther invited the king and Haman to a second banquet. The king asked her what was her petition and she replied, "If it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated." The king asked her who was responsible for this abomination and she replied, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!" It was as if a sword had gone out of her mouth. Haman was terrified. Then the king

became angry and had him hung on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

Esther and Mordecai turned the tables on Haman, not by power and might, not by working miracles, but by wisdom, by sagacity, and by submitting to God's will. In all these events we see the verification of the words he spoke to Julian: "I never take my hands off my works."

## 5 Despised and Laughable

**I**N the 4th chapter of Acts it is written, that after Peter and John had been threatened by the Sanhedrin, they went to the disciples. The entire congregation raised their voice to God and said: "Lord, you are God who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said, Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against His Christ. For truly against your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done." Acts 4:24-28.

They quoted the first verses of Psalm 2 as referring to what happened in Jerusalem on Good Friday: the nations and rulers plotted against the Messiah, the Christ, in order to prevent Him from taking possession of His kingdom and from ruling. They hated Him, and with their actions they proclaimed, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Luke 19:14. With their deeds they said to God: "Depart from us, for we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways." Job 21:14

In Psalm 2:4 the scene changes from earth to heaven. God is looking down from above upon the sons of men. He tests the righteous, but the wicked his soul hates (Ps. 11:4). All nations before Him are as nothing; the inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers (Is. 40:17, 22), smaller than tiny insects in His sight. No one can restrain His hand. (Dan. 4:35)

Little man's puny efforts to overthrow the design of God, to fight against the Messiah, are despicable; they are ridiculous, laughable.

"He who sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall hold them in derision." Psalm 2:4

Then the Psalmist advised the rulers to serve the Lord with fear;

otherwise they would be broken with a rod of iron, and dashed to pieces (Ps. 2:11). Notwithstanding His warnings, some of them still continued to set themselves against the Lord, hardening their hearts against Him. One of them reaped the bitter fruit of his actions a few years later.

"Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him (Herod), because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died." Acts 12:23.

It was as if the king set him at the left and said, "Depart, you accursed, into the everlasting fire." (Mt. 25:41). He deserved to hear the terrible sentence, that the condemned will hear on the day of judgment, for he had murdered John the Baptist, had mocked Christ (Lk. 23:11) and had killed James the brother of John with the sword (Acts 12:2)

Christ said, "With the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." Lk. 6:38 It is a fact of history, verified by Scripture, that if people do not listen to God, later they will call out and he will not listen (Zech. 7:13; Is. 1:15). Herod did not listen to God, not even when Christ visited him, and later God did not hear him. He made a joke out of God (Lk. 23:11) and later on the Lord laughed at him. (Acts 12:23)

In the Scriptures it is stated that the Lord will laugh at the obstinate, when the day of the wicked comes.

"Because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Prov. 1: 24-28

"The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming." Psalms 37:12-13.

The Lord said to Julian: "that demons and damned souls are despised, as in God's sight."

## 6. We Should Take Our Trials Lightly

**O**UR Lord said to Julian: "It is God's will that we should take his behests and promises as heartily as we may, and that we should take our travails and dis-eases as lightly as we may, and make little of them, for thus shall we feel them less, and shall have more meed for them."

Many passages in Scriptures corroborate this truth. Christ told his disciples that they would have sorrow and tribulation in the world, but not to be discouraged, for he had overcome everything. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (Jn. 16:33) "...and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy... And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." (Jn. 16:20-22) He told the local church of Smyrna: "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10)

He wants his disciples to receive their trials lightly: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Mt. 11:30)

The apostles received their trials with joy: "When they had called the apostles, and beaten them... they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." (Acts 5:41)

The apostle Paul declared that suffering with Christ was followed by glory and joy: "If we are children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18) "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." (2 Cor. 1:5)

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:17)

## 7. Everlasting Joy

**O**UR Lord told Julian: "The children of God, holy Church, shall be shaken by tribulation, even as a cloth is shaken in the wind. Of this I will make a great feast in Heaven, of everlasting joy, that shall last for ever and ever."

Christ said that on the day of reckoning, his servants would have great joy. "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Mt. 25:21)

The prophets Isaiah and Daniel stated that the Messiah would establish a kingdom that would last for ever. Isaiah 9:6-7; 60:20. Daniel 2:44 7:13-14 Luke 1:33 2 Samuel 7:13.

Isaiah continues saying that in the Messianic kingdom they will offer a prayer of praise, comfort and joy: "Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted." (Is. 12)

He also says that in the kingdom there will be joy and singing (Is. 35:2), that the blind and deaf shall be healed (Is. 35:5; Lk. 7:22), and that their joy will last for ever:

"The redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35:10

The prophet Jeremiah said that after the captivity of sin, the Messiah would come and would bring goodness and joy to the redeemed: "Because of their wickedness I have hid my face from this city (Jerusalem). Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and ye shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." Jer. 33:5-9. He said the voice



of joy and the voice of gladness would be heard (33:11).

