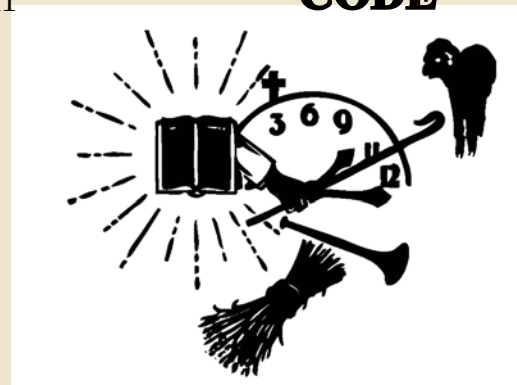
THE SYMBOLIC CODE

Vol. 11 No.7



MAY , 1956

THE NECESSITY FOR THE SEALING

PURPOSE

This publication is dedicated to the mission of conveying to Davidian present truth believers, edifying news and articles of timely significance. This comforter freely gives its time to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, and neither collects fees nor charges for its service.

Address all communications to:

THE SYMBOLIC CODE

Mt. Carmel Center Waco, Texas

THE NECESSITY FOR THE SEALING

(The sermon which has been selected for this issue of The Symbolic Code is on Isaiah 27. It was given on several occasions in 1936 and the last time Brother Houteff presented it was February 27, 1943. On September 21, 1936 Brother Houteff made the remarks concerning the possibility of trouble coming to the church after the sealing of the saints and before the slaughter of Ezekiel 9, and if so what the results would be and why. Since Revelation 11 has more recently been unfolded before us we should be able to see that it is not just a possibility, but rather both a fact and approaching reality that trouble is coming to the church before the slaughter of Ezekiel 9. None therefore need be ignorant concerning what we must now be doing about it.)

PRAYER THOUGHT: "If those who are headstrong and full of self-esteem go on unchecked in their course, what will be the condition of things in the church? How are the wrongs to be corrected which exist in these strong-willed, ambitious ones? By what means will God reach them? How will he set his church in order? Differences of opinion are constantly arising, and apostasies often afflict the church. When controversy or division comes in, all parties

claim to be right and to have a conscience void of offence; and they will not be instructed by those who have long borne the burden of the work, and who, they have reason to know, have been guided by the Lord. Light has been sent to dispel their darkness, but they are too proud of heart to accept it, and they choose the darkness. They despise the counsel of God, because it does not coincide with their views and plans, and favor their wrong traits of character. The work of the Spirit of God, which would bring them into the right position if they would accept it, has not come in a way to please them, and to flatter their self-righteousness. The light which God has given is no light to them, and they wander in darkness. They claim that no more confidence is to be placed in the judgment of one who has had such a long experience, and whom the Lord has taught and used to do a special work, than in that of any other person. Is it God's plan that they should do thus, or is it the special working of the enemy of all righteousness to hold souls in error to bind them in strong delusions that cannot be broken, because they have placed themselves beyond the reach of means that God has ordained to deal with his church?

"The reproofs, the cautions, the corrections of the Lord, have been given to his church in all ages of the world. These warnings were despised and rejected in Christ's day by the self-righteous Pharisees, who claimed that they

needed no such reproofs, and were unjustly dealt with. They would not receive the word of the Lord through his servants, because it did not please their inclinations. Should the Lord give a vision right before this class of people in our day, pointing out their mistakes, rebuking their self-righteousness and condemning their sins, they would rise up in rebellion, like the inhabitants of Nazareth when Christ showed them their true condition.

"If these persons do not humble their hearts before God, if they harbor the suggestions of Satan, doubt and infidelity will take possession of the soul, and they will see everything in a false light. Let the seeds of doubt once be sown in their hearts, and they will have an abundant harvest to reap. They will come to mistrust and disbelieve truths which are plain and full of beauty to others who have not educated themselves in unbelief. Those who train the mind to seize upon everything which they can use as a peg to hang a doubt upon, and suggest these thoughts to other minds, will always find occasion to doubt. They will question and criticize everything that arises in the unfolding of truth, criticize the work and position of others, criticize every branch of the work in which they have not themselves a part. They will feed upon the errors and mistakes and faults of others, 'until,' said the angel, 'the Lord Jesus shall rise up from his mediatorial work in the heavenly sanctuary, and shall clothe himself with the garments of

vengeance, and surprise them at their unholy feast; and they will find themselves unprepared for the marriage supper of the Lamb.' Their taste has been so perverted that they would be inclined to criticize even the table of the Lord in his kingdom.

