



A World On Fire?

“You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end” (Matthew 24:6, NASB 1995)

The day after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed a joint session of Congress. His speech that day, which summoned a nation to war, would become among the most iconic in American history — particularly Roosevelt’s famous line describing the outrageous attack the prior day: “Yesterday, December 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.” In that same speech, the U.S. President declared War on Japan.

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. Some analysts claim that it was just an escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War that started in 2014. However, the invasion was the biggest attack on a European country since World War II.

In February 2023, Walter Reed conducted an interview with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on behalf of the Wall Street Journal. When the interview was published on February 27, it was titled, “War in the Middle East Is Closer Than You Think.” Eight months later, the ruling faction of Gaza, Hamas, attacked the nation of Israel. The next day Netanyahu, in a speech before the Knesset, declared war on Hamas. The number of Israelis killed on that day was the most since the Holocaust of World War II.

Wikipedia lists six major wars currently being fought (combat deaths of 10,000 or more in the current or past year), fifteen minor wars (1000-9999 in the current or past year), twenty-one conflicts where 100-999 combat related deaths have taken place, and fourteen skirmishes or clashes where fewer than 100 combat related deaths have been reported. At least twenty countries have suffered combat casualties.

Between the 16th and the 18th centuries, war proliferated. History records at least thirty-four notable conflicts during that time, leading up to World War

I in 1914. Since recording began around 3,600 B.C., there have been over 14,500 major wars. About four billion people are estimated to have been killed. Not long ago, that was the entire population of earth. Of the past 3,400 years, historians estimate that humans have been entirely at peace for 268 of them, just eight percent of recorded history. Today’s wars bring us into a new world where economic gains, the prosperity of nations, and a peaceful environment now takes a back seat to perhaps the most dangerous period in our century. This was best summarized in a 2021 essay by former statesman Henry Kissinger:

“The founding legend of modern government is a walled city protected by powerful rulers, sometimes despotic, other times benevolent, yet always strong enough to protect the people from an external enemy ... As the world emerges from the current crisis ... [it] will require restraint on all sides in ... diplomacy ... Failure could set the world on fire.” As we examine the world today, a world on fire may not be far away.

China (PRC)

2023 marks the tenth anniversary of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the largest and most ambitious infrastructure

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development project in human history. China has lent more than \$1 trillion to more than 100 countries, stoking anxieties about the spread of Chinese influence. According to *Foreign Affairs* magazine, many analysts have characterized Chinese lending through the BRI as “debt trap diplomacy” designed to give China leverage over other countries and even seize their infrastructure and resources. After Sri Lanka fell behind on payments for its troubled Hambantota port project in 2017, China obtained a 99-year lease on the property as part of a deal to renegotiate the debt. The agreement sparked concerns that Beijing’s real aim was to acquire access to strategic facilities throughout the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the Americas.

In Argentina, Ethiopia, Montenegro, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Zambia, and elsewhere, costly Chinese projects have pushed debt-to-GDP ratios to unsustainable levels and produced balance-of-payments crises. The U.S. State department lists many issues surrounding China, including:

Fear of arbitrary arrest, absolute control over law enforcement and the judicial system, using both to stifle calls from Chinese citizens for freedom, human rights and rule of law.

Religious freedom abuses, openly hostile to members of all religious faiths, including Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Christians and Falun Gong practitioners. The PRC has adopted a five-year plan to bring all religious doctrine and practice in line with Communist Party doctrine.

Stifling freedom of expression through blocking access to information.

Forced Labor. Independent unions are illegal in China and employers are under no obligation to bargain with workers in good faith. The effects on workers are severe: Occupational safety and health violations are prevalent, with limited enforcement and recourse for workers who find themselves in dangerous working conditions. Workers are frequently not paid in many industries. Workplace discrimination is rampant, including recruitment practices that explicitly reference gender, age, disability, physical appearance, and marital status.

Assaulting Hong Kong’s autonomy. The Government of Hong Kong has announced the postponement of elections for at least a year; enacted national security legislation that provides for up to life in prison for the crimes of secession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with foreign powers. Authorities are removing books critical of the CCP from bookstore and library shelves, banning democratic political slogans, and requiring schools to enforce censorship of teachers and students.

The current threat of **China invading Taiwan** could provide even greater hostilities between the East and the West as the United States and other allies would be committed through agreements to provide military support to block access to trade routes. If



China, divided into 22 administrative provinces

China started a war with India, whose population is now greater than its own, it could escalate easily to include all major powers. With the growing affinity of China to Russia, any escalation could lead to a major military and economic conflict between the East and the West.

Russia

At midnight on December 31, 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) officially ended with fireworks over the Kremlin. Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev’s policy of glasnost (openness) failed as a last-ditch alternative to save the government following revolution and rejection of Marxist-Leninist totalitarianism.

During the 70-year USSR reign of communism an estimated 20 million citizens were killed for political reasons. After its fall a mass stockpile of nuclear weapons — 45,000 to 60,000 throughout the empire — were supposedly collected, deactivated, and dismantled. (See Allison, Graham. “What Happened to the Soviet Superpower’s Nuclear Arsenal? Clues for the Nuclear Security Summit,” HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP12-038, August 2012).

Today, Russian premier Vladimir Putin’s determination to reassert Russian hegemony in the former Soviet sphere (Putin was a KGB intelligence officer from 1975 to 1991) is largely based on his view that the demise of the USSR was “a major geopolitical disaster.” Currently, he is determined to “rebuff what he sees as the threat of an encroachment eastward of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,” analysts said. He is also eager to leave a legacy that repositions Russia as a superpower to be both respected and feared.

In a television interview, without citing evidence, Putin alleged that Western powers had installed Volodymyr Zelensky, who is Jewish, as president of Ukraine to cover up the glorification of Nazism. Putin tried to associate modern Ukraine’s democratically elected government with the mass murder of Ukrainian Jews in World War Two by Nazi German occupiers

of Soviet Ukraine and their local collaborators.

In 2021 over 100,000 Russian military forces had amassed on Ukraine's border. Russia's follow-up invasion in February 2022 resulted in Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett advising Israelis in Ukraine to come home and all Ukrainian Jews in Ukraine to come to Israel. Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid announced, "Israel has deep, long lasting, and good relations with Russia and with Ukraine. There are tens of thousands of Israelis in both countries, and there are hundreds of thousands of Jews in both countries. Maintaining their security and safety is at the top of our considerations."

Under Putin, a former KGB operative, Russia has increased its presence in the Middle East, particularly in Syria. According to the *Middle East Eye*, when Israel expressed support for Ukrainian independence, Russia condemned Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights. Russian-supplied missile systems and other defense technology have thwarted Israeli jets seeking Iranian military targets in Syria. If airspace were to be restricted — crucial to Israel's effort to prevent Iranian aggression — Iran could freely supply terrorist groups such as Hezbollah with advanced weaponry, impacting Israel's northern border and threatening to move Israel's war on Hamas to a wider field of battle.

War in Israel

The war between Israel and Hamas, which began on October 7-8, brought a new world risk and special attention to students of the Bible. The focus of global conflict may be shifting as American and European resources refocus on protecting their interests in the Middle East, and Russia and China develop a silent partnership. The New York Times headlined a November 3 article, "In a Worldwide War of Words, Russia, China, and Iran Back Hamas." It went on to say, "The deluge of online propaganda and disinformation is larger than anything seen before, according to government officials and independent researchers — a reflection of the world's geopolitical division." "It's just like everyone is involved," said Moustafa Ayad, executive director for Africa, the Middle East and Asia at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue. The institute, a nonprofit research organization in London, last week detailed influence campaigns by Iran, Russia, and China.

Israel declared war with Hamas after ten months of the most significant domestic political and social crisis in decades in that country. Four weeks after Hamas killed at least 1,300 Israelis and wounded more than 3,300 in a merciless assault. In Gaza, the Hamas-controlled health ministry reports that more than 9,488 Palestinians have been killed. As of this writing, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad are holding hostage more than 242 soldiers and civilians, including foreign nationals.

Iran has renewed its focus on the other countries of the Middle East, providing drones, rockets, missiles,

military training, and support to militias in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Palestinian areas. Tehran has also stepped up proxy attacks through terrorist groups on Saudi Arabia and the UAE. In February 2022, an Iranian military exercise called "Great Prophet 17" showcased the potentially devastating response to any aggression by Western or Israeli forces.

As Bible Students we view Israel as the timepiece for God's plan. The reestablishment of Jews in Palestine in the late 19th century, culminating in the birth of the nation in 1948, is testimony that the promises of Jehovah are true. "I will bring back the captivity [Hebrew: restore exiles or former state of prosperity] of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God" (Amos 9:14-15). From less than 600,000 in 1948 until today, immigration to Israel has grown to where there are now more Jews in Israel than in any other country.

Although Israel today is being regathered in unbelief, a religious atmosphere is prominent in much of the land. A Gallup survey in 2015 determined that 65 percent of Israelis say they are either "not religious" or "convinced atheists," while 30 percent say they are "religious." As the sentiment regarding the Israel-Hamas war shifts towards the Palestinian cause in Western nations, antisemitism is once again growing due to Western nations' support of Israel. Interestingly, the Western world contains the last great concentration of Jewish people. According to the Jewish Agency, with 7.2 million Jews, Israel accounts for 46 percent of the world's Jewish population, the same percentage as last year. Diaspora communities' number 8.5 million. United States is home to the second-largest Jewish population, with around 6.3 million. It is followed by France (440,000), Canada (398,000), the UK (312,000), Argentina (171,000), Russia (132,000), Germany (125,000), Australia (117,200) and Brazil (90,000).



Israel in white, Gaza and West Bank part of the land of promise

Israel as a nation will remain blind until Jesus has completed his bride, the church (Romans 11:25). The land is being restored and built up; the desert is beginning to blossom as the rose; advances and discoveries in scientific and technical knowledge are beginning to spill over into the wider world to the greater benefit of man generally. Of old time Isaiah said, “They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities; the desolations of many generations” (Isaiah 61:4). Soon the nation will be saved by Jehovah from Gog (Ezekiel 38) and then purified and converted, learning to trust God implicitly for every kind of defense and protection. Jehovah’s hand is accomplishing it, and no amount of anti-Semitism can stop it.

Wars to Cease

Throughout world history, nations, alliances, and empires have battled one another. Mankind has practiced warfare as a way of life. Historians Will and Ariel Durant concluded: “In the last 3,421 years of recorded history only 268 have seen no war” (*The Lessons of History*, page 81). “Go, behold the acts of the LORD, Who made desolations on earth, caused wars to cease to the end of the earth. The bow He has broken and splintered the spear, and chariots burned in fire” (Psalm 46:9, 10, Alter translation)

At some point, Jehovah will intervene in the affairs of man to bring violence, killing, and war to an end. “It shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains [at the head of the mountains], and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law [instruction], and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he will judge between [among] the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:3, 4).

As long as he is motivated by selfishness, man will not voluntarily give up the spoils of war. Jehovah’s ruling over the nations and the powerful, His defense of the weak and poor, and the supplying of all mankind’s legitimate needs, will be supplemented by the teaching of true love for one another in Christ’s kingdom. This will change man’s heart and his desire to rule over one another. Cooperation will be the order and will be rewarded.

“Come, behold the works of Jehovah, What desolations he hath made in the earth [or, who has made desolations in the earth]. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariots



Peace will replace war, when the Sun of Righteousness shines.

in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psalm 46:8-10).

While God will cause wars to cease by his superior power, man will actively “beat his swords into plowshares” (Isaiah 2:4). During the reign of Christ, love will replace selfishness as the motivating power that has often resulted in human conflicts. Under the administration of that kingdom of righteousness, all mankind will find satisfaction and joy. All those who died in wars, as well as all others who experienced death, will be raised to a world where war will no longer be permitted nor necessary (John 5:28, 29). Jesus, accompanied by his faithful followers of this Gospel Age, will give all an opportunity to enjoy everlasting life in peace and happiness, and in a world without war.

The experiences of the past 6,000 years, including the dying process (Genesis 2:16, 17), have tried man almost to the limit. Today, there is much worldwide distress (Luke 21:25). But the lessons learned now will be of inestimable value. They will greatly increase appreciation of the blessing of life which will be given to the people during the thousand years of Christ’s reign. Let us pray earnestly for that time.

God’s Promise to Israel

The reestablishment of Israel in the land promised to Abraham is one of the most important fulfillments of prophecy in these times. It confirms the words of the Biblical prophets. In Genesis 28:12-14, Jacob’s vision of a ladder extending between heaven and earth contained the everlasting and irrevocable promise: “I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the ground be blessed.”

God has already regathered Israel to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jeremiah told of an everlasting covenant that God would make with the returned people (Jeremiah 32:40, 41). Amos verified that the descendants of Abraham would never again be removed from the land, testifying to the miraculous deliverances seen there since the first settlement at Petah Tikvah in 1878 (Amos 9:14, 15).

During this time, the entire world would experience a similar time of travail: "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3). During this time, the regathered nation of Israel would survive while other nations fall. The events we see unfolding today show that Israel cannot always depend on allies for protection. Alliances with its neighbors will eventually demonstrate this as well.

Israel will stand in need of Divine help when the climactic point in man's history, the invasion of "Gog and Magog," takes place. This battle is recorded in Ezekiel 38 as an attack upon Jerusalem. Nations in former alliances will not be able to help or will look for benefits from such an invasion (Ezekiel 38:12-14). When the situation appears hopeless, Jehovah Himself will intervene. The defeat of Gog and Magog in Israel will decisively display the power of Jehovah: "Thou wilt make them as a fiery furnace ... Jehovah will swallow them up in his wrath, And the fire shall devour them" (Psalms 21:9).

As our theme text describes, in ancient days when Israel became unfaithful, enemies were sent to chastise them. The people would cry out and God would send a prophet to both turn them back to Jehovah and deliver them. When all seems hopeless, miraculous events will take place. The Ancient Worthies, Abraham, Moses, and perhaps David, their greatest king, will rise to positions of leadership (Psalms 45:16, Isaiah 1:26). They will urge dependence on Jehovah for the victory. God will be magnified and sanctified as Israel's enemies are defeated (Ezekiel 38:16). Israel will then recognize their true Messiah and Jehovah will pour out His spirit upon them. "I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son ... as one that is in bitterness for the firstborn" (Zechariah 12:9, 10).

Before this stage of history Christ's bride must be completed in glory. The subsequent deliverance of Israel will be a testimony not only to Israel, but to earth's billions. The people of all nations which came to war against Jerusalem will go up to that city to acknowledge and worship Him who brings peace and blessings to the resurrected world of mankind (Zechariah 14:16-19). Let us who hope to be part of the blessing of these billions be faithful to our covenant and look forward to the blessings which will follow!

— Len Griehs

The Times and the Seasons

"Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-5 NASB).

The common tendency of the human mind is expressed by the Apostle Peter, who prophesied of the present time that the worldly will be saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation" (2 Peter 3:4 NASB). Ignorance of God's Plan is to be expected of the world, but the true people of God have the promise of His special instruction so that they need not be in darkness respecting the Divine Program.

Our world for about six thousand years has been the battlefield between the forces of light and darkness, truth and error, righteousness and sin; the Prince of Darkness, otherwise styled the "Prince of this world" (John 12:40 NASB) has led and is still controlling them.

The Prince of Light is represented in a feeble way by ambassadors who are specially cautioned by Him that they must not use carnal weapons nor carnal methods but must in meekness correct those who oppose them.

