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2026/53.4

The Ark &
The Cross
8 pages

III. The Cross: "Darkness over all the earth"

Matt. 27: 45, Mark 15: 33, & Luke 23: 44

In Termination
Future Titled

As we have reached the conclusion of 'Section II', we must have come to the realisation that, on the one hand, the Righteous, Just, and Holy God could not tolerate the then prevailing wickedness of humankind. He therefore decreed that the answer lies in the extinction of the entire human race, but on the other hand, God who is also Gracious, Loving, and Merciful, has orchestrated the preparation of the Ark, "to keep them alive", *Gen. 6:20*, and thus He has spared all life on Earth, in general, and humanity, in particular.

In like manner, humankind is once again racing very speedily towards eternal damnation by the same Righteous, Just, and Holy God, and the Earth, which the human race has totally 'abused', is now condemned to extinction, *vide infra*, however, by the Grace, Love, and Mercy of God The Father, He has prepared another 'Ark of Salvation', which brings us to the pivotal event in the history of the world, "for God so loved the world" that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life", *John 3:16*. For genuinely God "will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth", *1 Tim. 2:4*, so much so that at the incarnation of the Son of God on Earth: "the people which sat in **darkness** saw great **Light**"; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death **Light** is sprung up", *Mat. 4:16*.

The Crucifixion of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ, His redemptive death, and His glorious resurrection is a subject that is so dear to my heart, which is covered, *in extenso*, in another article entitled: 'What is the Hour?'

* Crucifixion is a subject that cannot be covered in a short space, it warranted a devoted paper in its own right. However, in brief, the torture of nailing, the agony of muscle pain and the gravitational effect of hanging on a wooden beam cause a very slow death by dehydration, hypovolaemic shock, acidosis, dysrhythmias, heart failure, pulmonary embolism, and sepsis from nail sites or the usual accompanying scourging. All of these leads to exhaustion but as the whole-body weight is being supported by the outstretched arms thus causing difficulty in breathing and eventually asphyxiation. And that's what makes crucifixion the most inhumane method of punishment, other than being eaten alive by purposefully starved animals for predation. The term 'excruciating' to describe the extremes of pain is literally derived from: 'out of crucifying'. Notwithstanding, it was the method of capital punishment used in the dark ages of the Roman times, which is recently revived by the retrograde cruel and inhumane societies, e.g., Islamic States, Saudi Arabia and Iran and the totalitarian regimes, e.g., North Korea, China and Russia.

* All Biblical "quotations" are from the Authorised King James Version – *KJV*

I. The place of 'Hosanna' in the A&A Rite Ritual:

I never tire from expressing my deep admiration for the skillful compilers of our beloved Masonic Ritual, over the years, more especially for the very clever usage of some celebrated words which are not only quite memorable but are also very meaningful in imparting the important message contained therein, the usage of the word '*Hosanna*' is no exception.

The only time "*Hosanna*" is communicated is in the Second Point in the 18^o Ceremony, after the candidate for Perfection has completed his journey from darkness to light, on two occasions, as follows:

a. As an observant, on the first occasion, when all the assembled brethren rise; and in time with the Sovereign, all give the first Sign, saying the word "*Hosanna*" seven times, to the rhythm of the knocks of the degree.

b. Shortly thereafter, the Candidate is decorated with his Collar and Jewel, and the Signs and Words are communicated and explained in full.

The first Sign is appropriately called the 'Sign of Adoration', in compliance with the modern meaning of the word *Hosanna*. That said, in view of the other historical aspect in the meaning of the word, namely as a plea to: 'Save', which will be discussed in details in the next section, suffice it to say, at this stage, that it may explain why at the conclusion of every opening of our Chapters, the Sovereign always gives the first part of the second Sign saying, as if in a plea: "Save, we beseech Thee, O God in Heaven, Creator and Sovereign of all things, us Thine unworthy children".

II. The Etymology and Exact Meaning:

Not all the Linguistic scholars are fully in agreement with regards to the exact origin of the word *Hosanna* as we know it in the English Language. It is believed to be derived from the Greek or Aramaic word: (H)Osanna as it is also known in Latin, as well as in the Arabic Tongue, which is considered to be the transliteration of the Hebrew word: *Hōshi'āh nnā* or *Hoshana*.

Etymologically, it comes from two Hebraic words: '*yasha*' which means 'to save, rescue or deliver' and '*anna*' which means 'please, I beseech'. Hence,

Hosanna is therefore often translated “*save now*”, “*please, save us*” or “*Oh Save us, we pray*”.

Interestingly, ‘*yasha*’ also forms the root of the name *Yeshua*, the Hebraic name of our Lord, which means ‘*to save*’: “And thou shalt call His name **JESUS**, ‘i.e. *Yeshua*’, for He shall **save** His people from their sins”, **Matt. 1:21**. And as you may undoubtedly recollect, from the article ‘*Emmanuel*’: His actual name in Aramaic, His mother tongue, is ‘*Jeheshuah*’, pronounced *Yeheshua*, which, quite significantly, means in full: *Jehovah is Salvation*.

If, however, as some scholars believe, and lead us so to understand, that the Hebrew root of the word ‘*yasha*’ comes from a different verb tense which means: ‘*to cause or to bring about salvation*’, in which tense **Hosanna** clearly becomes a command, or rather a plea, to cause or to bring about salvation, and therefore this ‘old’ interpretation remains extant.

Hence, it is not surprising that in the **KJV***, probably the most accurate translation, **Ps. 118:25** reads: “*Save Now, I beseech thee, O Lord. O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity*”! There are, however, many alternative translations: e.g. “*Oh save, Jehovah ...*”*, which basically confirms it to be a plea, exactly as intended in the original usage in the Scripture.

In fact, it must be noted that all the phrases that are in use in the English translations, namely: “*Save now*”, “*Save us, we pray*”, or “*Oh save*”, when spoken in Hebrew do actually sound like, or very close to, **Hosanna**.