"Has God ever revealed to these self-deceived ones, that no reproofs or corrections from him are to have any weight with them unless they come through direct vision? I dwell upon this point, because the position that many are now taking upon it is a delusion of Satan to ruin souls. When he has ensnared and weakened them through his sophistry, so that when they are reproved, they persist in making of none effect the workings of God's Spirit, his triumph over them will be complete. Some who profess righteousness will, like Judas, betray their Lord into the hands of his bitterest enemies. These self-confident ones, determined to have their own way, and to advocate their own ideas, will go on from bad to worse, until they will pursue any course rather than to give up their own will. They will go on blindly in the way of evil; but like the deluded Pharisees, so self-deceived that they think they are doing God's service. Christ portrayed the course which a certain class will take, when they have a chance to develop their true character: 'And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kins-folks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.'" -- Testimonies, Vol. 5,

pp. 688-691. (Emphasis ours.)

The lesson here is for all who profess to be ministers in the church and also for those who claim to be disciples of Christ. The Pharisees (the ministry) would not heed Christ's Own reproofs and Truth. Neither did Judas (one of His Own disciples), but instead Judas showed his true character in the end: that he was a wicked traitor instead of a disciple, a great benefactor or a friend. May God help us all to understand ourselves and be constantly in right relationship with Him that we fall not into temptation, should be our prayer.

The subject for this afternoon is a continuation of our study of last Sabbath dealing with Early Writings, pp. 36 and 38.

Rev. 7:1-4 -- "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard

the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

You notice here that the angels are not told to hold the winds until Ezekiel 9 has all been fulfilled, but until the servants of God are sealed. Therefore, if there is any intervening time between the close of the sealing and the slaughter of Ezekiel 9, there is a possibility that the winds could start blowing during that time. If the nations had everything ready, it would not necessarily take long to bring the trouble that is represented by the four winds. We do know from this scripture that God will restrain the winds until the sealing is finished, for according to verse 3 of this chapter a message was sent to the four angels instructing them to hold the winds until the sealing of the 144,000 is finished. It shows that the Devil is doing all he can to loose the winds as soon as possible, perhaps even in a day.

How serious it is that right now when God's people should be awake and preparing themselves to receive the seal that they might be protected in that great and dreadful day, the church instead is dead asleep!

If sinners were still among God's people when the winds start to blow the church would fall, for while sinners are among God's people

the church cannot stand against her enemies. In other words, were trouble to be brought against the church before the abominations are eliminated, before the unrighteous are taken out of her midst, there is a possibility that the whole church would fall, and that God would have to intervene Himself to rescue her. If God's righteous people were separate it would be different. The ninth chapter of Ezekiel, however, tells us that angels are commissioned to go through the city and mark those who sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof, showing that the wicked and the righteous are not at that time separate, but instead they are commingled.

You recall how God dealt with Israel just before they went into the promised land. Because of that one man (Achan) Israel's army was miserably defeated at Ai. And though sealed ones were in her midst, should the church now meet with trouble while there is, as Sister White says, an Achan in every church and in almost every family (Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 157), the entire church would fall! With this startling possibility confronting us, I ask you how can any true professor of present Truth sit calmly in unconcern about his own spiritual condition and do nothing to warn others to get ready? Such grave possibilities on the contrary should cause each of us to be a light bearer indeed, a watchman who will sound the alarm, and warn Israel to cast away her idols and seek the Lord God now

that we may be hid in the day of His fierce anger which is soon coming.

Let us now turn to Isaiah 27 for the remainder of our time this afternoon:

Isa. 27:1-13 -- "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Fury is not in Me: who would set the briers and thorns against Me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

"Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by Him? In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: He stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones

of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up. Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore He that made them will not have mercy on them, and He that formed them will shew them no favour.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye Children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."