They must be subject to "the powers that be" Mark 13:25 (NASB) to the extent that their consciences will permit, and so far as is possible live peaceably with all men.

This experience of subjection to the powers of evil has been a hard lesson, difficult to learn; a trial of faith as well as of endurance, the value of which has been difficult sometimes to appreciate. But these must walk by faith and not by sight if they would please the

See **TIMES**, continued on page 10 ...

“If We Suffer With Him”

The Bible Teachings (Part Seventeen) – Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering, Atonement

“The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:16,17).

CHARACTER LIKENESS OF JESUS

But under which Covenant does God purpose to receive the faith-justified ones as sacrificers? The answer is that the Divine proposal to the Redeemer that He sacrifice and as a reward of His sacrifice be highly exalted to the Divine nature and glory — this blessing (which belongs to Jesus only and was applied only to His sacrifice) has by the gracious plan of God been extended to include all those of this Gospel Age who have the character likeness of the Redeemer. They are invited to share in His sacrifice and are promised that if faithful they shall share in His glory.

Justice re More than Jesus’ Life

But what sacrifice is this? Could Justice call for more than a life for a life — the death of Jesus as the ransom price for the death penalty of Father Adam? Surely Not. Justice has no voice in the present proceeding of Grace. Justice, however, cannot interfere, if it is agreeable to the Great Judge and the Redeemer to accept a “little flock” of justified believers as members under the Redeemer as Head. This very matter pleased the Father and pleased the Son, and is, therefore, a part of the Divine program. These members are “elect according to God’s foreknowledge through sanctification of the spirit and the belief of the Truth” (1 Peter 1:2). Their selection is not a change in the Divine program, for they were “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). Their selection was unexpected of the angels and of men and hence was a “mystery” and still is a “mystery” to mankind. “The world knoweth us not, even as it knew Him not” (1 John 3:1). But the selection of this class was always the Divine purpose. “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus foreknew us also by Jesus.”



Blessed are your eyes, for they see.

Same Program for Master and Members

Whatever, therefore, was the Divine program for the Master, the Forerunner, the Chief-priest, is the Divine program for His members — they must “walk in His steps”; they must “Suffer with Him”; they must “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.” If any decline so to do, he loses his place as a member of the Body. We know, nevertheless, that the full number of the “elect” will ultimately be found and every one of them will be a sacrificer, for no others are members of His Body. It is the spirit of the Head coming upon these that produces the sacrifice of the flesh (the justified flesh) “holy, acceptable to God” (Romans 12:1).

Object of Jesus’ Sacrifice

There is only one object in the sacrifice which God has provided for, the sacrifice which Jesus accomplished, and is accomplishing in all those who will become His members— that is a sacrifice for sin. It is presented to God, holy and acceptable. In this respect it differs from other sacrifices which men make; as, for instance, a father or mother may sacrifice comfort or even sacrifice life, on behalf of their offspring, but such sacrifices, however appropriate, are not the sacrifice of Christ are not of the “better sacrifices” typified in the sacrifices of the bulls and the goats.

Blessed Are Your Eyes

St. Paul calls our attention to the fact that only those sacrifices which were burned outside the camp were a Sin Offering. Next, he shows how our Lord was the sin offering. Then he points out how, if faithful members of His Body, we also must suffer outside the camp — as members of the sin offering — represented in “the Lord’s goat.” This sacrifice is not yet completed. It is in process. Hence the Apostle’s expression, “Let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach” just as the slain goat was carried outside the camp and there consumed as the bullock had been (Hebrew 13:11-13). These matters, dear readers, are amongst the “deep things of God which no man knoweth except by the spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10). The world knows nothing about them. “To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to outsiders all these things are spoken in parables” (Matthew 13:11). Outsiders are in what the Scriptures term “outer darkness”

— the darkness which belongs to this present time of ignorance and superstition (Matthew 25:30). The few have been permitted to enter into the banqueting halls and to see the glorious beauties of the riches of Divine grace.

Blessed are your eyes that see and your ears that hear. As for those who never saw they properly have our sympathy, nor should we expect so much of them as of ourselves who have been blessed with this knowledge of this important sacrifice and of its glorious reward. Furthermore, as we are now in the sifting and testing time, it must not surprise us if some who once saw eye to eye with us in these matters become blind to them and drift into the “outer darkness” as respects these matters and others — we know not how far. Truths so interweave that one lost or perverted injures presently the beauty of the entire fabric.

Sifting and Testing

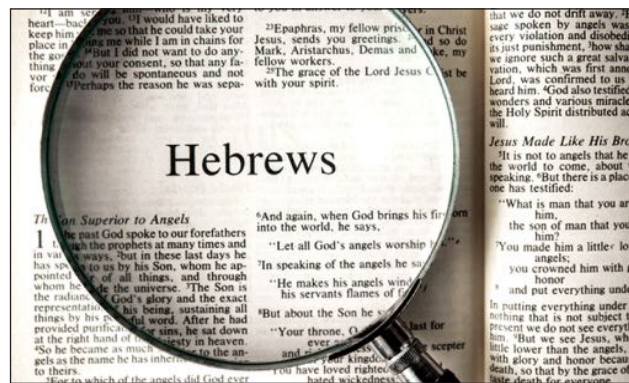
Our expectation must be that the differences will increase, and that the loss of spiritual sight will ultimately extend to other features of the Divine Plan. We have nothing but sympathy to express for such. Indeed, to us their case is most “pitiable. It is practically a hopeless case, too, whereas some of those who have never seen and never tasted we may hope will yet see and taste of this grace. But to those who see and then become blind our Lord says, “If the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is the darkness” (Matthew 6:23). It would be better not to have known the way of Truth than to have departed from the holy command. It is not for us to judge one another, but to leave all in the Lord’s hands, assured that He makes no mistakes. We may have thought their hearts all right, when the Lord may have seen them to be all wrong. But the results will show. And what we could not read and should not have attempted to read of unfaithfulness to the Truth, will be manifest to themselves in the Lord’s, time and way. let us not forget that He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified (His members) are all one. He is in us all. In our consecration we lose our humanity and all of its rights, exchanging these for our spiritual membership in the Body of Christ (Z1909, 154).

“FOR THIS HE DID ONCE”

‘Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s; for this he did once, when he offered up himself’ (Hebrews 7:27).

Book of Hebrews

In studying the Book of Hebrews, it is well to keep in memory that the Apostle’s thought was not to give a detailed explanation of the types of the law, but merely to prove to the Jews that they should look beyond the high priests and the under-priests of the Aaronic order for a greater Higher Priest of our



The Book of Hebrews

profession (order) and a superior under-priesthood, “a royal priesthood.” In the text above quoted, St. Paul is drawing attention to the fact that a repetition daily and yearly of the sacrifices of the law on a higher plane is not to be expected, but rather that the One Priest (Christ, Head and Body) in the one antitypical Atonement Day accomplishes the entire work which will usher in full forgiveness and reconciliation to all the people. This in type was done in the one Atonement Day and the antitype of that Atonement lay is not yet ended. It will close with the end of this Gospel Age. It will close when the last member of the Body of Christ shall have suffered with the Lord, “Filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ” (Colossians 1:24).

The Anointed One

The first offering of the Day of Atonement was the bullock which typified the man Jesus. It was because of this offering and by the act of consecration that our Lord became the Anointed One — “the High Priest of our profession.” As the spirit-begotten High Priest our Lord for three and a half years offered up Himself, His manhood, in sacrifice. He finished that offering, typified by the bullock, at His death. Then, as shown in the type, He took the blood of the bullock and proceeded into the Most Holy, “there to appear in the presence of God for us” — the “household of faith.”

Goat Follows Bullock

In the type the typical high priest, after offering the first sacrifice and after applying its blood on behalf of the body (the under-priests) and his house (the tribe of Levi), laid his hands on the Lord’s goat and slew it and did with it as with the bullock, except that its blood when taken into the Most Holy was differently applied — on behalf of the other eleven tribes, who represented all nations, people, kindreds and tongues of humanity.

Two Parts of One Sacrifice

These two offerings and their distinctly separate sprinklings of blood were both parts of the one Atonement Day service — “this He did once.” Two deaths are clearly shown and two blood sprinklings; and on behalf of two different classes; but they were,

parts of the one sin atonement. Just so our Lord, during His earthly ministry, was dying daily, yet it was one sacrifice; so also when we fill up a share of His sufferings, dying daily, it is part of His sufferings and sacrifice, which He is still accomplishing in us once for all — this He does once and will never repeat. All sacrificing of this sort will end with this age — He will accept no further members of the Body of Christ, no additional members to “the royal priesthood.”



Jesus began his service at Jordan.

Fellowship of Mystery

As we have repeatedly shown, the first Atonement Day sacrifice was our Lord’s sacrifice of His own flesh, the man Jesus, and the second sacrifice was that of His adopted members — those justified by His blood and consecrated to His service even unto death. These accepted by the Lord are sacrificed by Him as parts or members of Himself; and their blood (death) is counted in as a part of the blood of Christ — “dead with Him.” This is the “Mystery” hidden from previous ages and generations. The “fellowship of this Mystery” was granted to the Jews and Gentiles of the “little flock” of the called and chosen and faithful.

Lord’s Hand (Power) on Head of Antitypical Goat at Pentecost

Our Lord as the High Priest laid His hand upon the Lord’s goat at Pentecost. His power (hand) there came upon His followers accepting their consecration and bringing to them the trying experiences as His members which faithfully endured will, according to the Divine plan, grant them a share with Him in His divine nature and Kingdom. It is not the suffering of the Church that counts, but the sufferings of Christ. It is because we are counted in as members of Christ, “members in particular of the Body of Christ,” that we are permitted to be His members on the Spirit plane and to share the glories and honours of our (Head. “If we suffer with Him, we will reign with Him.” “If we be dead with Him we shall live with Him.”

Sufferings of Christ Continue in His Members

Thus, the sufferings of Christ, while in one sense of the word ended at Calvary, in another sense of the word continue in His members; this is a “Mystery” to many. The Sufferings of Christ are still in process and His faithful ones are still filling them up. St. Peter tells us that the prophets of old spake of the sufferings of Christ and of the glories that should follow. His sufferings of Christ Jesus were followed by His personal glorification, demonstration of which was given at Pentecost; but the glory mentioned in this text has not yet been accomplished. It awaits

the completion of the sufferings of Christ — the sufferings of the members: “For if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26). “When He shall appear in glory, we shall appear with Him.” We shall be glorified together if we suffer with Him as His members.

When Millennial Kingdom Will be Ushered In

With the Jews there was a Day of Atonement every year, with its sacrifices repeated year by year continually. But with Christ there is but one antitypical Atonement

Day and when its “better sacrifices” shall have been accomplished — when the great antitypical High Priest shall have finished the work of offering up Himself, including His members, thereafter there will be no more sufferings of Christ for anybody to fill up. The glory of the Millennial Kingdom will then be ushered in. The sins of the whole world will be blotted out so far as God is concerned and the High Priest of our profession will be a Priest upon His throne (Head and members) after the order of Melchisedec (Z1909, 153).

“PRESENT YOUR BODIES LIVING SACRIFICES”

Result of Failure to See the “Mystery”

Whoever fails to see that the Church as “Members” of the Christ suffer with Him sacrificially (after being “justified by faith in His blood”), will be logically bound by and by to interpret the sacrifices and sufferings in some other way. This our opponents already do. They say that we offer merely “the sacrifice of thanksgiving” (Psalms 116:17), “the sacrifice of praise to God” (Hebreww 13:15).

Sacrificing of thanksgiving — Wrong Application

True, we answer, the word sacrifice is used in that broad sense, even though it is a pleasure rather than a sacrifice to praise God, as the word sacrifice is now generally used. This sacrifice under the Law was represented in the “peace-offerings” and “thank-offerings.” But St. Paul also urges us, “Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God” (Romans 12:1). He as well as the Master intimates that there is a more difficult sacrifice than the offering of praise before us when we forsake all and take up our cross to follow Him in the narrow way. St. Paul urges, “let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing the reproach with Him.” He identifies these words with the Sin-offering by pointing out that the blood of both the bull and the goat of sin-offering was taken by the Priest beyond the second veil into the Most Holy. He

identifies it again by His reference to the burning of both “outside the camp.” Compare Hebrews 13:11-13 and Leviticus 16:27. If once you saw the beauty of this application of the “better sacrifices” and see it not, confess the blindness that has come upon you and seek the precious eye salve of Divine supply.

Sufferings of the Church and the Great Company

So far from the “sufferings of Christ,” which we experience, being sufferings for sins, the reverse is true. Even the “great company” suffers not for its own sins, but suffers the “destruction” of their justified flesh (as the “scape-goat”), because they fail to sacrifice it.

What “The Acceptable Time” Means

This is the one peculiar and distinctive feature of the Gospel Call of this Gospel Age, differentiating it from the preceding and the succeeding ages. Some of the past, from Enoch to John, had the sacrificing spirit and did lay down their lives in the service of the lord and righteousness, but God did not accept them as sacrificers. Our Lord’s great sacrifice was necessary first for our actual justification before God. Since then, is the opportunity for believers who have the same sacrificing spirit — “Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.” “Now is the acceptable time” — “The acceptable year of the Lord”— the time in which God will accept your sacrifices, because He accepts you as “members” of the Body of the Christ, the Great High Priest, the Great Mediator of the New Covenant (Isaiah 61:2, Luke 4:19, 2 Corinthians 6:2, 1 Peter 2:5, Ephesians 1:6, Romans 12:1).

Limitation of “The Acceptable Time”

In the future age “the acceptable time” will be past — the Antitypical Atonement Day will be at an end. Satan will be bound, and none will any more suffer for righteousness’ sake.

Ancient Worthies In the Next Age

Now note the import of this. The Ancient Worthies will get restitution blessings as a part of the world.



Abraham, one of the Ancient Worthies

“Instead of thy fathers, they shall be thy children” (Psalms 45:16). They will be the first-born children of “the everlasting Father.” Under the new order of things, they will be made the earthly agents or representatives of the Kingdom. And the world will get restitution blessings also as, under the New Covenant they obey the great Mediator. But why is this? Is there partiality with God that we of this Gospel Age alone of all mankind have the offer of a spiritual or heavenly inheritance?

Does Call of Church Instead of Ancient Worthies Show Partiality?

No, we answer! The gift in every case is the same, namely, restitution of earthly rights secured by our Lord’s sacrifice of His earthly rights. The whole difference is that we live in the “acceptable year (or time) of the lord” and willingly take advantage of the privilege afforded. That privilege is restricted to those who have ears of faith and hear the “glad tidings” now and fleeing from sin become servants of righteousness and present their “bodies living sacrifices holy and acceptable to God.” We receive of our Redeemer earthly restitution rights by faith, and sacrifice these with whatever we have of earthly advantage. All such are accepted as “members” of the Christ, under the Redeemer their Head, the Prophet, Priest, Mediator and King of the world.

Beguiling Others of the Prize

Whoever sees this, sees “the Mystery hid from past ages and dispensations, but now made manifest unto the saints — Christ in you [which is, that you are His ‘members,’ and that this fact is the only ground for] the hope of glory.” Whoever helps to blind those who have once seen this great “Secret of the lord” (Psalms 25:14) is beguiling them of the prize (2 Corinthians 11:3), whether he knows what he is doing or not. Whoever loses sight of the fact will cease to strive for it. And the fact that the Lord led into the light of “Present Truth” and showed us the “Secret,,” the “Mystery,” implies that He would not let us be plucked out of His hand and away from His leading unless the heart was at fault.