The prophet Jeremiah also said that the Messiah would make an everlasting covenant; therefore the joy of his kingdom would last for ever. "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, with my whole heart and with my whole soul." (Jer. 32:39-41; Heb. 13:20)

The prophet Isaiah was mourning, because Jerusalem was in ruins. "Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste." (Isaiah 64:10). Then the Lord consoled him. He spoke to him and said that the former troubles would soon be forgotten. The Lord was going to create a new city, a new congregation, a new assembly and a new covenant. "But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." (Is. 65:18) "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:" "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." (Isaiah 66:10, 13).

The Son of man came down from heaven (Jn. 3:13; 6:38) in order to make all things new. "For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth;" Jer. 31:22 "And he that sat upon the throne said: Behold, I make all things new. It is done. I am Alpha and Omega." Rev. 21:5

He came upon earth to put new wine into new bottles. (Mt. 9:17) "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." Jn. 2:10

He came to establish a new covenant (Jer. 31:31; Hebrews 12:24) in a kingdom which cannot be moved (Heb. 12:28) with new commandments, (Jn. 13:34), where the redeemed sing a new song (Rev. 14:3) in a new city (Rev. 21:2). "Former troubles are forgotten." Is. 65:16 "The old covenant, which decays and waxes old, is ready to vanish away." Heb. 8:13 "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17

The Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah has established a kingdom not of this world, but visible in the world, a new city that cannot be hid (Mt. 5:14) "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." (Hebrews 12:22) "the holy city, new Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:2). Paul wrote: "God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. 1:13). The Scriptures declare that the Messiah has established a new covenant, in which saved souls, as new creatures, (2 Cor. 5:17), praise and exalt him for ever, all sorrow and tribulation having passed away.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4

The first chapters of Scripture relate how the earth was placed under a curse. The last chapter of Scripture declares the curse will be removed. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."



## Notes

### 1. Adam's Sin Was the Greatest

Our Lord told Octavio Michelini, a soul in Italy, that the sin of Adam had such horrifying consequences and was so great, that the full extent of its magnitude would not be understood until the day of judgment.

### 2. Sins of the Chosen

Our Lord told Julian that Saint John of Beverley committed some sins in his youth, and that after he repented, he had more meed than if he had not sinned.

Psalms 103 does not state, "As far as the north is from the south," because the distance from the north pole to the south pole is finite and can be measured. "As far as the east is from the west," is a circle that

goes around forever, an infinite distance.

Jeremiah 50: 20 declares: "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." --- "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him." Numbers 23:21

### 3. The Ground of Our Beseeking

Our Lord told Julian that if he did not grant our requests, "we abide a better time or a better gift." He told her he was pleased with our prayers even when offered in dryness or in distress. He also told her that if we prayed but without confidence, it was not enough, and if we had confidence but without prayer, it was not enough. He willed "that our trust and our prayer be alike large."

### 4. All Shall Be Well. Haps and Adventures

In the thirteenth shewing, Our Lord revealed to Julian: "Sometimes there be such great evils done, and such great harms taken, that we look upon it with great distress, sorrowing and mourning without measure. But our dear Lord told me not to be greatly dis-eased for any manner of thing, for he said: "By the same wisdom, power and goodness that I made well the greatest evil, I will make well all that is less, and thou shalt see it." --- Since God directs everything that happens, "we are living more in heaven than on earth."

Our Lord said to Gabrielle Bossis: "Do not believe in chance, but learn to see the hand of your father, your friend, the one who never leaves you, in everything that happens."

### 5. Despised and Laughable

The word ridiculous is derived from Latin, *ridere*, to laugh.

Our Lord told a soul in Italy, Luisa Piccarreta, that when civil or ecclesiastical leaders press for the observance of laws but they themselves do not keep them, "they make a joke out of me, as Herod did." He foretold that on the day of judgment he would make a joke out of them.

Daniel 4:35 states how vain it is for foolish humans to oppose God: "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" These words were spoken by Nebuchadnezzar, who also declared "Those that walk in pride he is

able to abase.” (Dan. 4:37).

## 6. We Should Take Our Trials Lightly

Dis-ease: lack of ease, trouble. In Middle English *diseise* meant inconvenience, trouble, sickness. From < OFr *desaise* , discomfort.

Meed: a merited recompense or reward

Behest: an order, command, or request

## 7. Everlasting Joy

Our Lord told Gabrielle Bossis (1874-1950): “Everything I say to one of My children is for all of them. Each soul is My favorite. If only you knew My love for each one.”

Our Lord told Julian it was his will that we receive these manifestations of his love with great joy, as if they were made especially for us.

### **Biographical Note**

**J**ULIAN of Norwich was a recluse, a hermitess, who lived in a small room adjoining the parish church in Norwich, England. She made a petition that God would send her an illness so that she could suffer for Christ. She became so ill that those around her thought that she was going to die. On May 8, 1383, from about 9 a.m. until the afternoon, Christ granted her a series of thirteen revelations or shewings, in which great truths were revealed to her. A few years later she received the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> shewings. She spent the remaining 40 years meditating on what she had seen.

The most well-known shewing, or revelation, is the thirteenth, in which Christ told her “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and thou shalt see, that all manner of thing shall be well.”

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