III. The Biblical Origin and relevant Contexts:

In order to establish the relevant context of all the Biblical references, it is important to make three rather significant observations, as follows:

1. Contrary to popular perception, the word **Hosanna**, in the N.T., was in fact used on two separate occasions and not just once:

a. First, as it is generally well known, it was bellowed by the multitude which joined the Lord Jesus on His way to Jerusalem, on the occasion of His Triumphal entry there, during the passion week leading to His death on the Cross.

* As well as in almost all other concurrent or contemporary English translations, especially the New International Version (NIV).

✱ As in J. N. Darby Bible Translation.

b. The second, which is usually overlooked, when it was uttered in the Temple, by the children only, which prompted a critical reaction from the Chief Priests and Scribes, and the Lord's response with quite a telling rebuke to them, as detailed in **Matt 21 : 12 - 16**.

2. The word **Hosanna** is concocted with two other references:

a. "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord", **Ps. 118:26**, as reverberated in the words of praise and adoration which were spoken by the multitude.

b. "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass", **Zech. 9:9**, which was fulfilled by the action of the Lord Himself, in His riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

3. The original Hebraic and Aramaic words for **Hosanna**, i.e. *hoshana* or *Osanna* respectively, must have been known to, and well-rehearsed by, the gathering crowd of the time, being a direct quote from **Ps. 118:25**: "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord", where the context was that of a plea.

Accordingly, although the old 'pleading' interpretation, based on the above, does not fully explain the occurrence in the Gospels, where the context is that of celebration and jubilation, but the textual connections of 'praising' will become obvious *vide infra*.

Let us then look, in more details, at the six references in the N.T. where the word **Hosanna** is found, five of these are in two Synoptic Gospels, namely those According to St. Matthew and St. Mark, and the sixth, which is even more distinct, in the Gospel According to St. John, as follows:

Three times in the Gospel According to St. Matthew:

- "The multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying: **Hosanna** to the Son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; **Hosanna** in the highest", **Matt 21:9**.
- "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the Temple, and saying: **Hosanna** to the Son of David; they were sore displeased (i.e. they were indignant)", **Matt 21:15**.

Twice in the Gospel According to St. Mark:

- “They that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying: **Hosanna**; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: **Hosanna** in the highest”, **Mark 11:9 & 10**.

Once in the Gospel According to St. John:

- “Much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, **Hosanna**: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord”, **John 12:12-13**.

P.S. In the Gospel According to St. Luke:

- Although the word **Hosanna** is not specifically mentioned in Luke’s Gospel, therein is the reference to that same theme: “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest”, **Luke 19:38**.

It is quite obvious that there is a shift from the context of ‘pleading’ for salvation in the O.T., to the context of ‘praising’ and jubilation in the N.T.

This is clearly exemplified by the Lord Himself, when He unceremoniously cleansed the Temple by driving the moneychangers and those who were buying and selling items for their own profit, in “His house of prayer” and as the children followed Him in the Temple crying out: “**Hosanna** to the son of David”, He graciously commended those children as He was scorned by the chief priests and the scribes, whom He rebuked quoting from, or rather paraphrasing, **Ps. 8:2**: “Yea; have ye never read: out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected **praise**?”, **Matt 21:16**. Hence, the Lord here had certainly emphasized the element of ‘praise’ in the outpouring of the word **Hosanna**.

In like manner, on the occasion of the triumphant entrance of the Lord Jesus into Jerusalem “riding upon an ass and a colt the foal of an ass”, one of the few events which is recorded in all four Gospels, there it was clearly a joyous celebration, and ever since the word ‘**hosanna**’ has been used as an expression of adoration which could be almost translated: ‘praise God’.

On the one hand, it was the tradition, which is still observed amongst the Orthodox Jewish community, during Sukkot, a 7-day feast which is meant to be held in Tents or Booths, *aka* The Feast of Tabernacles, as in the olden days, **Lev. 23:33-43**, wherein "on the first day, ye shall take the boughs of goodly trees, **branches of palm trees** And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days". Therein the 'Psalms of Praise', **Psalms 113 - 118**, which are also known as *Hallel* *, are read or recited, culminating on the seventh and last day with the '*Hoshana Rabba*' or the Great Hosanna, as they shout "Save now", "Oh Save" or "Please, save us" i.e. *Hoshana*, **Ps. 118:25**, as an additional prayer is specifically included.

The context, therefore, is: **A plea for salvation!**

On the other hand, the gathering multitude, "when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem" they likewise "**took branches of palm trees** and went forth to meet Him", as He triumphantly entered Jerusalem, and there and then they hailed Him "and cried, **Hosanna**: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord", **John 12:12&13**, and here St. John is recording, but slightly paraphrasing the prophetic statement: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord", **Ps. 118:26**.

We also read that "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet (*Zechariah*), saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass", **Matt. 21:4&5**, and here it is clearly paraphrasing **Zech. 9:9**: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having **salvation**; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass".

So, '**Hosanna**' was cried out loudly in public, for the first time, in praise and celebration, and it still forms the basis of what, in Christendom, is known as Palm Sunday, which is observed until this day in words and in deeds.

In this context, it is: **The shout of jubilation!**

Alas, this event took place exactly five days before the Passover, during the week leading to His crucifixion and death, when in less than one week, that same mob, "cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him, ... We have no king but Caesar", **John 19:15**. They themselves, quite surprisingly, concluded that: "His blood be on us and on our children", **Matt. 27:25**. A

rather poignant prediction of the reality that is still ravaging 'The Nation'

* *Hallel*: is the Hebraic root of another well-beloved word: '*Hallelujah*' meaning: Praise the Lord.

even until this generation, and will continue until He returns in His second advent, at the restoration of the Millennial Kingdom of peace, only then "the daughter of Jerusalem" will genuinely sing their *Hosannas*.

Finally, by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the combination of *plea* and *praise* is quite clearly observed in two consecutive verses in *Ps. 118*, namely: *v. 25* represents the supplication for salvation and deliverance, followed by the shift to celebration and jubilation in *v. 26*.