Isa. 27:1 -- "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

The day this is to happen must be found in

the preceding chapter, for this verse is introduced with the words "in that day." Therefore, to find the time we shall read

Isa. 26:20, 21 -- " Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

God's indignation is coming upon the earth, and God's people are invited to take shelter somewhere. These verses place the fulfillment of this prophecy in the time of the end of the world when God will punish the wicked and raise the righteous.

Isa. 27:1 -- "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

From the reading of these verses we clearly see that when God punishes the inhabitants of the earth and the earth discloses her blood, leviathan will be punished and the dragon that is in the "sea" is to be slain. Who is the serpent? -- It is Satan. But how is Satan to be pun-

ished and slain at the time this chapter applies? For help on this point let us turn to:

Isa. 14:1-14 -- "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,

"That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at

thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High."

The king of Babylon in this chapter is connected with Lucifer because whatever Babylon aspires and sets out to do is instigated by Satan himself. Likewise we find the same to be true in the following account of Tyrus.

Ezek. 28:1, 2, 13-17 -- "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou

set thine heart as the heart of God:... Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee."

You recognize this description as being that of Lucifer; yet the prophecy is addressed to the prince of Tyrus just as Isaiah 14 associated the king of Babylon with Lucifer. By this we are to understand that both "Tyrus" and "Babylon" are instigated by Satan and are set up to do on earth the identical wicked work that Satan did originally in heaven. But we are here told that Satan's defeat in these endeavors will be com-

plete and shameful.

Isa. 27:1, 2 -- "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine."

In the day the dragon is "slain" in the "sea" someone is to sing "A vineyard of red wine." There is then to be a vineyard of red wine, and there is to be singing about it because it is a rich vineyard producing good fruit -- righteous people. The song for the vineyard is sung when God punishes leviathan. It cannot be sung now because God does not yet have this rich productive vineyard. The rest of this chapter tells how He is to obtain it.

Isa. 27:3 -- "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

This obviously is the Lord's vineyard which He is to have at that day and which He is to keep night and day lest any hurt it. If He must so carefully keep it lest any hurt it, the vineyard must therefore exist in a time of danger.

Isa. 27:4, 5 -- "Fury is not in Me: who would set the briers and thorns against Me in

battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me."

The implication here is that there are briers and thorns and that if they should be set against Him in battle they would be destroyed together. The briers and thorns must represent people who fight against God by fighting against His Truth. This scripture says that those who fight against Him will surely perish together, but he who takes hold of God's strength for peace will receive peace. In other words, the briers and thorns need not remain such in this case. They can be converted if they would. These verses, therefore clearly present a choice. If there is offered to a people the choice to take hold of God and live or battle against Him and perish, that choice must be coming to them in a message, in Truth. If they take His Truth then they would be taking hold of His strength, and those who choose to fight the Truth will not win, but will perish together.

Anciently God was furious with His people and was tempted to cast them away forever root and branch. But here He says that fury is not in Him. He is longsuffering toward His people, and He is anxious that all should take hold of His strength and be at peace with Him. That very choice is found in the message we bear today. As the message makes its way

through the ranks of the church we see some take hold of His strength and rejoice in the Truth, and we also painfully see the briers and thorns set in battle against the Lord. Though fury is not in God and though He is not willing that any should perish, yet He declares that those who will not take hold of His strength by accepting His Truth must lose out.

Isa. 27:6 -- "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

Those that come of Jacob will take root. It implies that not all are coming, but those that do come will take root. The others will die. Those that take root are of Jacob. We all know that the Scriptures say that the 144,000 are all of Jacob, for they are Israelites. The verse we are now studying says that those that come of Jacob shall take root and "Israel shall blossom and [grow] and fill the face of the world with fruit." These words are so plain they do not need interpretation. Using the analogy that an apple tree bears apples and not plums or something else, we may draw the lesson that the Israelites that take root, the 144,000, will bring forth converts to Israel. These converts will be Israelites either by birth or by being grafted in as Paul describes in Romans 11.

We have learned so far in our study of this chapter that when the briers and thorns fight against God it is at that time that those of Jacob shall take root. That could not be after the close of probation, for it is after they take root that they "fill the face of the world with fruit."