Re Those Who Lose Sight of the “Mystery”

Nor is it necessary for us to specially condemn the hearts of those who are now losing their sight of what they once claimed to see as clearly as we. Some of them may be merely blinded by dust and may be recovered; and find their chief trial along, the line of humility in the matter of acknowledging their error; let us neither do nor say anything to make their way back more difficult. let us apply the principle rather to ourselves. let us find comfort, peace and joy as well as caution in the assurance that if our hearts are loyal, God by myriads of agencies is able and willing to keep our poor heads! (Z 1909, 376.

TIMES, Continued from page 5 ...

captain of their salvation. For centuries the prayer has gone up to God from their hearts, “How long, O Lord!” Revelation 6:10 (NASB) Reason assures them that it cannot be the Divine purpose to forever permit the victory of sin and death under the Prince of Darkness.

God represents Himself as a great Husbandman. Each Age is a “season” and bears its own crop. Each Age has its own time for the ploughing of the field, the sowing of the good seed and the harvest work. As Bible students we have already noted the work accomplished in the Age which ended with the Flood, the different work accomplished during the Patriarchal Age and the still different work accomplished during the Jewish Age, which lasted from the death of Jacob and particularly from the giving of the Law, down to the death of Jesus.

Our Lord’s ministry of three and a half years was a harvest time to the Jewish people in the close of their Age of favour or day of visitation. He said to His disciples, “I send you forth to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour; other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours” (John 4 :38). The ploughing and sowing connected with the Jewish Dispensation was in the far past. The Egyptian bondage served to do a ploughing work, as did Israel’s escape from that bondage and the forty years of wandering in the wilderness before they reached Canaan. The giving of the Law and the establishment of them as a people, the lessons of their sacrifices, and the exhortation of their Prophets, all constituted a seed-sowing, harrowing and cultivating experience.

In the end of their Age, the Jewish Age, Jesus gathered the ripe fruitage of that experience — those sanctified thereby and developed in character and obedience to God. The crop gathered by our Lord and the Apostles in the Jewish harvest numbered thousands. These were gathered out of Judaism and from under the Law Covenant into Christianity — gathered under a Grace Covenant applying only to the “Church which is the Body of Christ.” This Grace Covenant, under which they become associated with Messiah, reads, “Gather together My saints (holy ones) unto Me,” saith the Lord, “those who have made a Covenant with Me by sacrifice” (Psalms 50:5). All



We are now in the Harvest of the Gospel Age.

coming thus into relationship with Jehovah as members of the Body of Christ came by way of the cross — through a recognition of their own imperfection, and of Jesus and His sacrifice as the satisfaction for their sins, a covering for their blemishes, by which alone their sacrifices were rendered “holy and acceptable to God” (Romans 12:1).

The reaping work of the Jewish Age merged into the sowing work of the Gospel Age as the invitation to become joint-sacrificers with Jesus was extended to those having hearing ears amongst nations aside from the Jews. For twenty centuries this sowing work, with painful experiences and various cultivations, has been in progress.

Now in turn we have arrived at the harvest of this Gospel Age — the reaping time, the time of gathering into the garner — beyond the veil — by the power of the First Resurrection. “None of the wicked shall understand but the wise shall understand” (Daniel 12:10), is the Lord’s declaration. Our text declares that “Ye, brethren, are not in darkness” respecting this time. This implies either that the brethren are very few, or that a considerable number of them have not yet become sufficiently awake to a discernment of the times and seasons in which we are living. Many of the brethren and many of the world and many of the “wicked” do realise that we are living in strange times and under peculiar conditions. These try to persuade themselves, however, that what we see today is merely a recurrence of what has repeated itself time and again during the past centuries. Thus these lull themselves, saying, “Peace and safety!”

This attitude is what the Scriptures foretold, “For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them” (1 Thessalonians 5:3 KJV). It is only brethren, who are privileged to have the clearer light respecting present and future conditions. We know that we are in the Harvest time of this Age — the reckoning time — the testing time — the time when the “wheat” is to be gathered into the heavenly “garner” — the time when the field is to be cleared of all “tares” in a fiery trouble — the time when the ploughshare of trouble will be run through the world of mankind to prepare the whole world for the New Dispensation.

So accurately timed is every feature of the Divine Plan, that it all fits perfectly. The Harvest of the present time is the gathering of the fruitage of this Gospel Age — the gathering of the “Church of the First-born, whose names are written in heaven” — those who have made a Covenant with Jehovah by sacrifice.

The Head, the Messiah, developed and glorified twenty centuries ago, is Jesus. The members of the Body of this Messiah have been gathered from every nation, first from the Jews and then from the Gentiles. God’s call and selection of saintly sacrificers in this Gospel Age ignores all sectarian, denominations, and national lines. “The Lord knoweth them that are His”



The saints are being sealed in their foreheads.

(2 Timothy 2:19). The winds of violence, “the powers of the air (Ephesians 2:2), which will shortly be loosed, and which will produce the terrific “storm,” are being held back until the sealing of God’s servants on their foreheads shall have been accomplished.

This sealing on the forehead implies an intellectual appreciation of heavenly things and is intimately associated with the harvest work — the sealed are the ripe wheat being gathered for the heavenly garner. As soon as the sealing work shall have been accomplished the winds of strife and trouble will be let loose according to the Master’s declaration, and the result will be a “time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation” (Matthew 24:21) — no, nor ever shall be the like again. The awful lessons which will then be learned by humanity will be sufficient for all time. The strife, the hatred, the malignity, the anarchy of that day of trouble are depicted in various places in the Word of God.

The troubled times impending are indeed declared to be a time of Divine wrath, and we must not lose sight of that feature of it. Divine Justice has indignation against inequity and selfishness in general, for selfishness is but another name for sin. All sin is selfish, and all selfishness is sin. The captains of industry, of education, of wealth, have today greater opportunities and therefore greater responsibilities than the kings of the earth, for their dealings with their fellowmen.

Similarly, there are leaders of the people, presidents, and secretaries of unions, etc., who are also captains, and who also have great responsibility.

All perceive that the world of humanity is rapidly nearing a crisis. The almost miraculous opening of the eyes of understanding which God has recently granted has brought to the world mechanical inventions and chemical processes which are making the world rich with amazing rapidity.

Although these blessings are in considerable measure reaching the masses of mankind and uplifting all to a higher plane of comfort, nevertheless general

education has opened the eyes of human understanding correspondingly. The ordinary people are looking with amazement at the luxury of the rich as the barbarians of old looked upon the much lesser splendors of Rome. They are covetous, they are hungry for what they term their “share” of the bounties being dispensed by Providence with so lavish a hand. Even if the vast increase of wealth that has been brought about by the increase in knowledge were to be evenly distributed, we doubt if it would satisfy these new-born minds.

How glad we are that the Bible shows that the culmination of the conflict will bring everlasting peace — a just, loving, equitable and satisfactory adjustment of earth’s affairs, under Messiah’s glorious reign of a thousand years.

Someone may ask, would these same difficulties not beset any new government which Messiah or others might institute? Will not the element of selfishness forever persist in the human heart, and will not this imply that to all eternity, there will be a strife of selfish interests? We answer, No. The Divine Plan solves the problem perfectly. Jesus has demonstrated His unselfishness as respects earthly things. His laying down of His life not only proved His loyalty to righteousness, and to the Father’s will, but proved also His unselfishness — His love — “greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

This Friend of humanity is to be the great King of the world, Christ in the New Dispensation, and His associates in the Kingdom, the Bride class, are to be such only as have His spirit and disposition of obedience to the Father’s will, self-sacrifice and love for fellowman — unselfish love. Under present conditions, these may not always be known, nor their true character and unselfishness be discerned, because they have the treasure in “earthen” vessels which do not always fully represent their true benevolence of heart. “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves” (2 Corinthians 4:7 NASB).

The Divine provision is that such of these as shall demonstrate their unselfishness of heart and loyalty to the Lord shall be given new bodies in the resurrection — “sown in weakness, they will be raised in power; sown in dishonour, raised in glory,” sown a human body, with Adamic weaknesses and fleshly imperfections, they will be “raised spirit bodies” — perfect, complete, lacking nothing (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

These, in association with their Redeemer, will constitute the Kingdom class which is to rule the world for a thousand years under the Headship of Jesus. Surely, we can trust these, we can have confidence in them. The fact that God has selected them, and that He is pleased to give over to them the rulership of the world for a thousand years, testifies beyond peradventure their worthiness and capability.

That Government will not be a republic, but a monarchy, a theocracy, a Divine Kingdom. Christ and His Bride will be the King and Queen of the New Dispensation, supplanting Satan and the fallen angels, who for centuries have been in control. The Kingdom of God will be as invisible as the kingdom of darkness has been. It will operate through human agencies, as does the other. But even its human agents have been provided. The Scriptures inform us that the worthy ones of the Jewish Dispensation and before, will be the princes in all the earth who will represent Messiah's Kingdom amongst men. Not only so, but they will be perfect men, made so by participation in the "resurrection of life." How grand the prospect! (John 5:29).

The time of trouble will be awful, as typed in the terrible trouble which came upon the Jewish nation following the harvest work of their Age. Then will come the levelling process, which in the Divine order will prove to be a blessing to everybody. In other words, the socialists and anarchists are not so far from

a correct conception of what must ultimately prevail, but they are far astray respecting the methods by which it shall be obtained. Their attempt to grasp the rudder of the world's affairs shows an awful lack of appreciation of the mighty influences with which they seek to contend. Their efforts will merely precipitate upon themselves and upon others the terrible trouble which the Scriptures foretell.

God's people are distinctly warned that they must keep hands off, must not interfere with the powers that be. Their reliance must be upon the Lord and not in the use of carnal weapons. James, writing on this subject, declares the coming trouble, and tells that it will be especially severe upon the rich. "Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you" (James 5:1). No doubt the troubles will be equally upon the poor; but to them they will seem less severe since they have been accustomed to less. To God's people is the message, "Be patient, brethren, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord" (Zephaniah 3:8).

Jerome

Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus, in English Jerome, is known as the greatest Christian scholar of all time. Jerome single-handedly translated the bible into Latin, producing what we now know as the Latin Vulgate translation.

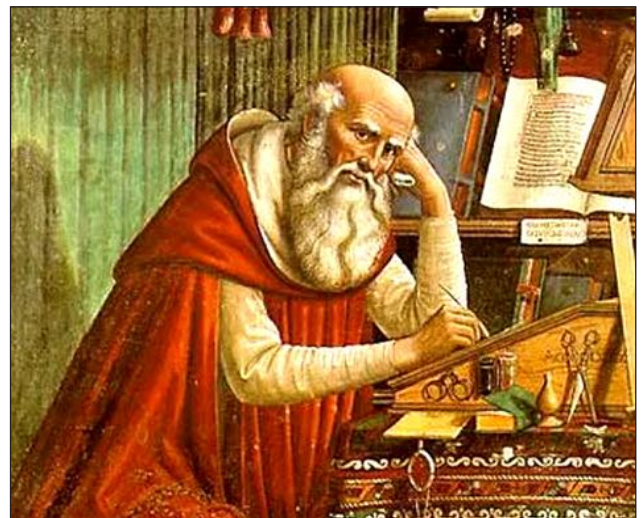
Jerome was born in the Roman town of Striden, Dalmatia (which is believed to be in modern Croatia or Slovenia) around the year 342-347 CE. He was born to wealthy Christian parents who commenced his education at home before sending him to Rome around the age of 12 where he continued studies under Aelius Donatus, who was training him in skills required to pursue a career as a lawyer. His education also included philosophy, Greek and Latin.

Despite having been raised by Christian parents, Jerome himself did not become a Christian himself until he was nearing the end of his time in Rome. Subsequently, he decided to be Baptised around the year 366, after grappling with the guilt he felt from living a life of loose morals during his time in Rome.

From Rome, Jerome spent around 20 years travelling around with friends, visiting places around Gaul, Italy, Thrace, and Turkey. During his travels he met with many different Christian groups, and their discussions lead him to begin his studies in theology. His longest sojourn was at Antioch, where his travels were stopped by him and two of his travelling companions becoming seriously ill; the two companions did not survive.

During his illness he had a dream that God was condemning him for his secular studies, and so he

vowed never again to own or read pagan literature. This dream prompted Jerome to move to the harsh Syrian desert Chalcis and live amongst a group of Christian Hermits, where he lived a life of self-discipline and abstinence. This was a very challenging time for Jerome. The conditions meant that his skin was burnt by the sun, he had to sleep on the ground, and he became quite thin. To ease his loneliness, he was forced to learn Syraic in order to communicate with the natives he was living with. As a way of distracting himself from the misery of the situation he turned his attention to learning Hebrew from a Jewish convert that was also living amongst the Hermits. He also furthered his studies in Greek.



Jerome (*Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus*)

Jerome remained in the desert for 2 years, after which time political pressures were beginning to rise within the church. It began to affect the desert region. He was suspected of being a heretic. This prompted him to return to Antioch, where he was reluctantly ordained as a priest. He accepted the priesthood on the conditions that he would be able to continue in his monastic style of life and studies, and that he would not be obligated to perform any priestly duties. From here he soon departed for Constantinople, where he continued his studies of the scriptures and Greek under Gregory Nazianzen. It was here that he began translating sermons into Latin. He remained there for around 2-3 years.

In 382 Jerome was requested by Pope Damasus I to return to Rome to sit on the Council of Rome and to work as his secretary. It was during this time that Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome to do a revised translation of the *Vetus Latina* (Old Latin Bible). He also spent his time running classes for Widows and virgins that were interested in the monastic way of life and answering their questions regarding scripture.

After the death of Pope Damasus in December 384, he decided to leave Rome. After some travel, he settled in a monastery in Bethlehem in 386, where he focused his studies on the Hebrew language. Around 390 he had begun to translate the Old Testament into Latin. Unlike previous translators, Jerome decided to do this using only the original Hebrew text, without referring at all to the Septuagint. He made this decision based on the fact that the Septuagint

had been rejected by mainstream Jews who felt it held many mistranslations, contained the apocryphal books which were not in the original Hebrew version, as well as being heavily influenced by Greek culture. He completed this work by 405. As well as his translation works, Jerome was known for his temper, as he vehemently opposed those that he felt were teaching false doctrine. He also devoted the final 15 years of his life to writing Biblical commentaries and other works. He died in Bethlehem on September 30, 420.

Jerome ensured that the Latin Vulgate not only made the Bible more accessible for the common people of the time, but he also strived to ensure its accuracy making it the main Bible used for English translations of the Bible even in modern times. For over a thousand years it was the most commonly used translation of the Bible. There are many famous quotes recorded of Jerome, but the one that best summarises the way he lived his life was, "Good, better, best. Never let it rest. 'Til your good is better and your better best."

The Vulgate not only made the Bible more accessible for the common people of the time, but it is one of the main Bibles used for English translations of the Bible. For over a thousand years it was the most commonly used translation of the Bible.¹

(1) There had been several Old Latin translations. Some say there were almost as many different Latin translations as there were manuscripts. (There are four or five editions of the Vulgate, too. Stuttgart is best, but Wordsworth-White is not far behind it.)