All the Gospel references seem to be quoting the prophetic statements of *Ps. 118:25 & 26*, in one form or another, either verbatim or as paraphrases, with a variety of embellishments, as follows:

Matthew: "*Hosanna* to the Son of David *Hosanna* in the highest."

Mark: "Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: *Hosanna* in the highest"

Luke: "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest"

John: "*Hosanna*, Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord".

Is it any wonder that the populace, though quoting from the Scriptures, was rather confused and mixed up? Even those closest to the Lord, as St. John recalls: "These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him", *John 12:15*.

Like wise, in our case "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away", *1 Cor, 13:9-10*. In like manner, "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us", *Rom. 8:26*, and this leads us now, as Christians, to the Spiritual applications of the word *Hosanna* in our time.

IV. The Spiritual Applications:

As we have already observed, in *Psalms 118*, there is a remarkable shift from concern to confidence, the original plea of *v.25*: "Save now, I beseech thee", which, I may remind you, sounded like '*Hosanna*' in Hebrew, has in *v.26*, instantly changed to a proclamation of Salvation: "Blessed he that cometh in the name of the Lord", which may also be easily considered as a "thank you".

And as *Hosanna* preceded the O.T. quotations, either by a direct reference: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord", *Ps. 118:26*, or by the contextual inference: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass", *Zech. 9:9*, accordingly, it has ever since become a shout of praise or adoration.

In like manner, in the 'Christian' context, it first refers to a cry expressing an appeal for Divine assistance, when we feel, as it were, that we have come to the end of ourselves and we need God to intervene, following which we return with our grateful thanks for His intervention.

Spiritually speaking, *Hosanna* exemplifies the transition from pleading with God for action, to thanking Him for the action taken, these are two separate places in our relation with God. The one is not better than the other but we need the former to reach the latter, however, this mindset shift will empower us to connect with God in prayer in time of need and in worship and adoration more often. We can approach God through supplication or in worship all the same.

In other words, when we are at a place where we need God's intervention, we can plead with God "please save us", exactly as intended in the original use of the word "*Hosanna*". And when we are connected with God and feel like we are overflowing, we may shout praise in jubilation, this is also a proper use of "*Hosanna*", and it is applicable, not only in our Personal walk with God, but also Masonically, Nationally and even Globally.

In conclusion, quoting the very famous words in the well-known anaphoric refrain: "I have a dream", by the gifted orator Martin Luther King, Jr., in his rhetorical speech on the steps of Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C., on 28th August 1963, nearly three score years ago, I too have a dream, but paraphrasing it into, "**I have a plea, that one day..., I have a plea today**", in the following four pleas:

1. To every individual:

'I have a plea, that one day all my friends, all my family and loved ones, and all my acquaintances might come to know The Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, I have a plea today'.

And together with the Lord Jesus Himself I pray: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent", *John 17:3*, that we might all be able to sing the '*Hosannas*' no longer as a plea but in praise and rejoicing in the true impact of the act of our Saviour on the cross of Calvary, where each one of us had once stood crying to God for salvation, and consequently this will generate in us all an eternal gratitude as we give thanks for what He had done for us.

2. To every 'Christian' Freemason:

'I have a plea, that one day every professing Trinitarian Christian Freemason, will become a member of the beloved Ancient and Accepted Rite, I have a plea today'.

It is the one Order in Freemasonry which wrought "*ordo ab chaos*", for when Masonry was de-Christianised in the mid-eighteenth century, it was the A&A Rite that brought 'Order out of Chaos', early in the nineteenth. And, thankfully, our Supreme Council for England and Wales, in conjunction with the Northern Jurisdiction of the USA, remains the protector of the virtues and principles of Christianity upon which this Institution was founded, namely: Faith in the Lord Jesus, who is "The Way, the Truth and the Life", *John 14:6*, as that virtue which leads from earth to Heaven, Hope, as the virtue which support us when oppressed by shame and sorrow, and Charity as the perfection of every Christian virtue.

3. To the Nation:

'I have a plea, that one day this Nation, which was once a 'Christian' country, will return to fear and revere God, I have a plea today'.

And as I join with St. Paul, the Apostle: "I Would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether, such as I am", *Acts 26:29*. That is what this Nation needs, to cry out to God for help against all the moral degradation, the violence, the hedonistic immorality, the shameful abuse and corruption, in order "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty", *1 Pet 2:2*.

4. To the whole World:

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of *Physical Cosmology* is expressed as the 'Big Bang', so that what started with a small singularity inflated over the subsequent billions of years to form the cosmos, which includes all the celestial bodies, namely: the stars, planets and moons, as well as the asteroids, meteors and comets, *etc....*, in the form of massive galaxies. Interestingly, the already expansive universe is said to be still expanding, before it will eventually implode.

However, even with today's best technology, approximately 85% of all matter in the universe remain undiscovered, it is quite appropriately given the hypothetical descriptive term: **Dark matter**, which is also thought to be associated with an unfalsifiable energy, also aptly named: **Dark energy**, that is said to contribute nearly 70% of the total energy in the currently 'observable' universe. In like manner, in the center of most of the galaxies there are supermassive **Black holes**.

You get the drift! We are literally still very much in the **dark** about this inscrutable universe, with major gaps in our knowledge. For therein are many 'known unknowns', which are things we know we don't know, and even more 'unknown unknowns', i.e., things we don't know we don't know.

It must also be recognised that our current knowledge is limited, it applies to the 'observable' Universe only, when the emitted light of the respective celestial bodies reaches the Earth and is detected either by one of the fixed terrestrial observatories or by some powerful orbital telescopes, e.g., The Hubble Space Telescope.

