

## **Crescendo**

‘A visiting cantor [a choir leader] was invited to sing traditional Jewish songs at a Brooklyn synagogue. After the services he was bragging to members of the congregation that Lloyd’s of London had insured his voice for \$750,000. Mrs. Seigel, an older woman, said, “So, cantor, what did you do with the money?”’

Sounds like his voice was a “total loss”! This otherwise irrelevant joke is about music, and the sermon title is “crescendo”, a musical term, which is a gradual increase in volume. Crescendos can be fast or slow, gentle or abrupt, small or huge. I chose the term because it perfectly describes our times. Things all around are continuously increasing. For us Christians, children of God, our Father is increasing our awareness and knowledge of His ways, as He is preparing us for His soon, triumphant return. There is so much going on that we can hardly keep track of, let alone understand it all. So, dear Holy Spirit is pouring more and more knowledge and understanding into God’s people, through prophets and preachers and praying people all over the world.

For example, the first verse of today’s psalm declares, “The heavens proclaim the glory of God, the skies display His craftsmanship”. Is it any wonder that the insights gained from astronomers studying data from the Hubble Telescope and inter-

planetary probes is leading more and more of them to reluctantly concede that galaxies couldn't have originated from any "natural", evolutionary processes? Consider the new insights to be gained by the just launched James Webb Space Telescope, the largest and most sensitive telescope ever put up in known human history. As of last Monday, it had reached its planned orbit, successfully unfolded to its operational configuration with its mirrors moved out from their launch positions. Now cooling to its operational temperature, after about five more months of testing and calibration, it will begin peering into distant space with a sensitivity and resolution some 100 times greater than the Hubble. Imagine what scientists will discover then. At some point, they'll essentially see something that tells them that "Jesus Christ is Lord and Creator".

Hear God speak in the Old Testament lesson in Jeremiah 1:5: "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as My prophet to the nations". If we need a Biblical injunction against the abominable evil of abortion, here is one of many. It's clear that a human being begins at the instant of conception. That yet-to-be-born baby's life, potentialities and destiny, have already been poured into it at that same instant. It matters not one whit how it was conceived. Whether from the love of a mother and father, or from tragic acts of violence such as rape and torture, still the baby is endowed by his or her heavenly Father and Creator with all the same rights as every other human being ever con-

ceived, created and blessed with life on this earth, no matter how long it lives. Which is why we observe Sanctity of Life Sunday, near the anniversary of the catastrophic Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling which somehow discovered in the United States Constitution a “right” for all women to murder their babies at any stage of pregnancy. This annual observance causes us to refocus and remember again that we must pray for the reversal of this ruling, that all abortions permanently cease in America.

In Jeremiah 1:9-10, again God speaks directly, “Look, I have put My words in your mouth! Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms. Some you must uproot and tear down, destroy and overthrow. Others you must build up and plant”. Consider the implications. God has delegated great authority and power to a mere teenager. But with that responsibility and power came immense suffering. For the power given him changed the course of nations, it did not personally benefit Jeremiah. For that is the way God works. God needs nothing. And He certainly has no need of anything that would in any way “benefit” Him. He is God. What could possibly “benefit” Him? He is the great “other”. There isn’t a selfish “bone” in His Body! Likewise, eventually there won’t any such selfishness in any of us either!

For as we read in I Corinthians 12 and 13, we are all parts of the one body of Christ as He works through us to accomplish His will on the earth. For now, we live, serve and work by faith, enjoying only fleeting moments of blissful union with His glory. But

when Lord Jesus returns, our union with Him will be complete, total, and everlasting. And how great a wedding celebration and banquet that will be! In this passage, we're taught that, among many, many others, Lord Jesus, Head of the Church, has appointed apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, leaders, tongue talkers, etc. Since that's the case, then how is it that for centuries the church almost entirely lost these vital body "parts"? Whys notwithstanding, they are being raised up again and the church is only gradually starting to seek them out. Without these body "parts", we're not whole and can't effectively administer the spheres of influence that Holy Spirit has delegated authority to each and every one of us. Yes, that means you. For I can guarantee that none of us can ever walk in the same shoes as any one else! This is a part of the crescendo that God is orchestrating in time and space in our day preparing us for His return. As Paul testified in I Corinthians 13:11, "When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child", so, too most of us are still small children of God, not even older children. We must be growing up in the Lord, and daily learning how to become adults in His Kingdom and His service. For we're all in the service! The service of the Lord Jesus' Everlasting Kingdom.

Speaking of His Kingdom, proclaimed near wherever He went on the earth, note His acts as recorded in Luke 4. At all the synagogues He read the scheduled lectionary Bible readings for every Sabbath worship gathering in the year. He preached at

every opportunity, then He demonstrated the Kingdom's nearness by healing people and delivering them from unclean spirits. There were so many of these spirit "varmint" around in those days. But what about now? Where did they go? Well, nowhere! They're still here! And it's up to us to cast them out of people. Including ourselves. Most of us are older, and some have lived with camouflaged spirits for so long that we no longer distinguish them from our self identity. But do a careful comparison of the fruit of Holy Spirit, like as listed in Galatians 5:22—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control—with our own behavior, are there times we fall way, way short of those Godly virtues? If consistently so, we may well be under the influence of one or more unclean spirits.

Just to be clear, unclean spirits are not fallen angels. Our Lord taught us in Matthew 12:43 and Luke 11:24 these unclean spirits are the disembodied spirits of the nephilim spoken of in Genesis 6, the hybrid demigods, angel and human offspring that were the giants, the titans, the so-called gods of so many ancient civilizations. These spirits lost their bodies when God sent the worldwide flood in Noah's day. Since then, they seek out bodies in which to physically move—our bodies. Remind you of the many stories often heard of so-called alien abductions?

All these, we, His mighty warriors, are to engage and defeat in battle as He makes His return. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:12, "we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but

against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places”. Because as John 3:16 says, “God so loved the *world*, that He gave His only begotten Son”. Christ Jesus’, Savior of the *World*, came to save not only people, but the whole of creation as well, from the evil sin of rebellion that corrupted God’s perfect and totally beautiful creation. When He went to Peter’s house, healed Peter’s mother-in-law of a high fever, He also healed many others, including many who were ‘possessed by demons; and the demons came out at His command, shouting, “You are the Son of God!”’ The demons knew Who Lord Jesus was, but they didn’t know why He’d come.

This is all part of the crescendo of understanding and knowledge that Father God is giving His people in these final days before Christ Jesus comes again to lead the final vanquishing of all that the devil and his minions have built over the millennia since Adam’s and Eve’s fall into sin. In that light, what we’re facing right now in America is but a practice run for what we’ll be fighting by the power of Holy Spirit at Armageddon. As Rabbi Jonathan Cahn has noted, the parallels between ancient Israel’s fall into apostasy and America today are uncanny and serve as blaring sirens and flashing warning lights for us to avoid the same collapse. Yet, this time God is writing a new ending to that story! We just have to cooperate with Him. Report for our prayer duty, and let Him work through us!