The River Euphrates

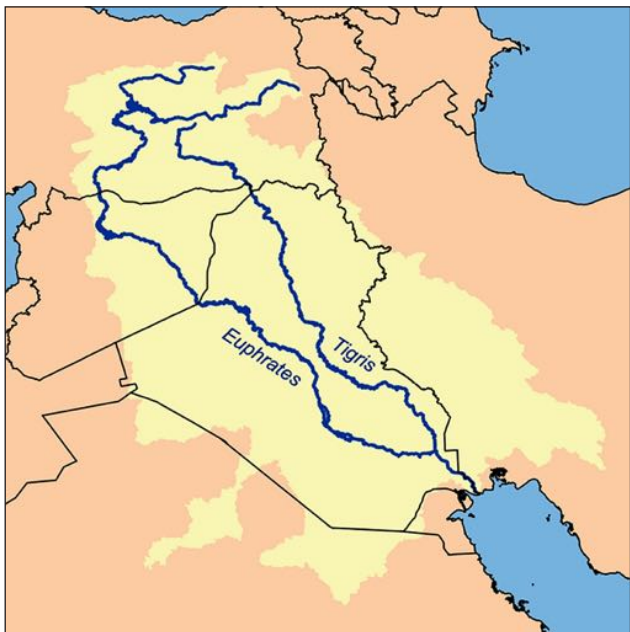
"On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates" (Genesis 15:18, NASB).

Euphrates (you FRAY tease) is the longest river of Western Asia and is one of the two major rivers in Mesopotamia, the other being the Tigris River.

The river is approximately 2,780 kilometres long. It is formed by the union of two branches, the Kara (the western Euphrates), which rises in the Armenian highlands of today's eastern Turkey, north of Erzurum, and the Murat (the eastern Euphrates), which issues from an area southwest of Mount Ararat. The upper reaches of the Euphrates flow through steep canyons and gorges, southeast across Syria, and through Iraq (ancient Babylon). The Khabur and the Balikh River join the Euphrates in eastern Syria. Both rivers have their origins in Turkey. Downstream, through its whole length, the Euphrates receives no further water flow. The river merges with the Tigris River before emptying into the Persian Gulf.

Because the river could be navigated by small vessels for 1950 kilometres it was a major trade route and there are the ruins of many ancient cities mentioned in the bible located along its course, including Babylon, Kish, Carchemish and Ur.

In the Bible the Euphrates is referred to as "the River Euphrates," "the great river, the River Euphrates," or only as "the River." The Euphrates was one of four rivers whose source was the springs of water originating in the Garden of Eden. "Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is



the Euphrates.” (Genesis 2:10-14 NASB) It is the only river out of the four mentioned that there is no details of its course or what it may yield.

The Euphrates is next mentioned in the promise to Abram. It was to form the northern boundary of the land promised to Abram and his descendants. “On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates’” (Genesis 15:18 NASB). When Israel was preparing to enter the land of promise, God re-iterated his promise to their fathers. “If you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him, then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river ... Euphrates, as far as the western sea” (Deuteronomy 11:22-24 NASB). The land was given to Abraham unconditionally because of his faith. However, for Israel to gain control of the land, they had to keep the commandments.

King David

The Israelites did not gain control of all the land until King David defeated Hadadezer, king of Zobah and took possession of the land through to the Euphrates. “So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass” (Joshua 21:43-45 NASB). King Solomon inherited and maintained this land as recorded “Judah

and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; they were eating and drinking and rejoicing. Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.” (1 Kings 4:20-21 NASB)

The Euphrates played another important part in the lives of Israelites. It signified the divide between those who served the True God and those who “served other gods.” “Joshua said to all the people, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac” (Joshua 24:2-3 NASB).

The Israelites are reminded “I gave you a land on which you had not laboured, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant. Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” The people answered and said, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods” (Joshua 24:13-16 NASB).

As followers of Christ there is the lesson that we too must stay on the right side of the Euphrates River. The side that Abram left pictures the ruler of this world Satan, while the other side represents the acceptance of Christ as our master and King. Like the Israelites, must say “We will serve the Lord.”

The river Euphrates is mentioned twice in Revelation: “Saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates’” (Revelation 9:14 NKJV).

“Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared” (Revelation 16:12 NKJV).

The history of the Euphrates River gives some of the clues to understand these verses. The Euphrates stood at the boundary of those who believed in God and those that believed in other gods. Babylon was destroyed in Daniel’s time by the drying up of the Euphrates allowing Darius to take the city. The drying up of the Euphrates could signify the loss of protection of Babylon and thus bring about its destruction at the end of the age.

For more information: herald-magazine.com/2018/01/01/trouble-in-the-harvest

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Website: australianbiblestudents.org

Editorial Committee

Ray Charlton, Adam Kopczyk, Matthew Christopher

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Convention

Australian General Convention

Online Convention, January 26-28, 2024, EDT
<https://meetings.dialpad.com/australianconvention>
Friday 7-9 pm, Sat. 9 am-4 pm, Sun. 9 am-1 pm
Information: australianbiblestudents@gmail.com

The Bible Teachings

On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom,
Sin Offering, and Atonement.

This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute in the 1970’s, setting out the Bible teachings on topics eluding many in the Christian world. Pages 6-9 in this edition of the Peoples Paper is the next part of this 274-page book. Brethren may read more of the content through the Berean Bible Institute’s official webpage.

www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf

The Creator Won’t Ask...

- What kind of car you drove but will ask how many people you drove who didn’t have transportation.
- The square footage of your house but will ask how many people you welcomed into your home.
- How many fancy clothes you had in your closet but will ask how many of those clothes helped the needy.
- About your social status but will ask what kind of class you displayed.
- How many material possessions you had but will ask if they dictated your life.
- What your highest salary was but will ask if you compromised your character to obtain that salary.
- How much overtime you worked but will ask if you worked overtime for your family and loved ones.
- How many promotions you received but will ask how you promoted others.
- What your job title was but will ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.
- What you did to help yourself but will ask what you did to help others.
- How many friends you had but will ask how many people to whom you were a true friend.
- What you did to protect your rights but will ask what you did to protect the rights of others.
- In what neighbourhood you lived but will ask how you treated your neighbours.
- About the colour of your skin but will ask about the content of your character.
- How many times your deeds matched your words but will ask how many times they didn’t.

When there is nothing left but the Creator, that is when you find out the Creator is all you need.

Memorial

“Do this in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

The Lord’s Memorial this year falls on Sunday, 21 April, 2024, after sundown. An online service will be provided for brethren starting at 1900 hours AEST. Details of the service can be obtained by emailing — australianbiblestudents@gmail.com

The Opening of a New Year

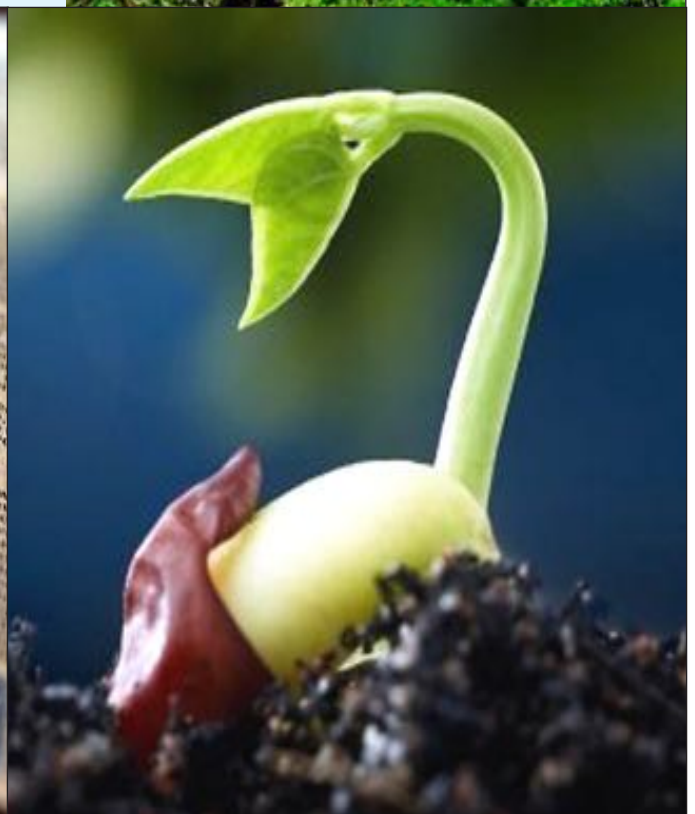
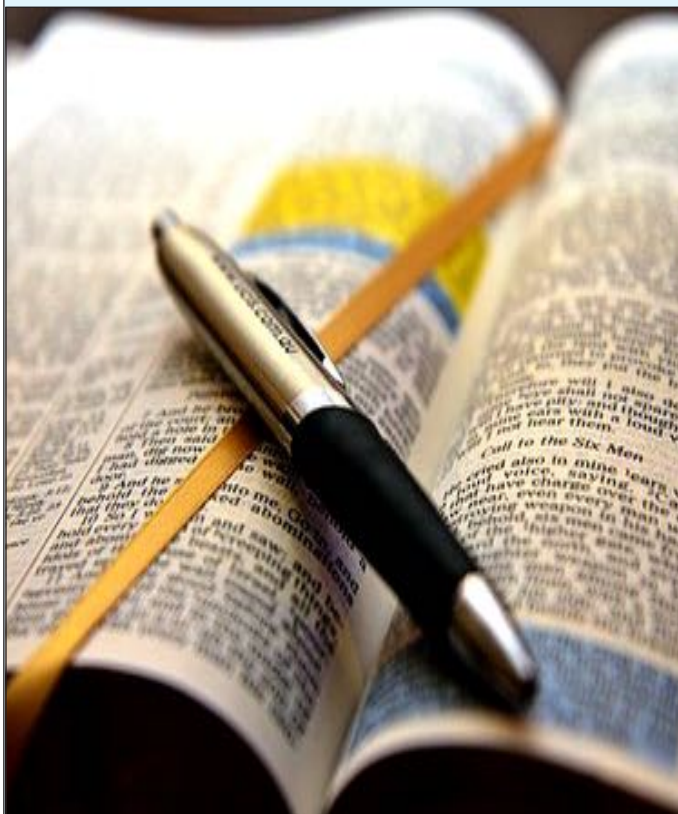
STANDING at the portal of the opening year
Words of comfort meet us, hushing every fear;
Spoken through the silence by our Father's voice,
Tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

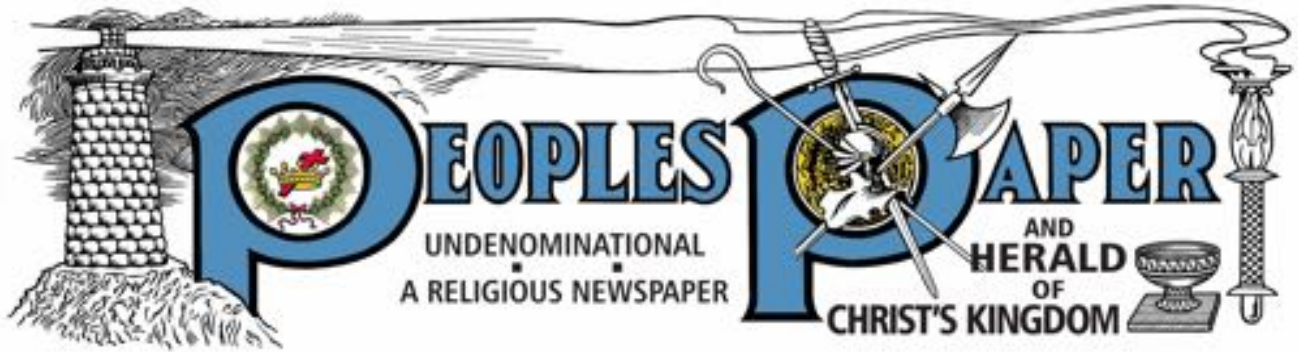
"I, the Lord, am with thee, be thou not afraid;
I will help and strengthen, be thou now dismayed.
Yea, I will uphold thee with Mine own right hand;
Thou art called and chosen in My sight to stand."
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

For the year before us, oh, what rich supplies!
For the poor and needy, living streams shall rise;
For the sad and mournful, shall His grace abound;
For the faint and feeble, perfect strength be found.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

He will never fail us, He will not forsake:
His eternal covenant He will never break;
Resting on His promise, what have we to fear?
God is all-sufficient for the coming year.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

Author: Frances R Havergal, 1836-1879
Music: F. J. Haydn, 1732-1809





“The Word of God is Not Bound”

(2 Timothy 2:9)

“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel; wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. “Therefore, I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Timothy 2:8-10). Verse 9 from the Amplified Version reads: “For that [Gospel] I am suffering affliction and even wearing chains, like a criminal. But the Word of God is not chained or imprisoned!”

It is generally acknowledged that when the Apostle Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, he was imprisoned in Rome; and that this was the last of Paul’s epistles. It is understood that Paul was therefore literally in bonds, or chains, as the Amplified Version states. Knowing also that his earthly ministry was nearing its end, some may have expected that this servant of Christ would have been sad and downcast as he faced death, after so much suffering for the Gospel’s sake. He was not sad and downcast, for he knew that while he was in chains, the Word of God was not bound. He knew there was the whole Gospel Age ahead, during which time the members of Christ’s body, the Church, would be found by the proclaiming of God’s Word and the influence of the holy Spirit upon those who had ears to hear.

One of the most outstanding experiences of any of the apostles was granted to Paul and helped to impress upon him the assurance that the truths of God’s Word would never be allowed to be bound or hidden. Referring to the visions and revelations Paul received from the Lord and described in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4. It seemed Christ revealed his truth in an outstanding way, perhaps even more than to those who were with him in person. Paul states “Such an one caught up to the third heaven ... he was caught up into paradise.” These verses imply that Paul was carried forward by

revelation on the stream of time to behold what had been accomplished throughout the Gospel Age, as though he was looking back upon those events from the third heaven, the Kingdom of God.

This means that God’s Word of truth had been revealed to the hearts and minds of all the members of the body of Christ, so that the words of James 1:18 would have been fulfilled, “Of His (God’s) own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.” God begat the first fruits with or by the Word of truth. In other words, as the Lord’s people comes to a knowledge of the Word of truth, it so acts upon their minds and hearts that they are led to respond to him, and yielding themselves fully to the Lord the result is the receiving of the holy Spirit. It is through the Word of truth that they are led to become followers of Christ.

Revelations to Paul

The granting of those revelations to Paul means also that the apostle, perceiving in his day “the mystery of iniquity was already working,” he could see beyond this partial hindrance to the work of the truth, and would know that Christ’s true church would be with him in the “third heaven” in readiness for the Kingdom reign to follow. Being “caught up to

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paradise” would convey the same assurance to the apostle. He would see in his vision the “heavenly paradise” as revealed in Revelation 2:7, with the overcomers of the Gospel Age given “to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” This would be the spiritual paradise, in contrast with the earthly paradise that will also be established throughout the length and breadth of the whole world.

Beholding this heavenly “paradise of God” was also equivalent to the amazing experience which Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. “I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me also.” Paul explains the wonderful information he received from the Lord directly, and not through association with fellow apostles. This apparently took place on the Damascus Road when he was intercepted on a mission contrary to the Lord’s cause, and from which time onward, he declared in Acts 26:19 “I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.”

Knowing all this wonderful outworking of God’s plan truly gave full assurance to the Apostle Paul that the Word of God is not bound, because it is the message of God’s Word which accomplishes all that was revealed to Paul in the vision of the “third heaven,” in the spiritual kingdom. Further, not only did Paul perceive the heavenly phase of the kingdom, but he would also grasp the restoration of the earthly paradise being accomplished through the truths of God’s Word conveyed to all the families of the earth.