Bearing in mind that the distances involved are astronomical, which are measured in terms of light-years, and given that one light-year is a galactic distance equivalent to 5.88 trillion (5.88×10^{12}) miles, accordingly, and without stating the obvious, what is presently observed on earth, has in fact taken many light years to reach us, and thereby it must have already been in existence, at the very least, for a considerable length of time, indeed many billions of years. By way of an illustration, the light from the Sun, the nearest star to us, takes approximately 8 Minutes and 20 Seconds to reach the earth, which is only about 93 Million miles away, hence the sun is always actually risen 8 minutes and 20 seconds before the hour of sunrise is recorded. Likewise, all the galaxies we now see have actually existed long before their light has reached us. It must, therefore, be appreciated that there is quite a lot more out there, still waiting to be discovered when more light eventually reaches the Earth.

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to be approximately **13.8 billion** (thousand million), **13,800,000,000** years. This is scientifically re-calculated with the more recent interpretation of the phenomenon of *microwave background radiation*, i.e., the 'echo' left over from the Big Bang, accordingly, the age of the universe is adjusted at **13.787 ± 0.02 billion** (only a mere ± 200 Million) years. This is confirmed further by the more modern Probe and Spacecraft missions, in particular the *Wilkinson Anisotropy Probe*, in **2001**, of NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) in partnership with the Johns Hopkins University of the USA, and subsequently, in **2013**, by the *Planck Spacecraft* of the ESA (European Space Agency).

On the other hand, the Scripture gives no details of the initial creative event, the so-called Big Bang, neither does it record any data for determining how long ago the Earth was created, however, under Divine inspiration, it clearly indicates that the Creator God is eternal in nature, for He is indeed "the Ancient of days", *Dan. 7:9*. And Moses, the man of God and writer of the Book of Genesis, within the five Books known as the Pentateuch, in the only Psalm* coined to his name, recorded: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the world", even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God", *Ps. 90:2*, who "hath appointed, His Son, heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds", *Heb. 1:2*, of whom we also read: "In the beginning was The Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made", *John 1:1&3*.

The universe is not only many billions of years old; it is also a vastly expansive space which contains all of everything in existence, the exact size of which is likewise unknowable. It is arranged in innumerable galaxies, that

* Or probably the group of 11 Psalms, from 90 to 100

* In the Greek language, there are two words for 'world', namely, *kosmos* and *oikumenē*: *kosmos* which means the order or arrangement of the universe, but it also refers to the beauty of that order, from where we derive two English words: *cosmotic* which refers to the universe as a whole, and *cosmetic*, the process of beautifying e.g., plastic or cosmetic surgical procedures. And *oikumenē* which signifies the inhabited Earth, politically-speaking, it has reference throughout the N.T. to the Roman Empire or the Roman 'world'. The 'world' also signifies the universality of something, e.g., as in the 'world' of the economy or the 'world' of Arts, Science, or sport, etc... Finally, 'world' has an 'ethical' dimension: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world", *1 John 2:16*. Likewise, in reference to 'worldliness' we describe the state under which Satan has organized, or rather disorganized, the 'world' of the unbelieving humankind, upon the cosmic principles of: force, greed, selfishness, ambition and pleasure, which has materially caused the downfall of humanity.

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'I have a plea that one day the entire 7.8 Bn inhabitants of the planet earth might cry out for salvation, I have a plea today'.

There has never been a time, more than the present, when humankind, in its entirety, has such a rude awakening, and we ought, as the whole of the human race, to expeditiously and collectively return to God, who is ready to intervene, only if we call upon Him, "For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation", **2 Cor. 6:2**. Likewise, "we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now", but it shall also "be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God", **Rom. 8:21 & 22**.

In the light of the above, the only hope for the world's current state of affairs, under the immense global impact of the COVID-19 crisis is a return to true godliness. This submicroscopic menace of Coronavirus, although reportedly is now less virulent it is still very prevalent with a serious threat imposed on life and stock. It has already affected, at the time of writing on 31st August 2020, in excess of 25.5 M people, and continue to rise by more than 1M cases every four days, with a frightening randomness about who and when it strikes down. Regrettably, there have been well over 850,000 deaths, a daily average of more than 6K people, since the beginning of the pandemic which started in Wuhan in China on 31st December 2019.

The devastation continues, the global stock markets are in freefall and the world economy is in serious turmoil. People's lives are shattered and the sense of despair is prevalent. We are far from any sort of triumph over this brutal disease. There is no effective universally accepted treatment and as yet no vaccine has been found. Normality is a distant memory; I can't even remember the last time I shook the hands with anyone.

But we know that there is a redeemer, if only the world may turn to Him in a genuine plea for help, as the Lord saith for all those who turn to Him "in an acceptable time I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages" **Isa. 49:8**. Believe me faith conquers, and the whole world may then return to Him again. In the former **Hosanna** works as the plea for salvation and in the later it is a celebration in adoration with praise and thanksgiving, and the time will come, very soon, when "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" **Phil. 2:10-11**.

is estimated to be at least **100 billion**, each of which consists of well over **100 billion** stars and planets. By way of an example, in our own galaxy, the Milky Way, which is dwarfed by many other much larger galaxies, and is about **100,000** light-years across, wherein there is a minimum of **100 billion** stars, formed into planetary systems, and each star is having at least one planet orbiting it, e.g., there are **8** planets in our solar system, in addition to dwarf planets, moons, asteroids, and meteors, therefore, there is potentially well over **200 billion** celestial bodies in our galaxy alone, which when replicated to all of the presumed **100 billion** galaxies in the 'observable' universe, we can easily come up with a modest estimate of something in excess of one billion trillion, *aka* sextillion, that is for the mathematically minded, one thousand (10^3) raised to the 7th power, i.e., 10^{21} , that's a lot of zeros, oh yes **21** or to put it graphically: **1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000** celestial bodies.

Quite staggering, really!