Daniel tells us in the second chapter that in the days of the ten-toe kings the Lord God would set up a kingdom which he said was represented by the stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that that stone would break in pieces all other kingdoms and grow to be a great mountain that would fill the whole earth. Daniel in reality said the same thing that Isaiah is saying in the 27th chapter we are considering today. It is those of Jacob that take root that make up the stone that Daniel saw. And as the stone is small and the mountain large, it shows that the majority will not take hold of the strength of God, but will perish while the minority will escape and take root and bring in converts that will fill the face of the world with fruit. What Isaiah calls a vineyard Daniel called a kingdom -- the Kingdom of God.

Isa. 27:7, 8 -- "Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind

There are two winds mentioned here: the rough wind and the east wind. At the time when God delivers a message of choice to His people to separate those who make peace with Him and those who do not, and at the time His vineyard shoots forth, there are to be two winds. The rough wind we understand to be God's wind which He stops in the day of the east wind.

Isa. 27:9 -- "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up."

The rough wind comes to purify His church. When it blows fruit will fall. In the words of Ezekiel those who do not "sigh" and "cry" for the abominations done in the church will be slain, and only those who take hold of God's strength will remain.

If all the stones of the altar become as chalkstones then the altar will crumble to the ground. The altar is not the entire church, but it is a very important part of the church. It is from the altar that the laity are led. The figure used here shows that there is a false leadership and it is to be brought down. "The groves and images will not stand up," showing

that idolatry is among God's people, and it too will be taken away. It is this purging that must come in order to make the vineyard rich and productive as verses 2 and 3 describe it as being. The briers and thorns must be removed. The message comes preceding this separation in order to prepare God's people to escape the purging rough wind and to be safe from the time of trouble represented by the east wind.

Isa. 27:10, 11 -- "Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down and consume the branches thereof. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore He that made them will not have mercy on them, and He that formed them will shew them no favour."

This chapter first describe God's vineyard in its beautiful and excellent condition, representing God's church in its future purified state. The verses we are now reading describe the present condition of His church before it is purified How vastly different is the picture! John describes it as being "wretched" and about to be "spued out."

When a man prunes his orchard and he finds dead branches on the trees, he breaks them off

and stacks them in piles for someone to burn, for they are useless. It is this illustration Isaiah is using to show what God is to do with His people who are represented by the dead branches -- people who have no understanding. They are those who are ever learning but never come to the knowledge of the Truth. Yes, they are branches of the tree, but they are void of spiritual life. There is something fundamentally wrong with this class of people, because God is able to make anyone wise; He can make anyone strong. His Truth is so simple that though they be fools they need not err therein (Isa. 35:8). Therefore all can get understanding. For this reason those men who get no understanding God will destroy without mercy. In this work of separating, God keeps the trunk and destroys the branches.

Isa. 27:12, 13 -- "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."

The children of Israel are to be gathered first one by one, and in that day the great trumpet will be sounded to signalize the commencement of the ingathering of the people who are going to worship in the holy mountain, Jerusalem. In our studies on Isaiah 19 we found that there are to be five cities in "Egypt" that will speak the language of Canaan, and that there is to be a highway between "Assyria" and "Egypt" and Israel is to be a third with them, even a blessing in the midst of the land. It is the great trumpet of the twenty-seventh chapter that will save them. It may be that there will be many from "Assyria" and "Egypt" that will join the 144,000 and go to worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem. Since Isaiah says they were ready to perish, it may happen just at the making up of the image of the beast, or just in the time of transition when the world emerges from the "Assyrian" period and enters the period when "Babylon the Great" rules.

This one chapter is made up of only thirteen verses, yet it outlines for us clearly the whole message. Truly God has graciously given us Truth that no others have. That, however, puts a great burden, a great responsibility upon us. When Volume One of The Shepherd's Rod came we saw that the message had to be carried to the church, and the light we have received from God through this chapter is to help us to understand what God expects of us and the magnitude of the work that is to be done not only in the church but also in the world.

We ought to be wise and of an understanding

heart in the things of God. We ought daily to be living the Truth and making every effort to be at peace with God that we may receive the seal of His protection and approval. Are we getting ready for the great and dreadful days just ahead? We have not a moment to lose if we would be ready on time. All God is waiting for now is for His saints to receive the seal so that His church will not perish from off the earth forever, but will instead "take root" and "fill the face of the world with fruit."