Working Out of God’s Plan

Our Lord Jesus indicated this same working out of God’s plan in his words recorded in John 12:47, 48. “If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” These are very helpful verses when we consider the situation of those people who rejected our Lord at his first advent. These words reveal what the Kingdom will mean to mankind: the very truths, the very principles, the very words that the Lord spoke at His first advent will be the same upon which mankind will be judged when they all know the Lord from the least to the greatest. This helps us to see, then, that the Word of God will be vital, it will be instructive, it will guide mankind to obey and know the Lord on the earthly plane. Paul knew, as our Lord did, what was going to be accomplished right down over the two thousand years of the Gospel Age, and throughout the



Jesus, giving words of life

thousand years of the Kingdom Age. Paul knew in his own day, “the Word of God is not bound,” but would accomplish all its wonderful works in harmony with God’s will.

In addition to this long-range view of the Word of God not being bound, we know that the Apostle intended Timothy and all Christians from his day forward to know that the binding of himself with literal chains could not hinder the Gospel message progressing in harmony with God’s will in His plan from that time forward. That is why he wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:8, “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.” Paul is saying, be not ashamed of me in my present situation; do not be offended; do not be intimidated or kept from being a servant of Christ because of the way I’m being treated. No, indeed, this reminds us of the participation associated with the Memorial of our Lord’s death — participating with our Lord in His experiences. So, the Lord’s people are to be partakers of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God, even as Paul was setting that lovely example in his own faithfulness under all those trying conditions.

Purpose of Paul’s Imprisonment

Possibly Paul did not know that the very imprisonment which he suffered would have such a far-reaching influence in promoting the cause of the Word of God. Because of his imprisonment, restricting his ability to visit the Churches, he instead wrote letters. God preserved these epistles for the benefit of many more than the members of the actual churches or individuals to whom they were sent in Paul’s day, even down to us in this end of the Gospel Age. When we think of all the valuable epistles recorded by the apostle, we feel he would never have realised in his day the full extent and value of all these wonderful messages.

Further, in Paul’s case, his being in bonds sometimes resulted in promoting the cause of the gospel, as stated in Philippians 1:12-14, “I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of

the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” Here is an actual reaction favourable to the brethren because Paul was really in prison; this shows how the example of the faithful servant of God can react upon others, who, under other circumstances, may have felt intimidated because of the treatment which Paul received. So, his words, “What happened unto me has fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel,” shows how he gave courage, confidence, and assurance to the brethren who went forward despite the threatening possibility of receiving similar treatment to the apostle himself.

The Falling Away

Not only was the Apostle Paul given revelations about the Plan of God being fulfilled into the Kingdom Age, he informed the Thessalonian brethren of events to transpire during the early part of the Gospel Age in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. “Now we beseech you, brethren ... that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled ... as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” Here we find Paul was given instruction regarding the great falling away in respect of the gospel truths. This means, that by prophetic vision he was able to detect and tell beforehand what was to come to pass.

Following on this “falling away” from the truths of God’s Word, how clearly it is shown by the Lord’s messages to the Churches, in Revelation, that the truths of God’s Word were bound or restricted for a limited time only. When the Lord’s due time came, the message to the church in Philadelphia showed how truly the Word of God was not bound, from the period of the Reformation onward in particular. A message of this kind gives courage, confidence, and inspiration even to us today. When we recall the opening up of the Word of God after the period of the Dark Ages, when there was almost a dead condition throughout some of the church periods. The Lord’s will in respect to His Word is stated, “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no

man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it” (Revelation 3:7-8).

The Word of God is not bound. It is obvious that, when that time came, God’s Word was to be elucidated, to be revealed and expounded, gradually of course. “I know thy works; I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” This was the time when the noble Reformers, by God’s grace and with His Spirit in their hearts, defied all opposition — because God was with them.

We see further that those noble Reformers were used by God to prepare for additional unfolding of truth throughout the last century, leading up to the harvest truths which the Lord has blessed to his people now for over one hundred years. The clear understanding of the manner of Christ’s return was of outstanding importance, to grasp that the “days of the Son of man,” Christ’s second presence, with the Church, meant additional unfolding of truth for the benefit of God’s people.

The Harvest Period

Our Lord made special reference to the harvest period at the end of the Gospel Age, when the time of his second presence became due, in Matthew 13:39, “The harvest is the end of the age.” We call to mind the vision given in Revelation 14:14, where our Lord is pictured as the Son of man, sitting upon a cloud, with a sickle in His hand, and a crown on His head, depicting the time for the reaping of the harvest of the Gospel Age. This signifies that the harvest of the Gospel Age will be completed before the Millennial Age, or Kingdom Age, begins. In other words, the first resurrection of the “dead in Christ,” and members of the church who do not sleep in death but are changed to be with the Lord and the risen saints, would be completed before the new age, the Millennial Age, begins. This would seem necessary so that the value of Christ’s sacrifice, covering the church class throughout the Gospel Age, could be made available to bless Israel under the New Covenant, and then to all the families of the earth throughout the Kingdom Age. The church class are being developed under the Abrahamic Covenant, while the New Covenant applies to the Millennial Age only.

The distinction between the work of the Gospel Age and the Millennial Age is well revealed by the Apostle Peter in Acts 2:18, 17. These verses we know were quoted from the prophet Joel. Verse 18, “On my servants and handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit,” undoubtedly refers to the Gospel Age only, the time when God is selecting His servants and handmaidens, calling out a people for His name, to be associated with Christ in the heavenly kingdom.

Verse 17, “I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh,” clearly refers to the Millennial Age. If the Millennial Age were present for the past nearly one hundred years, we would expect God’s spirit to be poured out



Nicholas and Arius at Nicean Council

on all flesh. Some of the Revivalist people are even claiming this with the speaking in tongues, etc., which is a great deception of Satan in these last days of the Gospel Age. It is obvious that God's Spirit is not now manifest upon all flesh. Evil men are waxing worse and worse (2 Timothy 3:13), but with the overthrow of the present order of things and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom we rejoice that God's Spirit will ultimately be poured out upon all flesh in the new order of things.

The Passing Away of this Present Evil World

The passing of the present order, "this present evil world," and its outcome, is well pictured in Psalms 46:9, 10. Here we have a message of God speaking peace to humanity. The church class will then be with Christ. The time of trouble will have humbled mankind sufficiently so that, with the Kingdom operating, the blessings will so much more than compensate for all troubles of the past six thousand years of man's work week, so to speak. "Weeping endures for a night but joy cometh in the morning." Joy comes in the Millennial morning. "Be still and know that I am God," will be the message to subdue, humble, and hush humanity, brought down, as it were, as a necessary preparation for the introduction of the Kingdom of God.

How thankful we are, then, that the Word of God is not bound to God's people who are rejoicing in the liberty of the sons of God, the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. How favoured we are then, in these days of the harvest of the Gospel Age, to realise the blessings of God's Word, in having personal experience that the Word of God is not bound but is a living revelation to all who meditate upon its precepts and are blessed thereby to God's praise. The Word of God is alive to the hearts of God's people; they prove it as a reality. The Plan of God is so satisfying and is the only solution to all distress and perplexity throughout the world today. We are delighted that in this end of the age the truths of God's Word are assembled in such as the various translations of the Bible, the availability of dictionaries and Bible helps such as "Studies in the Scriptures."

These vital keys to the Bible, the truths, satisfy our longings as nothing else can do. It was lovely of the Apostle Paul to request the co-operation of the Thessalonian brethren in his ministry, even as he felt God had blessed them, as he declared in 2 Thessalonians 3:1, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you." May the Word of God have free course, and be glorified in each of God's people today, to His praise for all time.

The Lord's Last Supper and Memorial Considerations

"This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

What we refer to as the "Last Supper" is an important topic for students of the scriptures. The earthly life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was almost at an end. He had accomplished much in his ministry of about 32 years. (While the precise length of the Lord's ministry does not bear directly on the topic under consideration in this article, it is an interesting study. Daniel 9:27 would be one of the several key verses to examine in such a review.)

The fate of the entire human race was at stake in Jesus perfectly offering up himself as a ransom for Adam. Jesus, alone, was the key to all of the Heavenly Father's divine plan of redemption, and we rejoice to know that He was faithful unto death. His resurrection just days after his crucifixion was proof that our Lord was indeed the promised "ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6).

The commemoration of the Last Supper in our observance of the annual Memorial celebration has two important symbols: the bread, and the fruit of the vine. Jesus makes it clear how to interpret those two

symbols, in stating that the bread "is my body" and the fruit of the vine "is my blood" (Matthew 26:26-28). We must be careful not only to recognize those two symbols but also be very careful about adding any additional symbols to this simple, yet profound, commemoration. (Please note that the second symbol, the fruit of the vine, is also called a "cup." The cup is not, however, the symbol — its contents are the symbol. Nonetheless, because the fruit of the vine has to be contained, the cup serves as a synonym for its contents — both practically and scripturally.)

Was Jesus "Broken For Us"?

In Memorial service discourses, we often hear the expression that Jesus "was broken for us." Where does this expression come from? It comes from 1 Corinthians 11:24, "this is my body, which is broken for you" in the King James Version. The phrase "which is broken for you," however, is likely spurious. It is not present in the Sinaiticus or Vaticanus, two of the oldest manuscripts, nor in most other of the highest-quality manuscripts.

Another indication is that none of the Gospel accounts mention the phrase “is broken for you” (Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22, Luke 22:19). Rather, the expression is, as recorded in the Matthew account, simply “Take, eat; this is my body.” (We must keep in mind that Paul, the author of 1 Corinthians, was not personally present at the Last Supper, so he would have received details of that event from Peter, the other apostles who were present, or perhaps from the Lord himself. Please see 1 Corinthians 11:23.)

It is interesting to note that there is no other verse in the Bible that states that Jesus was broken for us. There is no question that Jesus suffered greatly for us and for the world — but why is the word “broken” used so often? It may be because of Matthew 26:26: “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it.” The Greek word for “brake” in this verse is Strong’s 2806, *klao*, which simply means “to break.” Therefore, was the breaking of the loaf symbolic, or simply practical? If it was symbolic, are we adding a third symbol to the Memorial?

It does make sense that breaking the loaf was practical, in that each of the apostles would be given a piece. There is no other way to dispense portions of the loaf other than to break it apart. Was the passing of the bread emblem also symbolic? Are any other actions or aspects of the Last Supper also symbolic? In our interpretation of what the symbols of the initial Memorial service are, we must be careful not to make virtually everything in the service that was in reality simply practical to do, mean something more. If the Memorial is to symbolize our Lord’s body and blood, perhaps we should consider affirming that the only symbols in the service were the bread and the cup.

There is another caution to be noted on this point. John 19:33-36 says, “But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, ‘A bone of him shall not be broken.’”

This is because Jesus is “our Passover lamb” who was sacrificed for our sins (1 Corinthians 5:7, John 1:29), and the Passover lamb was not to have any of its bones broken. Exodus 12:46 adds, “In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.” The same restriction appears in Numbers 9:12.

Also, note that early Christians broke bread as noted in Acts 2:42, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Generally, no symbolism in the breaking of bread is suggested in instances such as this. It was a practical matter to facilitate the distribution of the bread to the gathered brethren. (As students of the scriptures, we do not want to miss



Jesus at the Last Supper

anything that is symbolic, has a double meaning, etc. However, we must also be very careful that we do not see a need to find double or special meanings where literal Interpretations are intended.)

The ASV version properly renders 1 Corinthians 11:24 as follows: “And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.’” This rendering is in harmony with each of the Gospel accounts.

Is the Memorial About Jesus Only?

Is the purpose of the annual observance to remember Jesus exclusively, or to also commemorate the role of the footstep followers of Jesus?

Jesus said of this occasion, “This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). There is universal agreement that the primary focus of the Memorial service is to remember our Lord’s sacrifice. Is there a secondary focus as respects the Body of Christ, i.e. the church’s role in God’s plan? Is that aspect to also be celebrated at the Memorial service? Some brethren believe that such is the case. Other brethren, including those who zealously embrace the church’s share in the sin-offering, believe that when Jesus said “do this in remembrance of me,” he did not mean “do this in remembrance of us.”

One of the issues in this matter relates to whether or not there are primary and secondary symbolisms or only one symbolism in the emblems. There are only two emblems in this celebration; it is important for us to be clear about what those emblems mean. Sometimes seeing “primary and secondary” meanings is an accurate interpretation, and sometimes it is not. For example, when we read that Jesus “gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:6) we do not find a primary and secondary application of who is the “ransom.” Jesus, alone, provided the ransom, and there are no secondary applications whatsoever. Of course, sometimes there are secondary applications

in scripture. For example, our Lord provided a secondary application of the prophet Elijah to John the Baptist in Matthew 11:13-15 (NIV), “For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. Whoever has ears, let them hear.” Some brethren also see a third application of Elijah as a type of the church (see *The Herald of Christ’s Kingdom*, January/February 2019).

Primary, secondary, and even more applications are certainly also found in parables.

The secondary application of one or both of the Memorial emblems, however, likely stems from an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 10:16, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”

The keyword “communion” in this verse is Strong’s 2842, *koinonia*, and its meanings include fellowship, association, and community (Thayers Lexicon). Christians are privileged to have communion with Jesus. While there are verses of scripture which brethren believe establish the concept of the church’s share in the sin-offering doctrine, 1 Corinthians 10:16 may, or may not, be one of them. *Koinonia* is also used in scripture to note a sense of communion of purpose, when there is no oneness of personage. For example, 2 Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion (*koinonia*) of the holy [Spirit], be with you all. Amen.” Obviously, Paul’s listeners were not one in personage with the holy Spirit, since the holy Spirit is not a person. They do, however, desire to live in harmony with God’s power and influence, thus their “communion” with the holy Spirit.

Koinonia exists where people have a common purpose, a common goal, and perhaps even a common hope. There is a sense of communion among people who have a common interest — the common interest binds them together. Community is established when people, for example, have a common history — such



Jesus teaching disciples the Lord’s Prayer

as those who might have lived in a particular part of the world during a historically significant time.

So, determining if 1 Corinthians 10:16 indicates that the church is pictured in one or both of the Memorial emblems is entirely interpretive. The Greek word for “communion” is not singular in its meaning, so we should be cautious about drawing definitive conclusions.

Who Is the “One Bread”?

The answer to this question is easy, because there is a nearly universal agreement regarding the correct rendering of 1 Corinthians 10:17. Here is that verse in the KJV: “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” This is a mistranslation. The NIV renders the verse as follows: “Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.” (Virtually all other Bible translations have similar wording.) “We being many are one loaf” is not an accurate rendering. The “one loaf” or “one bread” is, of course, Jesus. We “partake” of Jesus because of our obedience to, and relationship with, him. The world will “partake” of Jesus in the Kingdom.

We occasionally hear that we are part of that “one loaf” since bread is made up of many grains, even if that is not what the verse literally says. For this application to be Biblically valid, we would need to find where in the scriptures the church is referred to as grains.

This brings up an important aspect of Biblical interpretation — we must be careful not to apply symbols to situations and/or objects that were never intended to symbolize something. For example, our Lord’s garments were taken from him prior to his crucifixion (Matthew 27:35), and lots were cast for them. The garments belonged to Jesus, so is the church pictured in those garments? It might be easy to answer in the affirmative because a singular garment is made of many threads. The glorified Christ is made up of Jesus as the head and the church as his body. However, since we do not see the church pictured as threads in the scriptures, we do not make such an application.

In what many call “the Lord’s prayer,” Jesus said “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). Most brethren believe that this refers to the physical needs of life, as well as daily spiritual nourishment — not in any way connected to the actual Memorial emblem. Still, the word for “bread” in this verse is the same Greek word, *artos*, as in John 6:35 (“I am the bread of life”), and in 1 Corinthians 10:17 (“we all share the one loaf” NIV). We must be careful to not necessarily apply the same meaning to every use of a particular word in scripture.