Notwithstanding, for the purpose of this Article, we shall shortly narrow our lenticular focus on just one planet, our own Blue/Green Planet, and on just one of its main inhabitants, the human race. Suffice it to say, not only because the former is equally fascinating, but more importantly because the latter is singled out for God's favour. Initially, "the Earth was without form and void, *tohu wa tohu*, and darkness was upon the face of the deep", *Gen. 1:2*, and not unlike any of the other sextillion celestial bodies in the universe, it was aimlessly hurtling along, but whilst travelling endlessly through space, the Milky Way galaxy was pulling the Earth with it, which was accurately positioned in its periphery, well away from the imploding Black Hole.

The age of the Earth is scientifically very accurately calculated, it is reported to be approximately **4.54 Billion** years old. And on the 4th phase of the creation, it came into orbit around the sun, a star that is also scientifically proven to be around **4.5 Billion** years old, nearly as old as the Earth. It came into existence when "God said: Let there be **lights** in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the Earth; and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater to rule the day, and the lesser to rule the night ... And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the Earth, ... and to divide the **Light** from the **darkness**", *Gen. 1:14-18*.

The Earth is perfectly positioned at exactly the appropriate distance

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The Earth is perfectly positioned at exactly the appropriate distance

from the sun, namely: 92,955,807 miles, or 148,729,291 km, as its source of **Light** and to give it a precisely calculated supply of heat and energy, for if it were just a few miles closer, it would have become scorching hot and uninhabitable and a few miles farther away makes it ice-cold and unable to sustain life. It is also tilted on its revolutionary axis at the precise angle of 23.5°, essential to cause the change of seasons. It travels at a staggering break-neck speed of nearly 67,000 miles per hour (107,200 kph), that's almost 20 miles (32 km) per second *, and covers nearly 584 Million miles (934.4 M km) every year.

The Earth is also provided with a very rich supply of life-giving water, 71% of its surface, and the finely balanced life-preserving atmosphere, including the protective Ozone shield, for now at least. And so, God have set the scene for 'life' to begin on the Earth. And at the end stage of the 6th 'phase' things were made ready for the grand finale of the creation, when "God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... and So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him" *Gen. 1:26 & 27*. And thus, the Earth which in the *physical* sense is no longer *tohu wa-tohu*, had become an orderly habitable place, which was prepared to be occupied by a Godlike *spiritual* creature, *vide infra*.

In conclusion:

As we are fascinated by the creation, we cannot but join David in conceding to the Omnipotent God, and confess that: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it", *Ps. 139:6*. The aforementioned mind-numbing astronomical figures, coupled with the logical sequence in the creation of the universe, in general, and planet Earth, in particular, cannot conceivably be there by chance, it indicates the Divine design which is demonstrated by the perfect harmony in the creation. It provides a seamless reconciliation of the Scripture narrative with the parallel explanation of the scientific discoveries.

*In fine may I join David: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" *Ps. 8:3 & 4*. This is surely the logical and progressive question which is herewith proposed for the upcoming sections, in search for the appropriate answers!*

* Only a 'fraction' faster than Usain *Lightning* Bolt, the fastest man on Earth and the world record holder of 100 m in 9.58 sec, i.e., almost 10.44 meters per second vs. 20 miles per second!

12

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I. The Creation: "Tohu wa-bohu", Gen. 1:2

May I begin by making the following 7 incontrovertible statements:

(1) First, it is certainly undeniable that any discussion on the subject of The creation will always be extremely difficult. The unfathomable mysteries of the Universe are too vast to comprehend, and in order to appreciate its immeasurable enormity, one just needs to extensively research voluminous tomes and just barely scratch the surface of only a very few amazing and fascinating facts, that are unceasingly upgraded with new discoveries.

(2) Secondly, thus far the scientists, particularly physicists, have always considered that the physical world, and indeed the whole of the visible universe, is governed by the four pillars of the 'four forces of nature', namely: gravity, electromagnetism, the weak and the strong nuclear forces, which are all quite fascinating indeed, however, science is still endlessly re-discovering these 'old' forces as well as unravel 'new' ones, e.g., the recent discovery of the so-called 'fifth' force of nature, the muons, or the mysterious $X17$, and more especially the precise 115° -degree-angle of decaying Helium, to name but a few of previously unknown facts. Likewise, the recent confirmation of the existence of Higgs Boson at CERN Institute, reflected the enormous gaps in human knowledge, it has ironically been dubbed, even amongst the all-knowing scientists, the "God's particle"!

(3) Thirdly, it is my firm belief that the Holy Scripture is the infallible Divine revelation to humankind, and although it neither claims any scientific disquisition nor it is meant to be a historical document, nevertheless, it is authoritative and in the original words, is without error, for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works", *2 Tim. 3:16&17*, so much so that if correctly interpreted, rightly understood, and faithfully applied "the Word of God be not blasphemed", *Titus 2:5*. Masonically-speaking, 'it is the unerring standard of truth and justice' and 'were we conversant therein and adherent thereto, we cannot err'. Therefore, I would like to affirm my strictest adherence to it.

(4) Fourthly, it is not my intention to enter now into an endless and often futile debate regarding the 'creation vs. evolution' of humankind, that's for a subsequent discussion, suffice it to say that the human race is indeed

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Let us, therefore, take an emblematic journey from the beginning of time, as far back as we conceivably can, to consider in some detail how the *Heavenly Divine Light* has systematically wrought '*ordo ab chao*' in timely changes amidst the physical and spiritual '*tohu wa bohu*' of the chaotic *Earthly darkness*, and from thence, metaphorically, hitch-hike a *Celestial* ride to watch the predicted end of the world, in order to contemplate on how that same beatific *Light*, in the very near future, will ultimately undergo the long-awaited spiritual regeneration of the contemporary faithless humanity.

I hereby solicit your indulgence to consider the following coordinated and fully integrated stepwise series of 7 sequelae:

- I. **The Creation:** "*Tohu wa-Bohu*"*
- II. **The Flood:** "It grieved God at His heart"
- III. **The Cross:** "Darkness over all the earth"
- IV. **The Rapture:** The 'darkness' is left behind
- V. **The Kingdom:** A whole Millennium of Light & Peace
- VI. **The Promise:** "The new heavens and a new earth"
- VII. **The Finale:** Spiritual Regeneration and '*ordo ab chao*'

* In my mother tongue, Egyptian Arabic, The Hebrew words: '*tohu wa bohu*' sound very much like the words for '*lost and bragging*', which reminded me of the following anecdotal story:

One summer evening, as a 4½-year old, while on holidays at Alexandria, a lovely coastal Mediterranean city in north Egypt, my very dear and caring late mother reluctantly entrusted me to my older siblings and few cousins, I think 8 of them in total, and as we were probably playing 'hide and seek', on the beautiful corniche, I was somehow separated from the group and got *lost*. And! Thankfully, after quite a few hours, I was found, to my relief, and the relief of my distraught mother. I was informed, later on in life, that I was unable to speak for days, neither did my parents, almost certainly from the state of shock. The moral of the story is that when one is *lost* there is no room for any *bragging*, in like manner, as humanity is currently lost in spiritual darkness, *vide infra*, there should be no place for bragging, or rather literally, *tohu wa'laā (and not) bohu!*

P.S. It is a well-known fact that one begins to build a lasting memory store at the age of 4 to 5 years, and in my case, this quite stressful event constituted my earliest memory, in particular how it was very *dark* when I was found kneeling down in prayer somewhere behind a 'tent'. The rest, as they say, is history.

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made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament **Heaven** *. And the evening and the morning were the second **day**", or rather the second **phase** ~, *Gen. 1:6-8*,

Notwithstanding, the word 'Heaven' in Scripture, as well as in the other world philosophies, religions, and even popular culture, has a few and variable connotations. It is considered to be the highest, brightest and holiest place, and often used to describe God's dwelling place, "Thus saith the LORD, the heaven is my throne", *Isa 66:1*, with all His Angelic hosts it is also where the believer's "spirit shall return unto God who gave it", *Eccles. 12:7*. In contrast 'hell', or *sheol*, is regarded as the lowest and darkest place, where the Devil and his armies are said to reside, and the spirits of all unbelievers "shall be cast out into **outer darkness**; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth", *Matt. 8:12, 22:13, and 25:30*. Consider what David, aka the sweet Psalmist of Israel, *2 Sam. 23:1*, had once said: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell (conceptually, down below), behold, Thou art there", *Ps. 139:7&8*. Accordingly, over the generations an imagery became etched on the human mind to elucidate that 'other world', or the world of spirits, in the form of a series of domes, whither that which is above is called heaven, and that which is below, is labelled as hell, from whence is derived the expression: 'the underworld', that is, of course, in the moral rather than in a spatial sense. This imagery eventually developed the concept of 'Seven' or even 'ten', in some cultures, heavens, which is, in fact, only a figment of human imagination, which has no resemblance to reality nor does it have any support whatsoever from the Holy Scriptures.

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Let us attempt to unpack what is involved in these short seven 'loaded' and powerful words: "God created the heavens and the earth", *Gen. 1:1*. But first, it is worthy to observe that, in addition to the this opening verse of the

* The etymology of the Hebrew word *shamayim* is composed of 2 syllables, namely: *shama*, meaning sky or *loft*, and *mayim*, meaning water, and thus in *Gen. 1:7*, the area above the earth was filled by sky-water, *shamayim*, and the earth below was covered by sea-water, *yammim*.

~ God is not limited by our 24-hour 'day', accordingly, I have advisedly used the term '*phase*', or period, rather than the Biblical '*day*', in order to avoid any confusion with the earth's solar day, which has only come to existence after the creation of the sun in the 4th *phase*. Moreover "be not ignorant of this one thing, that one 'day' is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day", *2 Pet. 3:8*. That said, in the Genesis narrative each '*day*' covers an entire period in consequential work of the creation, to which the concept of 'evolution' is coined.

①

Proof Copy

Tohu wa Bohu ①

- I Creation Tohu wa Bohu
- II Flood
- III Crossings
- IV Raphe
- V Kingdom
- VI Promise
- VII Finale

"ORDO AB CHAO"

'Tohu wa Bohu'

The case for a 'New' Covenant, Heb 8:8 *
and for the 'New' Heavens and a 'New' Earth!

Isa. 65:17 & 66:22, 2 Pet. 3:13, and Rev. 21:1*

V: III :: Bro. Dr. Joseph F. K. Marzouk, FRCS(C/Th), 33

Inspector General Designate in Charge, Worcestershire District, July 2021

① Prologue

Whereas the Latin Title: "*ordo ab chao*" is generally quite a familiar expression, which signifies in English '*order out of chaos*', it is particularly well known to us, in the Ancient and Accepted (A&A) Rite, being inscribed on every 18° Certificate of the Supreme Council of the XXVIII Degree of the A&A Rite for England and Wales and its Districts and Chapters overseas, which must always be duly explained at every presentation thereof. The Hebraic Subtitle: "*tohu wa-bohu*", which means '*without form and void*', however, might be an intriguing assertion. It comes from the 2nd verse of the 1st Chapter of the Book of Genesis: "And the earth was *without form and void*; and *darkness* was upon the face of the deep", Gen. 1:2. This universal original *physical darkness* was expelled when "God said: Let there be *light*; and there was light", Gen. 1:3, and the formless '*chaotic*' scene of the void and bleak emptiness of the Earth was put to '*order*' by Him who "upholds all things by the word of His power", Heb. 1:3, and has chosen the Earth as "*His* footstool", Isa 66:1, for He predestinated to tread it, in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

The theme of the initial *physical darkness* intertwined with Divinely-introduced material *light* is subsequently replicated in undulating cycles of *spiritual darkness* within the human heart, which mercifully is likewise interwoven with the Divinely-instituted *heavenly light*. Indeed, this cyclical theme is the inspiration for the subject matter under discussion in this 'short' Treatise, which is herewith summarised in the following 2 triads:

* All "quotations" are taken from the Revised King James Bible – *KJV*, aka The Authorised Version

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it was unavoidable in order to give the subject in hand the justice it deserves, however, if you consider that the discourse is unjustifiably curtailed, I trust that you will approve, it was so done in the interest of 'brevity'.