Jesus is the “one loaf” as noted in John 6:35, “I am the bread of life.” The Lord expands on this reality in John 6:51: “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live



Bread and cup, symbols of redemption in Christ

forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” No one but our Lord is ever referred to as “the bread of life.” Bread is a wonderful symbol for Jesus, because it is a symbol of life, as is water. Note our Lord’s words to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:13,14: “Jesus answered and said unto her, ‘Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.’” Just as “bread and water” are traditionally considered necessary to sustain life, they are suitable symbols of Jesus who will offer life to the entire human family. His reference in John 6:51, “the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is my flesh,” is a direct reference to his sovereign role as the ransom for Adam, and is the substance of the bread emblem in the Memorial service.

What Is the Meaning of “Cup”?

The word “cup” in the New Testament is always Strong’s 4221, *poterion*. Strong’s defines this word with three meanings: a drinking vessel, the contents of the vessel, and figuratively a lot or fate.

We suggest that these two meanings help explain some of the uses of the word “cup” in the New Testament. First, there is the literal cup in the initial Memorial service. Since the “fruit of the vine” is a liquid, it requires a means of containment and conveyance, and that is why a literal cup was provided. There was no other reasonable way to distribute this emblem to the apostles. Second, the Lord used the word “cup” to describe an experience, and, by extension, the fulfilling of a responsibility.

When James and John asked if they could have special places of favor with Jesus in glory, our Lord responded (Mark 10:38) as follows: “Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?” Was Jesus here referring to the Memorial cup?

If so, since he clearly stated that the cup represents his blood, the text could read “can you drink of the blood that I drink of?” which would not make sense. As mentioned, Strong’s Concordance also provides a secondary definition of “cup” as one’s lot or experiences in life. Jesus was here essentially saying that this request would not be easily granted, for a favor in glory requires obedience and faithfulness during the difficulties in the Christian walk. Favor is granted as a reward for faithfulness, and that is achieved with great effort. (See John 18:11 and Acts 14:22.)

The Lord also asked, “are you able to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” Was the Lord talking about water baptism? No, he was not. No one is baptized as Jesus was at Jordan by John (Matthew 3:14). The Lord was continuing the figurative theme of the “cup” with the figurative use of baptism. He was talking about the rigors of the Christian life as we endeavor to fight the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the Adversary.

The “cup” in Mark 10:38 about life experience is not the same “cup” we see in the Memorial service, because Jesus clearly states that the cup he passed to the apostles at the Last Supper “is my blood,” just as the bread “is my flesh.” The Memorial cup symbolized Jesus’ blood. The cup he asked the Heavenly Father to remove from him in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36) pertained to his experiences, not to his blood. The challenge to brothers James and John regarding what is required to prove faithful was about the rigors of a Christian life of obedience, not about Jesus’ blood.

Only the flesh and blood of the perfect man Jesus could provide the ransom for the perfect man Adam. The prospective members of the bride of Christ are imperfect, and hence have no share in providing the ransom for Adam.

It is always important for students of the scriptures to properly understand additional applications, if they exist, in the experiences of individuals portrayed in the scriptures. We must keep in mind, however, that not everything in the Word of God has additional applications. If such was the case, it would be easy, but not a good use of consecrated time, to needlessly search for additional meanings where they do not actually exist. Where they do exist, we can be richly blessed by the intended associations.

Special caution should be exercised when we look for double-meanings or associations in the experiences that were unique to Jesus in paying the ransom for Father Adam.

The beloved hymn “Rock of Ages” says it well: “In my hand no price I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

Paul summarized the sole reason for the Memorial emblems succinctly in 1 Corinthians 11:26. “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”

— *Br. Robert Brand*

“Sold All that He Had and Bought”

The Bible Teachings (Part Eighteen) – Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering, Atonement

Parables Illustrating Difference Between Ransom-price and Sin-offering.

Two of our Lord’s parables are very helpful to gain a proper understanding of the difference between the Ransom-price and the Sin-Offering. “The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls, who, when he hath found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:44-46). The Kingdom of Heaven, the Millennial Kingdom, its glory and honours and its privileges in connection with the world’s restitution, constitute the great prize peculiar to this Gospel Age. This prize never before was possible of attainment, and opportunity to attain it will end with this age, when it will be established in power and great glory at the Second Coming of our Lord- at which time “we shall appear with Him in glory.” This prize was first presented to our Lord Jesus; as we read, “Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.” This is the same prize or High Calling.

Process by Which Kingdom is Obtainable

The two parables under consideration illustrate the process by which this Kingdom is obtainable. Our Lord left the glory of the Father and humbled Himself to become “the man Christ Jesus.” But this humbling was not part of the Ransom nor of the Sin-Offering. It was preparatory work. A perfect man had sinned and had involved the entire race in his death condemnation, and only a perfect man could pay the price for one or any number or all of the sinners. When our Lord reached the age of thirty years, the age of manhood according to the law, He was ready to be put on trial for His own life, that by loyalty under tests He might prove His worthiness of everlasting life on the human plane. Only such a tested, proven, perfect man could be the world’s ransom price.

What Our Lord’s Keeping the Divine Law Did

Our lord’s keeping of the Divine law was not the ransom-price of the sinners. It merely demonstrated that our Lord could be an acceptable ransom-price for all. The giving of His life at thirty years in consecration was finished at Calvary. By that consecration, by the things which He suffered, by the laying down of

His life, He laid down the world’s ransom-price. It mattered not that the testing of His personal loyalty and His consecration of Himself unto death were simultaneous. It was just as proper that it should be so as it was that He should have been tried and tested first and should subsequently have surrendered His life willingly as man’s ransom-price.

Selling All

This feature of the work — the laying down of His life — is illustrated in the parables under consideration by the statement, “Sold all that He had.” As in the parable the selling of all that the merchant had did not purchase the field or the pearl, but merely secured the price, which was sufficient afterward for its purchase, so, our Lord’s surrender of His life and all of its rights and interests sacrificially on the world’s behalf did not purchase the world--did not pay the price--but merely secured the ransom-price for the sins of the world, to be applied afterward as He may please.

Securing and Using Ransom-Price Different Transactions

As in the parable the price was afterward used in the purchase of the treasure, so in reality our Lord’s payment of the price to Justice corresponded to the buying of the treasure, the buying: of the pearl. In other words, the ransom- price of the world was secured by our lord by the sacrifice of His human life, but the use of that price for the purchase of the treasure was a later and totally different transaction. It was after our Lord had risen from the dead and sojourned with His Apostles forty days and had ascended up on high that He “bought us with His own precious blood.” “He appeared in the presence of God for us” and there applied on our behalf the merit or ransom-price which previously cost Him His life.



Jesus at his baptism

Buying Treasure in Field Illustrates Purchase of Church

Those whose eyes of understanding are open to a discernment of “the mystery of God” will readily see the further application of the parable to us, the lord’s followers and members. By the grace of God our lord paid the price and bought us for whom He appeared. He did not buy the world, but the “Church.” He “loved us and bought us with His own precious blood.” “Ye were redeemed [bought] not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18,19). But this application of the ransom-price to us is provisional, conditional. To be of the class included in this purchase requires that we shall not only flee from sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ unto justification, but that additionally we must have our Lord’s character-likeness and must, like Him, sell all that we have, that we might share with Him in His great work and thus pass His merit on for the purchase of the world- for the cancellation of the sins of the whole world, at the close of this age.

Must Have Christ’s Spirit of Sacrifice

Whoever has not the Spirit of Christ in this sacrificing is none of His. And whoever, after thus consecrating his life, draws back does so unto perdition, destruction (Hebrews 10:39). Whoever seeks to preserve his life- the restitution life imputed to him through the merit of Christ — will lose his eternal life (Mark 8:35). This principle is applicable to the Church only, during this age. The rule will be the reverse for the world during the Millennium. Whereas we receive of Christ restitution rights to sacrifice them as His members and to gain the new nature with Him, the world will get restitution rights to keep them everlasting and never to sacrifice them.

The Merit All from the One Man

In the transaction, be it noted, the merit, the value, all proceeded from the one man — the man Christ Jesus. No more was needed. No more was demanded by Justice for the sins of the whole world. So to speak, our lord Jesus loaned to the “elect” the merit of His righteousness, imputing it to us by faith as a wedding garment. Thereby He qualifies us as His members and in His name to share in His sacrificial work in order that we may be permitted to share with Him in His Millennial Kingdom glory and its great uplifting work for the world of mankind. The merit of Jesus now temporarily is loaned in justification by faith to the Church and which must be sacrificed again by us as His “members” — that is to constitute eventually the ransom-price of the whole world of mankind.

It is the merit of Jesus which now temporarily is loaned in justification by faith to the Church and which must be sacrificed again by us as His “members”- that is to constitute eventually the ransom-price of the whole world of mankind, who are to be blest during the Millennium.



Treasure, hidden in the field

Condition for Sharing His Resurrection

The condition upon which we may share the Millennial Kingdom with our lord is that we shall walk in His steps; that we shall suffer with Him; that we shall drink of His cup; be partakers of the blood of the New Covenant which, at the end of this age, will be sealed for Israel, and the world. Thus, we shall be sharers in the sufferings of Christ, by immersion into His death, in order that in due time, we may share also in “His resurrection.”

Counting Cost and Selling All

Who cannot see the force of these parables? Who cannot note that our dear Redeemer counted well the cost, then laid down His life- sold all that He had? And who does not remember that He calls upon us to sit down and count the cost of being His disciples? The field will be bought. The precious pearl will be secured by our lord, in harmony with the Father’s arrangement. And more than this, the faithful elect Church will secure a share therein as members of His Glorified Body. How important, then, that we count the cost in advance and that we count not our lives dear unto us that we may win the prize, the pearl, the treasure! (Z1909- 379).

“GIVE THEE FOR A COVENANT”

Christ, Head, and Body

“Thus, saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers; Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose thee. Thus, saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee, and I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places” (Isaiah 49:7-9).

Earthly Inheritance and Mediator Different

Full often have we made application of this Scripture to our Lord, the Head, and the Church, His Body. We now call attention particularly to the feature which declares, “I will preserve thee and give thee for a Covenant unto the people, to establish the earth,” etc. Notice the fact that the people and their earthly inheritance are here differentiated from the great Mediator of the Covenant, through whom the people are to be blessed. Our lord has not yet received the heathen for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. He has not yet regathered and blessed natural Israel and made them the special channels of His blessing to mankind. For more than eighteen centuries He has been waiting at the right hand of majesty for His to be turned over to Him — for the time to come when He shall take to Himself His great power and reign. The beginning of that reign will be the binding of Satan. Then the blessing and uplifting of the groaning creation will follow. Gradually the world will be prepared to resume covenant relations with God at the close of the Millennium.

Ministry of the World’s New Covenant

Why the delay? Why did He not begin the work at once, immediately after He ascended up on high? The Scripture answer is that, in harmony with the Divine Plan, He has been waiting for the “members” of His Body to join with Him in sacrifice in the sufferings of this present time, that they may share with Him as His “members” in the glorious work to which He has been appointed as the Spiritual Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:29). From this standpoint all the work of God’s people during this Gospel Age is so much of the ministry of the world’s New Covenant- serving that New Covenant by getting themselves and each other ready for the future work of glory at the expense of self-denials as respects earthly things and the present life.

Paul’s Application to the Church

Note St. Paul’s application of our text to the Church. He quotes the passage as applicable to the Body of Christ, saying, “We, then, workers together, beseech also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted (the antitypical Atonement Day), and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time (when we, like our Lord, may sacrifice earthly rights and restitution privileges, and thereby attain the spiritual blessing of our “high calling of God in Christ Jesus”); behold, now is the day of salvation” — the great salvation to the Divine nature (2 Corinthians 6:2).

No Room for Question

Reading again the prophecy from which this quotation is made — our text — we perceive that there



The Apostle Paul, who wrote Hebrews

is no room to question that the entire Christ Head and Body was given as a Covenant for the people, the world, to institute general “times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).

Blood of New Covenant Signifies “Better Sacrifices”

We see, in this connection, also the appropriateness of our Lord’s speaking of His “Cup” of suffering and death which He invited His faithful to share with Him as being not only His own blood shed for us, but also “the blood of the New Covenant shed for many,” in which we are privileged to participate. Those who see and who appreciate the privilege rejoice to be counted worthy to have fellowship or participation with Christ in His sufferings and sacrifices- that they may share with Him also in His glories and work. The blood of the New Covenant signifies the “better sacrifices” by which God has been pleased to arrange to bring the whole world anew into Covenant relations with Himself.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

“If any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. [Such are already back into harmony or covenant relationship with God.] And all [these] things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ [brought us back to covenant relationship], and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He [God] hath made Him [Jesus] to be sin [offering] for us [Him] who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Set Your Mind on Things Above

“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:2-3 NASB).

While journeying on the narrow way there are days that are a struggle, things do not appear to be going right, the battles against the flesh can be wearisome. Trials can be tough bringing pressures which can be hard to bear.

While we are here on earth, we cannot fully escape all the troubles this world can bring. We can through prayer, study, and learning, rise above this tumult. Whatever we must face we can only remain steadfast, strong, and faithful if we rely on God’s strength. Apostle Paul writes, “There is nothing in us that allows us to claim that we are capable of doing this work. The capacity we have comes from God” (2 Corinthians 3:5 GNB).

Being able to rise above the fear, temptation and the hardship of this life comes about because we are in Christ, redeemed and set free. Apostle Paul states “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16 NASB). We are our Heavenly Father’s workmanship in Christ Jesus.

In the opening verse the Greek word used for “set” means “to seek after, strive for, be intent on.” This must be our constant goal in life. It allows us to be set free from the things of this world that would seek to hold us back and keep us down. Apostle Peter tells us “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8 NASB).

To “set your minds on things above” is to: (1) Look at life from our Heavenly Father’s perspective. (2) Seek after what He desires of us.

There are many verses in the Bible that remind us we are made new in Christ when we accept Him into our lives as Lord and Savior. We are made new as believers in Him and are continually being “made

new.” “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore, from now on we recognise no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:14-17 NASB). Unfortunately, our sinful nature is strong, and the enemy wants nothing more than to make us fall. It’s a daily battle and a choice we must make to follow Christ’s example.

God Has Given us Everything we Need

Apostle Peter states “To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ ... seeing that His divine power has granted to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust” (2 Peter 1:1-4 NASB).

Peter tells us that the antidote for covetousness and temptations of this life is to recognise the need for us to place our full affection, thinking, focus, and attention on heavenly things above, rather than the lust, greed and sin that encompasses this world. Jesus reminded His disciples “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise and be against the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, or whatever is trusted in)” (Matthew 6:24 AMP).

Jesus continues “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?” (Matthew 6:25-26 NASB). Our lives are hidden, kept safe, concealed under the authority and covering of the Heavenly Father’s care. When we take this to heart, we can let go of the burdens and the anxieties of this present life, they no longer hold power over us.



Jesus and Peter



Trust in God through prayer.

But sometimes, as we know, that's easier said than done. So just how do we go about learning to "set your minds on things above, not on earthly things," There are various scriptures that can point us in the right direction.

Anxiety

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Is it possible for a Christian to be anxious for nothing? It is possible if we have used the resource of prayer. The rest of the verse goes on to explain how our lives can be free from sinful worrying. Everything should be taken to the Lord in prayer. Everything means everything. There is nothing too great or small for His loving care!