Let us, therefore, take an emblematic journey from the beginning of time, as far back as we conceivably can, to consider in some detail how the *Heavenly Divine Light* has systematically wrought '*ordo ab chao*' in timely changes amidst the physical and spiritual '*tohu wa bohu*' of the chaotic *Earthly darkness*, and from thence, metaphorically, hitch-hike a *Celestial* ride to watch the predicted end of the world, in order to contemplate on how that same beatific *Light*, in the very near future, will ultimately undergo the long-awaited spiritual regeneration of the contemporary faithless humanity.

I hereby solicit your indulgence to consider the following coordinated and fully integrated stepwise series of 7 sequelae:

- I. **The Creation:** "*Tohu wa-Bohu*"* ✓
- II. **The Flood:** "It grieved God at His heart"
- III. **The Cross:** "Darkness over all the earth"
- IV. **The Rapture:** The 'darkness' is left behind
- V. **The Kingdom:** A whole Millennium of Light & Peace
- VI. **The Promise:** "The new heavens and a new earth"
- VII. **The Finale:** Spiritual Regeneration and '*ordo ab chao*'

* In my mother tongue, 'Egyptian' Arabic, The Hebrew words: '*tohu wa bohu*' sound very much like the words for '*lost and bragging*', which reminded me of the following anecdotal story:

One summer evening, as a 4½-year old, while on holidays at Alexandria, a lovely coastal Mediterranean city in north Egypt, my very dear and caring late mother reluctantly entrusted me to my older siblings and few cousins, I think 8 of them in total, and as we were probably playing 'hide and seek', on the beautiful corniche, I was somehow separated from the group and got *lost*. Ah! Thankfully, after quite a few hours, I was found, to my relief, and the relief of my distraught mother. I was informed, later on in life, that I was unable to speak for days, neither did my parents, almost certainly from the state of shock. The moral of the story is that when one is *lost* there is no room for any *bragging*, in like manner, as humanity is currently lost in spiritual darkness, *vide infra*, there should be no place for bragging, or rather literally, *tohu wa'laā (and not) bohu!*

P.S. It is a well-known fact that one begins to build a lasting memory store at the age of 4 to 5 years, and in my case, this quite stressful event constituted my earliest memory, in particular how it was very *dark* when I was found kneeling down in prayer somewhere behind a 'tent'. The rest, as they say, is history.

P ③

the pinnacle of God's creation, being the only '*spiritual*' creature on the Earth, that is capable of an intellectual communication, not only with one another but also with the Almighty creator, who is likewise communicating with the human race in quite diverse manners, *vide infra*.

⑤ Fifthly, we will observe a common thread of widespread **darkness**, first encountered in the *physical* universe, which subsequently found its way, in the *spiritual* sense, within the human heart. In the case of the former, just look up the sky on a cloudless and moonless night, especially if away from urban light pollution, so as to appreciate how dark the universe actually is, but as for the latter, one only needs to tune in to any daily news bulletin or read the many printed sources to realise how awfully dark the human race had become, being capable of inconceivable atrocious acts of inhumanity and of such shocking and unbelievably evil deeds of incredible heinous crimes.

⑥ Sixthly, in a striking contrast, "God is **Light**, and in Him is no **darkness** at all", *1 John 1:5*. Indeed, He is altogether the source of light, for we know that "every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither is any shadow of turning", *James 1:17*. According to the Scripture, the very first act in the creation narrative was that: "God said: Let there be **light**, and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness", *Gen. 1:3 & 4*. It is not at all surprising that subsequently His light has invariably prevailed.

⑦ Finally, and most significantly, as the **light** of God had first overcome the **darkness** of the universe, which is lit up by the shimmering lights of the sextillion glittering stars, in like manner humankind is, collectively and individually, invited to be illumined by Him who says: "I am the **Light** of the World; he that followeth me shall not walk in **darkness** but shall have the light of life", *John 8:12*.

With this in mind, let us now, my dear friends, begin at the beginning:

I dare say you recollect the opening words of the creation narrative in the Scripture. "In the beginning God created the **heaven/s** * and the **earth**", *Gen. 1:1*, and that shortly afterwards, "God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God

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Scripture, correctly translated, there are many descriptive references of the 'Heavens', in the plural. In the *KJV*, the first is in *Deut. 10:14*: "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God", which was quoted, *verbatim*, by King Solomon in his prayer at the Dedication of the Temple at Jerusalem: "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" *1 Kings 8:27 and 2 Chron. 6:18*.

Nevertheless, there is only one explicit reference which mentions a numeral with respect to the heavens, it appears in the 2nd Epistle to the Church in *Corinth* and the Christians in the surrounding Province of *Achaia*, i.e., modern-day Greece, which was penned by the Apostle Paul whilst he was in *Macedonia*, around *AD 57*, probably influenced by the contemporaneous culture of the time and place, he wrote, almost certainly referring to himself: "I knew a man in Christ, above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God *only* knoweth; such an one caught up to the *third heaven*", *2 Cor. 12:2*, he then continued in his discourse, explaining in *v. 4*: "how that he was caught up into *paradise*, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter". As such, he clearly equates the '*third*' heaven with *paradise*, which was in fact the same term that we heard from the Lord Jesus whilst on the Cross, as He "said unto him (i.e., the penitent thief): *Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise*", *Luke 23:43*. It is therefore, quite safe to consider that the "*third*" Heaven is the place where the spirit (N.B. not the soul), of the faithful believers 'when at last delivered from the burden of the flesh, shall wing its ethereal flight to the unexplored expanse of Heaven'.

Notwithstanding, when the Lord Jesus said: "In my *Father's House* are many mansions", *John 14:2*, was He referring to a different place than *paradise*? Here, I make no apology not to enter into any speculation as to whether the *Father's house* and the *paradise* are spatially different or temporally divergent, because it will be futile: "for we *now* know in part ... But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be *done away*", *1 Cor. 13:9&10*, so to put it simply, we just don't know!