Often, we come to the Lord at specific times and bring specific requests before Him. But it is also possible to live in an atmosphere of prayer. Paul speaking to the Colossians states "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2 NASB). Our prayers should not always be requests for something that we need, but ones of thanks for the many blessings that are received from above. We have the wonderful promise "casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7 NASB).

Jesus tells us "Your Father knows what you need before you ask" God loves us more than we could ever fully comprehend. His desire is to help us and is always there. His words of life remind us that He is our strength, especially when we are weak. He promises to draw near to us and to see us through the struggles of this world.

Trust

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

First, there must be a full commitment of ourselves to the LORD. We must trust Him not only for the salvation but also for the direction of our lives. It must be a total commitment without holding back.

There must be a healthy distrust of self, an acknowledgment that we do not know what is best for us, that we are not capable of guiding ourselves. Jeremiah expressed it emphatically: "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23 NASB).

There must be an acknowledgment of Christ as our Master. We must have no will of our own, only a singular desire to know His will and to do it. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father" (Colossians 3:17 NASB).

Freedom

"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

Jesus started this statement with the words "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine." God has a plan for our lives. The enemy has a plan for us too. We just have to decide which voice we're going to listen to, and who we choose to follow each day. And chances are, if we don't make a determined choice to follow God, we may eventually fall into a trap of the enemy.

The Bible has much to say about Satan's devious schemes and how he operates:

- He distorts the truth.
- He is deceiver,
- And the father of lies.

He becomes very in tune with our weaknesses and will use whatever means he can to bring us down. God never tells us to walk in fear, however He does tell us to be on guard and to live aware. As we keep pressing to know God, we set our minds on His Word, spending time to not only read but to meditate on it, and understand God has a plan that does not alter.

Apostle John writes "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God" (1 John 4:1-2 NASB).

Defence

"Put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armour of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm" (Ephesians 6:11-13 NASB).



"A Living and Holy Sacrifice" (Paul)

God has provided us with six pieces of armour. The belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit. As soldiers of Christ, we cannot decide which piece or pieces we don't need, all are required for our protection. The attacks are real, and continuous. There is another critical piece of the armour, prayer which binds all together. "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18 NASB).

Resist the Enemy

God's given us His Word and Spirit, so we have the wisdom from above and the protection to stand against the enemy. We have to do our part in this resistance as Apostle Peter states "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9 NASB).

Peter tells us that we are not alone in this battle, there are other brethren in the world that are resisting these attacks and that we can gain strength from this fact. We are reminded "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:25 NASB).

Safeguard your Heart

"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23 NASB).

Rotherham states: "Above all that must be guarded, keep thou thy heart." Our thoughts, our words, really matter. The state of our heart determines how we run our lives, the decisions we make, how they can affect others. Our conduct must reflect that of our Master and our Heavenly Father.

When we fill our minds, our thoughts, our hearts with the things of above, there is no room for evil thoughts to enter. We are to cast our cares on Him, our problems and burdens, seeking forgiveness for our human failings. It is not about pretending we do not have worries, ignoring our problems, or living a life of indifference.

- It requires effort on our part — choosing to rely on God.
- It requires trust on our part — remembering that He is in control.

Believe that God is With You

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Psalms 23:4 NASB).

The Psalmist reminds us that even when we are in the most difficult and trying circumstances the Heavenly Father is with us to guide and comfort us. We are never alone. There are times when we cannot see God's hand in the affairs of the world. We have times when we are not sure that his leadings are correct due to the trials we might have to suffer. The battle can feel to be uphill, especially when we feel drained and down hearted, but it is at these times that the Heavenly Father uses the rod and the staff to guide us and to lift us up.

Abounding in Grace

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed" (2 Corinthians 9:8 NASB).

The Psalmist wrote, "You anointed my head with oil, my cup overflows." David was looking at the many spiritual benefits that had been bestowed on him. As Christians we also are blessed with all the spiritual blessing in Christ which are granted to us. Paul encourages "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13 NASB). As we set our minds on Christ, it becomes the place where doubts get crushed and confidence in Him can grow deeper and fuller.

Summary

Apostle Paul gives the following advise "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2 NASB).

The Gospel Age is not the time for the conversion of the world which is still blinded by the prince of this world. It is the time for the calling out of the Church. A time for making our calling and election sure. **"A time to set our minds on things above."**

Eventide

“Abide with us ... for the day is far spent” (Luke 24:29).

What a change that stranger’s conversation had made in the demeanour of those two downcast men who had left Jerusalem for the quieter scenes of their village home. Hopes dead, faith shattered, expectations gone — a melancholy state of heart and mind indeed! “We trusted” — despondent words! not “we trust”! “We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21). And now all the fair hopes of Israel’s redemption lay dragged in the dust, decayed, withered, dead!

The glorious dawn, at one time deemed so near at hand, was now enshrouded in deepest midnight gloom, and none could give assurance now that Israel should at any time be redeemed. And if **he**, of all the sons of Israel, had failed to bring deliverance, who, among her waiting hosts, could hope to break the foreign yoke? He in whom they had trusted had been laid away in a borrowed tomb, and there their shrivelled hopes lay too. Even the excited words of some womenfolk in Jerusalem, that they had seen him alive again, had not rekindled the spark of expectancy and hope — for them the disappointing affair was over and done with, once, and for all!

With an Eastern freedom and courtesy that stranger joined himself to their company, and for a while listened silently to their tale of woe. Then in a quiet reassuring way he insinuated himself into the conversation to make their grief-shocked minds begin to work again. Slowly his quotations from the prophets, interspersed with reasoned explanations, began to take effect, as emotion and understanding began to “burn” within. As he walked and talked with them along the way the miles rolled by, and their journey was all but at an end. At the fork of the road that lay just ahead he would bid them a friendly adieu, for “He made as though he would go further.”

Had they tired of his company? Had his searching words probed too deeply and left a wound, or a sting? Had he dominated them too long? No! not a bit of it. The burning fires within their souls had kindled goodwill to such a traveller and made them long for more such conversation. Would he come and stay the night with them? At least he should not go forward without an invitation to their abode! He did go in with them to their quiet home — then came the Revelation — and he was gone! Withered hopes revived again, a new joy gripped their hearts,

as their travel-stained feet began the journey back to Jerusalem again.

Wonderful Journey — and yet More Wonderful Guest!

Not alone on life’s pilgrim journey was that walk from Jerusalem. We too have had our melancholy walks. We too have felt the chill of withered hopes, disappointing expectations, and overpowering frustration. There may be amongst us some who made as if to withdraw to some distant “Emmaus” home, and let the whole thing go by. It is so easy to go aside, like a wounded animal, and in loneliness lie down and die.

But we were precious in his sight. He, “watching over Israel,” saw our melancholy plight, and came out upon our outward way to revive our withered hopes, to fan anew our flickering love, and to make our hearts burn within us by the way. How? By some word spoken to us in loving confidence, by some good word in a re-assuring article, or by some sincere warm-hearted clasp of a welcome hand. Some dear servant of the Lord, himself at rest in God, walked out on his behalf and talked with us, and that was all! But it was enough.

And then the invitation went forth again — “Come in to me, dear Lord. **Abide with me**, as the evening shadows fall.” Let the sweet, voiced poet give tongue to our desire: In the maturing experience of every true child of God there comes at last — sometimes earlier, sometimes late — a deepening sense of Christ-consciousness. It is the expression of a deep inborn desire for someone on whom to rest implicitly and with confidence. In the earlier years of life, when one’s mental powers are at their prime, the need for this arbour of repose may not be so keenly realised. It is only when the brain with its reflective and retentive faculties begins to fail, and to function less capably, that the desire for something that is central to every

element of Truth begins to assert itself. It is then that the maturing saint begins to feel his need of the abiding Presence of the Lord. Thenceforth the need is more for “Him” than “It.”

But the Lord awaits the invitation to enter in and be our abiding Guest. He will not thrust himself upon us unsolicited. He “waits” to be gracious — but he awaits our solicitation. **“In life, in death, O Lord abide with me”** — be that our “evening” prayer.



On the way to Emmaus

Contacts

Berean Bible Institute, Inc.

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dawnbible.com/content.htm

Pastoral Bible Institute

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Published by the Berean Bible Institute, Inc.
PO Box 402, Rosanna, Victoria, Australia 3084
Email: australianbiblestudents@gmail.com
Website: australianbiblestudents.org

Editorial Committee

Ray Charlton, Adam Kopczyk, Matthew Christopher

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The Bible Teachings

On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom,
Sin Offering, and Atonement.

This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute in the 1970's and sets out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the next part of this 274-page book. For Brethren who would like to read more of the content, it is available at:

www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf

A Finger, then a Hand

I remember one time my daughter was begging her mother to get her a muff, and so one day her mother brought a muff home. Although it was storming, my daughter naturally wanted to go out to try her new muff, so she asked me to go out with her. As we went out, I said, "Emma, better let me take your hand." She wanted to keep her hands in her muff, so she refused to take my hand. Well, by and by she came to an icy place, her little feet slipped - and down she went. When I helped her up she said, "Papa, you may give me your little finger." "No, my daughter, just take my hand." "No, no, Papa, give me your little finger." Well, I gave my little finger to her, and for a little way she got along nicely, but pretty soon we came to another icy place and again she fell. This time she hurt herself a little, and she said, "Papa, give me your hand." I gave her my hand, closed my fingers about her wrist, and held her up so that she could not fall. Just so, God is our keeper. He is wiser than we. And he can keep us from falling — if we hold onto his hand.

A. C. Frey Collection

"He leads the humble in the right way and teaches them his will" (Psalms 25:9 GNB).



Memorial

"Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

The Lord's Memorial this year falls on Sunday, 21 April, 2024, after sundown. An online service will be provided for brethren starting at 1900 hours AEST. Details of the service can be obtained by emailing — australianbiblestudents@gmail.com

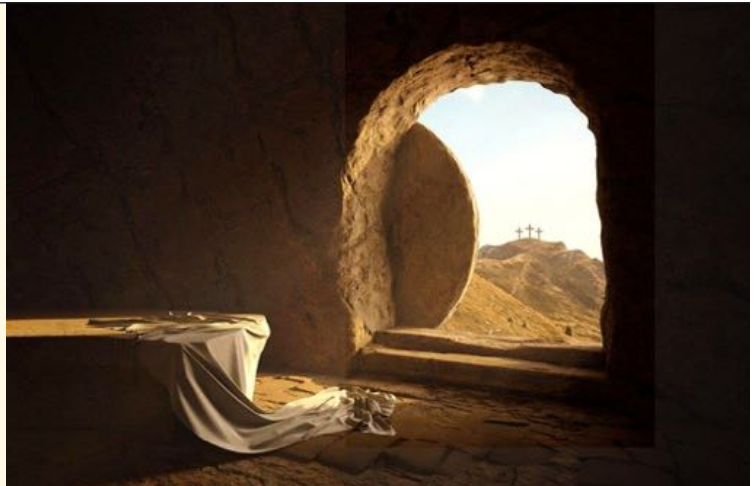
I Came to Jesus

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Come unto Me and rest;
Thy load of care thou mayst lay down
and be no more distressed.”
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
and He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Behold, I freely give
The living water, thirty one;
Stoop down, and drink, and live.”
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in Him.

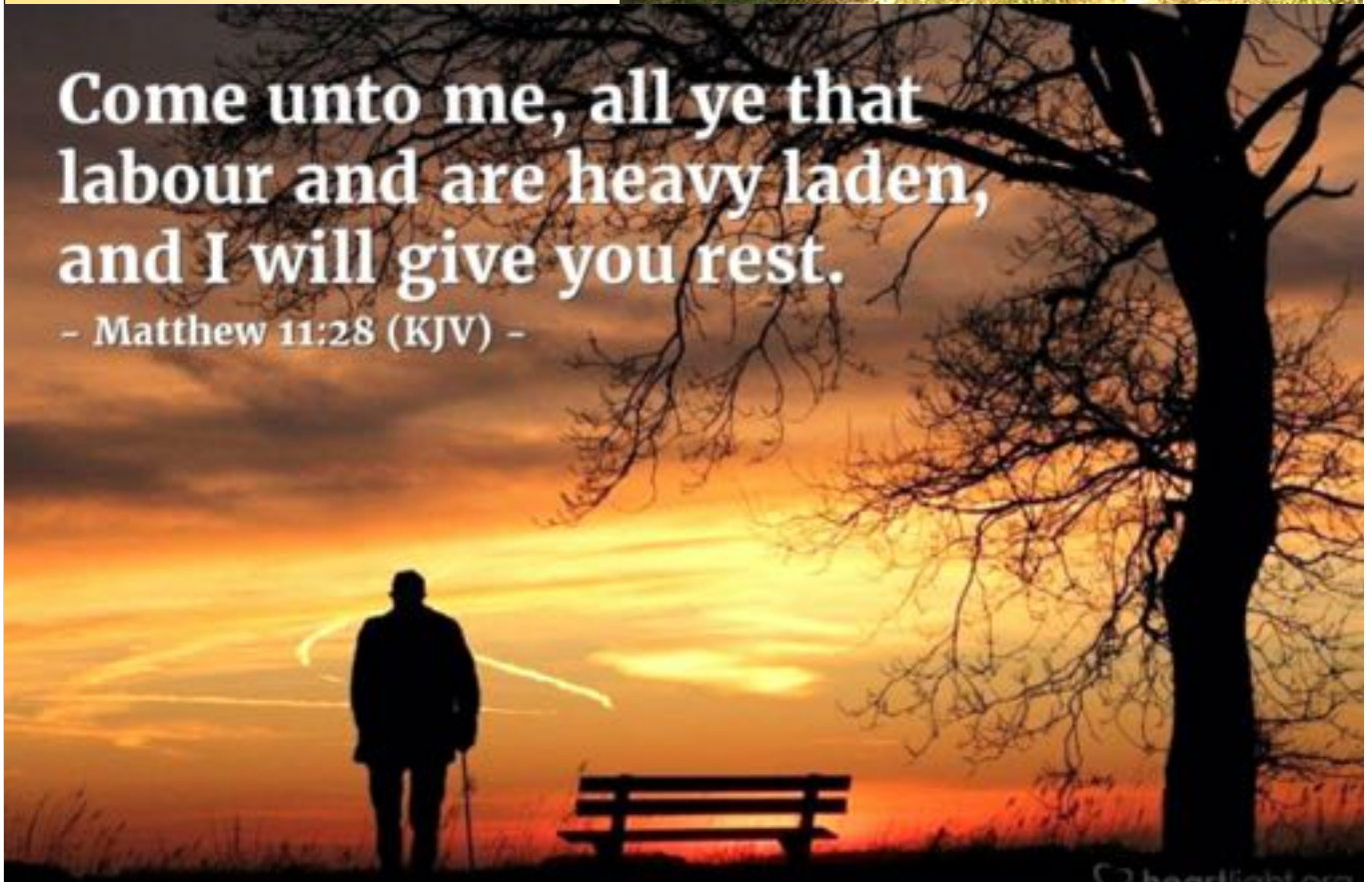
I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“I am this dark world’s Light;
look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright.”
I looked and saw my star of hope,
My Sun of Righteousness;
O! soon ’twill rise and fill the earth,
And all the nations bless.

Author: Horatius Bonar (1846)



**Come unto me, all ye that
labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.**

- Matthew 11:28 (KJV) -





The Samaritans

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him” (Luke 10:33).

Jesus instructions to his disciples, “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans” (Matthew 10:5 NKJV), are interesting, considering that he preached to the Samaritans and used the story of the Good Samaritan to show the Jewish people how they had strayed interpreting the Law.