Forasmuch as there is a "*third*" heaven, it is quite natural and perfectly legitimate to ask the following questions: how many more, and what and where are the other Heavens! The answers, however, will also be a matter of conjecture and speculations, nonetheless they are still quite fascinating.

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Earth, and the 'second' heaven is the vast **space** beyond, where all the celestial bodies are to be found in a constant motion. The combined 'first' and 'second' heavens are referred to as the 'firmament', *vide supra*, *Gen. 1:6-8*. Conceptually, they were jointly brought into existence in the second 'phase' of the creation. The firmament may, therefore, be safely described as those two distinct sequential regions, in the form of the limited atmospheric belt around the Earth, beyond which is the very expansive 'space'.

The atmosphere is approximately **60** miles in thickness, it extends from the surface of the Earth to reach the edge of space. It is retained in position by the gravity of the Earth. Placed within its lower region is the 'air' we breathe, which has a finely balanced gaseous content, and is renewed in the measured cycles of Oxygen, Carbon dioxide, Nitrogen, and water vapour, which sustains all plant and animal life on Earth. Therein also lies the rain-generating clouds, which constantly provide for the life-sustaining liquid water, *aka* the elixir of life^{*}. This crucial entity is a blessing from above, do we not colloquially say 'the heaven opened' when it rains, *Mat. 3:10*, especially when it does so heavily? As it had done in Noah's time: 'the windows of heaven *were* opened', *Gen. 7:11*! In addition to air and water, the atmosphere maintains the property of atmospheric pressure, which is the essential indicator of the weather.

More significantly, in the uppermost regions of the atmosphere, *aka* **the stratosphere**, at about **22** miles (**35.2** Kms), and beyond, above the surface of the Earth, there is a very special Oxygen compound, O_3 , called **Ozone**, which was first discovered in **1913**, by two French physicists, Charles Fabry and Henri Buisson. It is quite essential to absorb most (**~ 97 - 99%**) of the harmful ultraviolet solar radiation, an important protective function known as the **Ozone Shield**, the depletion of which threatens life on Earth, *vide infra*.

The 'second' Heaven is equally fascinating, so much so that David, amazed at God's creation, said: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard", *Psa. 19:1-3*. Although these immortal words were uttered over **3000** years ago, they still ring true in the **21st** century, as new information is constantly added and scientific discoveries never cease.

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"Hpsanna"

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A Plea for Salvation or The Shout of Jubilation!

V.: Ill.: Bro. Dr. Joseph F. K. Marzouk, FRCS(C/Th), 33°

Inspector General Designate in Charge, Worcestershire District

"*Hosanna*" is a very precious word which is adroitly, once again, used by the compilers of our beloved Masonic Ritual in the beautiful Christian Order of the Ancient and Accepted (A&A) Rite. It is, of course a Biblical and Liturgical word, which is popular both in Judaism and in Christianity. In the Holy Scriptures, however, it is expressly found only in the New Testament (N.T.), six times in the Gospels, namely: **Matt 21: 9 & 15**, **Mark 11: 9-10**, and **John 12: 13**.*

'*Hosanna*' is invariably defined in all modern Dictionaries as: "an expression of enthusiastic praise, adoration and acclamation", as it has come to be used in the N.T. time. Notwithstanding, originally it is thought to be derived from the Hebrew word, **Hoshana**, or rather **Hōshi'āh'nnā**, meaning: "Save now, we pray" as recounted in the **Tanakh**, i.e. the Hebrew Bible, the textual source for the 'Christian' Old Testament (O.T.), either in an explicit reference, exemplified in **Ps. 118: 25**, or within the contextual inferences of **Ps. 118: 26** and **Zech. 9: 9**, *vide infra*.

It is my intention in this treatise to examine, in some details, this rather powerful exclamation and much-treasured word, **Hosanna**, under the following four headings:

- I. Its place in the A&A Rite Ritual
- II. Etymology and exact meaning
- III. Biblical Origin and relevant Contexts
- IV. Spiritual Applications

① Creation

having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled", *Col. 1:19-21*, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself", *2 Cor. 5:19*, and hence, we are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of **darkness** into His marvellous **Light**", *1 Pet. 2:9*.

At this juncture, it might be profitable to reappraise the various **dispensations** within the context of spiritual regeneration:

1. At The Creation, the Earth was singled out from among the rest of God's marvelous handiwork, for it is written: "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the Earth", *Isa. 40:22*, and has called it "*my* footstool", *Isa. 66:1*, and it became quite special to Him because He has predestinated that His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, will eventually tread upon it "in fashion as a man", *Phil. 2:8*, as He "works all things after the counsel of His own Will", *Eph. 1:11*. For that very reason, the initial state of *tohu wa bohu*, i.e. the **dark**, void, and bleak planet, was changed and the Earth was made inhabitable and ready to receive the human race, as the pinnacle of God's creation. At this culminating event "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was **very good**", *Gen. 1:31*, so that this utter satisfaction was only expressed when He "created man in His own image", *Gen. 1:26&27*, as the only **spiritual** being with whom He might have cognisant fellowship and to whom He has also entrusted this aesthetically pleasing 'Blue Planet', not only once but twice, *Gen. 2:5 & 9:1*, supposedly to look after it and to cherish it.

Wistfully, it is abused by the Human race, not only in the material sense, *vide infra*, but worse still, it is bankrupted **spiritually**, "As by one man, *Adam*, sin entered into the world", and from henceforth an evil thread of **spiritual darkness** has dominated amongst the successive generations of his posterity, "for all have sinned", *Rom. 5:12*, and we started to have a glimpse of the theme of spiritual **darkness** threading its way throughout the human history. The sanctity of life was ignored, as humankind became a murderous race, the institution of marriage and matrimonial vows are no longer respected, and we witnessed the trend of sexual immorality, fornication, and 'free love' prevailing on the Earth. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and