Great animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans caused the religious leaders to attack Jesus’ credibility. “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” (John 8:48).

To understand the reasons behind these events requires knowledge of the history of the Samaritan people and their interactions with the Jewish nation.

Rebellion of the Northern Tribes

This rebellion has its beginnings with an aging King Solomon who had entered into political marriages with non Israelites. 1 Kings 11:4-8, “When Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. (5) For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. (6) Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. (7) Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. (8) And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods” (NKJV).

Before Solomon’s death, he managed to antagonize almost all his subjects. When he was succeeded by his son Rehoboam, Jeroboam, the leader of the ten northern tribes, sought relief from the burdens of work and taxation. Rehoboam followed bad advice and

refused. The northern tribes declared independence and formed a separate kingdom with Jeroboam as head. They named their kingdom “Israel.”

The City of Samaria

The name Samaria meant “lookout” and was the first capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel, built about 880 BC by Omri, the sixth king of Israel (1 Kings 16:23-24). “In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel ... And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill” (NKJV).

Samaria occupied a 91 meter high hill about 68 kilometers north of Jerusalem, and 40 kilometers east of the Mediterranean Sea. It was situated on the major north-south road through Palestine, controlling the east-west route to the Plain of Sharon and the Mediterranean Sea. Because of its hilltop location, Samaria could be defended easily. Its only weakness was that the nearest spring was a mile distant, but this difficulty was overcome by the use of cisterns cut into the soft sandstone to collect rainwater.

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The Region of Samaria

This was a territory in the uplands of central Palestine roughly within the lands allotted to the tribe of Ephraim and the western portion of Manasseh. It consisted of about 3626 square kilometers of attractive, fertile land, bounded by the Valley of Jezreel in the south and Mount Carmel on the north. Its rich alluvial soil produced valuable grain crops, olives, and grapes. Samaria was able to engage in commerce with neighboring Phoenicia as well as the more distant nations of Syria and Egypt.

Because Samaritan soil was considerably more fertile than the soil in Judah, the Northern Kingdom was always more prosperous. But the very attractiveness of the territory brought invaders, while trade with such pagan nations exposed the people to corrupt foreign religions. The prophets strongly condemned the wickedness of Samaria — its idolatry, immorality, idle luxury, and oppression of the poor (Hosea 7:1, 8:5-7).

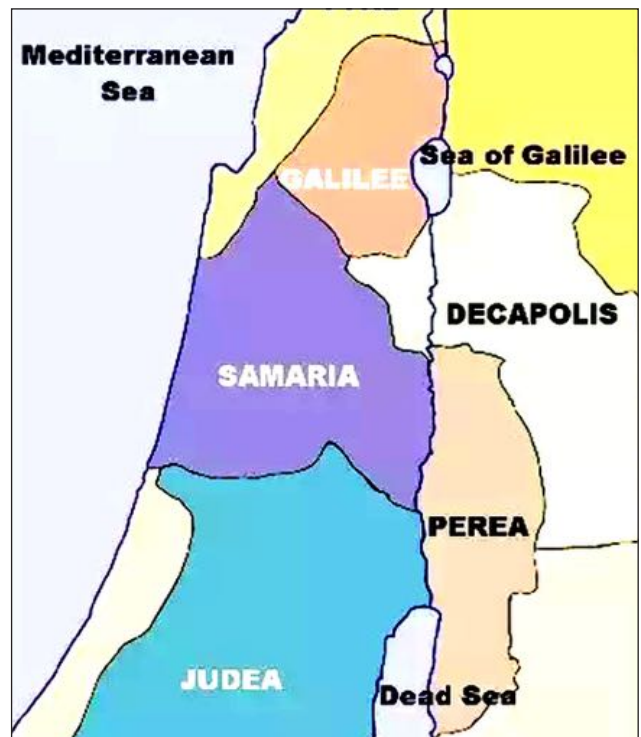
Samaria's History

Samaria became the new capital of Israel, and successive kings added to it and rebuilt sections to make it a well-fortified capital. But the city fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC. Most of the leading citizens of the Northern Kingdom were deported to places in Syria, Assyria, and Babylonia (2 Kings 18:9-12).

Sargon (king of Assyria) replaced the deported Israelites with foreign colonists (2 Kings 17:24). These newcomers intermarried among the Israelites who remained in Samaria. These people took the name Samaritans from the territory and attempted to settle the land. However, “they did not fear the Lord, and the Lord sent lions among them, which killed some of them” (2 Kings 17:25). In despair, they sent to Assyria for “one of the priests” who would “teach them the rituals of the God of the land” (2 Kings 17:27). Thereafter the Samaritans worshiped the God of Israel. But they also continued their idolatry, worshiping the pagan gods imported from foreign lands (2 Kings 17:29).

When a group of Jews, led by Zerubbabel, returned from the Babylonian Captivity, the Samaritans offered to help rebuild the Temple. When their offer was rejected, they tried to prevent the Jews from finishing their project (Ezra 4:1-10). When Nehemiah attempted to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, he was opposed by Arabic and Samaritan groups (Nehemiah 2:10-6:14). The breach between the Samaritans and the Jews widened when Ezra, in his zeal for racial purity, pressured all Israelite men who married during the Captivity to divorce their pagan wives (Ezra 10:18-44).

The final break between the two groups occurred when the Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, claiming Shechem rather than Zion (Jerusalem) as the true Beth-el (house of God), the site traditionally chosen and blessed by the Lord.



In the Roman period the Samaritans appeared to prosper. Their religion was made legal in the Empire, being practiced in synagogues in Italy and Africa.

In the time of Jesus, Palestine west of the Jordan River was divided into the three provinces Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. Because of their intermarriage with foreigners, the people of Samaria were shunned by orthodox Jews. Situated between Galilee and Judea, Samaria was the natural route for traveling between those two provinces. The pure-blooded Jews would travel east, cross the Jordan River, and detour around Samaria, rather than have dealings with the Samaritans.

Armed with a greater knowledge of the history of the area of Samaria and its inhabitants, the Bible student has a greater insight into the encounter that Jesus had with the woman at the well (John 4:1-42), and why he used a Samaritan in the story of the good Samaritan to explain how God's laws were meant to be interpreted (Luke 10:25-37).

The Woman at the Well

The meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well was planned by Jesus. He could have, like many of the pious Jews, taken a long route and gone around Samaria, but when taking a closer look at the passage it became apparent that there were lessons for the disciples, the Samaritans, and for the student of today.

In John 4:5-9 they “came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar ... Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.” The time would have been around midday, the heat of the sun, the journey, and the fact that it would have been meal time, would have been the reason for the weariness. “(7) A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ ... (9) Then

the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” (NKJV).

This set the scene in which Jesus was able to speak of the changes that were to come as the Jewish Age came to an end. The Jewish Nation had been chosen by God. “You are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:6 NKJV). It was to the Jews, “the lost sheep of Israel,” that Jesus had come, and yet he knew that they would reject him and that “their house would be left unto them desolate.”

At the time of Jesus’ first advent, the only recognised place of worship was the temple at Jerusalem. Jesus in John 4:21-24 indicated that this arrangement was soon to end. “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. (22) You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. (23) But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (24) God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (NKJV). The time for the change was close at hand, the sacrifices and the Temple worship would cease as they were but a shadow of the things to come. Jesus’ great sacrifice on the cross open the way for the worship of God “in spirit and truth.”

John records the effect that Jesus’ visit on the people. “We believe ... for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world” (NKJV). The Scribes and the Pharisees were not satisfied with Jesus’ words, stating “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You” (Matthew 12:38-39 NKJV). The words that Jesus had spoken did not satisfy the religious leaders, even though “No man ever spoke like this Man!” Nor did the miracles that were preformed move them to accept Jesus as the Christ, and yet the Samaritans, looked down at by the Jews, not only listened, but accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah.

The Good Samaritan

Although one of the best known stories in the Bible, it takes on greater significance when the history of Samaria is taken into account.

Luke’s gospel gives the setting of the story. “And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”” (Luke 10:25 NKJV). It appears that the lawyer came forward feigning a desire to be instructed, but actually coming to test Jesus, to lead him to contradict some of the fundamentals of the law. The question ‘what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ was a one often asked by the Jewish people. The lawyer knew that only total obedience to the law of God could bring everlasting life.

Jesus turned the question back to the lawyer. “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” The lawyer answered ... ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself’” (NKJV). It is interesting that this is the same answer that Jesus gave the Pharisees when they asked him “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” (Matthew 22:36 NKJV). The lawyer continued, “And who is my neighbor?” The Pharisees held that the “Jews” only were to be regarded as such, and that this obligation did not extend to the Gentiles. The lawyer appears ready to affirm that he had discharged faithfully his duty to his countrymen, and had thus kept the law, and so could justify himself.

Jesus does not answer the question directly. Instead he tells the parable of the Good Samaritan and then asks the Lawyer, “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?” His answer gives more insight into not only his character, but also the attitude prevalent at that time. He could not bring himself to answer “The Samaritan,” instead answering “The one who showed mercy toward him.”

Jesus spoke of the attitude prevalent at the time of his first advent in Matthew 5:43. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy’” (NKJV). The original command from God was “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:18). The thought that you must hate our enemy was an inference drawn from it by the Jewish religious leaders. They supposed that if they loved the one, they must of course hate the other. Jesus shows that this was not the intention that his Father, stating “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, (45) that you may be sons of your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:44-45 NKJV).



Jesus with the Samaritan woman at the well

The Ten Lepers

“Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. (13) And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” (14) So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. (15) And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, (16) and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan” (Luke 17:12-16 NKJV).

The attitude of the Samaritan leper is interesting. As soon as he realized the wonderful miracle that had happened, he returned and expressed his thanks to God and to his Jesus. He then would have had to go to the priest as he was directed; as he could not have been restored to society without doing it; but he first poured out his thanks to God, and gave him praise for his wonderful recovery. His response was noted by Jesus and the words Jesus spoke were probably more intended for the witness to this event than to the Samaritan, when he stated “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? (18) Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” (19) And He said to him, ‘Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well’” (Luke 17:17-19 NKJV). The Jews lived by the letter of the law, not by their faith.

The Spread of the Gospel

Just before Christ’s ascension, he issued new instructions to his disciples. They were to wait in Jerusalem until they had received the holy Spirit. They were then to “be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NKJV). The instructions not to go into Samaria were rescinded, and now armed with the holy Spirit they were to preach to the Samaritans.

God’s overruling seems to have brought about a quicker spread of the gospel to the Samaritans, as shown in Acts 8:1. “At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles” (NKJV). From the reaction of the people, they hungered after the gospel. “Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. (6) And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did ... (8) And there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:5-8 NKJV).

It appears that the Samaritans, unhampered by the traditions that held back the Jews, were able to quickly grasp the idea of a faith-based religion, rather than one that adhered to the letter of the law rather than to the spirit of the law.

Historical notes from Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary
Thomas Nelson

The Test of Discipleship

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NASB).

We may not be able to tell the exact time or place or trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion, but this does not mean that we are not converted. Christ said to Nicodemus, “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8 NASB). Like the invisible wind, the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the spirit of God upon the human heart. The power which no human eye can see begets a new life in us and we become new creatures.

While the work of the spirit is silent and unseen, its effects are manifest. If the heart has been renewed by the spirit of God, the life will bear witness to that fact. While we must not trust at all to ourselves or our good works, our lives will show whether the grace of God is dwelling within us; a change will be seen in our character, habits, and pursuits. The contrast will

be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are.

Character

The character is shown not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of habitual words and acts. The love of influence and the desire for the praise of others may produce a well-ordered life. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil.

A selfish heart, too, may perform generous actions. By what means, then, shall it be decided whose side we are on? We may ask the questions, who has our heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ’s, our thoughts are with Him and our best thoughts are of Him. We love to follow in His footsteps, do His will and please Him in all things.

Bringing forth Fruits

Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruit of the spirit, which we find recorded in Galatians. Paul says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23 NASB). He continues in the following verses, “Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another” (Galatians 5:24-26 NASB). We are to follow in the Lord’s steps by faith, reflect His character, and purify ourselves even as He is pure. The proud and haughty become meek and lowly in heart; the vain customs and fashions of the world are laid aside. Christians will seek not the “outward adorning,” but that which comes of a meek and quiet spirit.

When we come to Christ and become partakers of His grace, love springs up in the heart. Every burden is light, for the yoke that Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed covered in darkness becomes bright with beams from the Lord of heaven.

Love

Love is of God, and love to God was the controlling power in our Saviour’s life; it was His delight to do the will of God, and the beauty of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. The un-consecrated heart has not this love and therefore cannot pass it on. It is only to be found in the heart where Jesus reigns (1 John 4:7-21). Love controls our character and this in turn helps us to govern our passions, subdue enmity, and enriches our affections. This love kept within us sweetens our lives, and those about us can see that we are indeed followers of Christ.

Be on Guard

There are two things against which Christians especially need to guard. The first, already mentioned, is that of looking to our own works to bring ourselves into harmony with God. If we are trying to become holy by our own works in keeping God’s law, we are attempting the impossible. All that we can do without Christ is tainted with selfishness. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy. The second thing to guard against is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping God’s commandments; that is, that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption. But we need to realise that obedience is not just an outward act; it is the service of love. God’s laws are an expression of His very nature; they are full of the great principle of love. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in our hearts, the law of God will be carried out in the life. Obedience, then, through service and



love is the true sign of discipleship. We read, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3 NASB). Again the Apostle says, “The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4 NASB).

Instead of releasing man from obedience, faith only makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. We do not earn salvation by our obedience, for salvation is the free gift of God to be received by faith, but obedience is the fruit of faith. That so-called faith in Christ which professes to release men from the obligation of obedience to God is not faith, but presumption. “By grace are ye saved through faith,” said Paul to the Ephesian church. And in James’ Epistle we read, “But faith if it hath not works is dead.”

Gaining Eternal Life

The conditions for gaining eternal life are now just what they always have been; just what was required in Paradise before the fall of our first parents — perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any conditions short of this, then the happiness of the whole of humanity would be in danger; the way would be open for sin with all its consequences. It was possible for Adam before the fall to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law, but he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen, and we cannot make ourselves righteous — we cannot perfectly obey a holy law.

Having no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God, Christ made a way out for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life; He died for us, and now He offers to cover our sins and give us His righteousness. Christ’s character stands

in place of our character, and we are accepted before God just as if we had not sinned. Christ also changes the heart; He abides in our hearts by faith, and the complete surrender of our will to Him enables us to say with Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20 NASB).

Nothing to Boast

So, we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ which is given to us. When we speak of faith we do not mean the kind that merely believes the existence of God’s power without acting on that belief. The Scripture says, “the devils also believe and tremble,” but this is not faith. Where there is not only a belief in God’s Word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith — faith that works by love, and purifies the whole being.

The closer we come to Jesus, the more faults will appear in our own eyes, for our vision will be clearer, and our imperfect nature will be seen in contrast to Christ’s perfect life. If our life is changed by the grace of Christ, we will admire His beautiful character, but if we do not see our own shortcomings, we have failed to see the excellence of Christ. The more our need drives us to Him and His Word, the more we shall see of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image.

Sacrifice

The richest quality of love is sacrifice, and the noblest credential of any work is the spirit which has laid every selfish interest down at Jesus’ feet, and counts all things loss for Christ; which holds its money, its friendships, its life, all subservient to the Master’s claim, and, living a dying life, at last gives life itself as a willing offering to Him who gave His life for US. In this selfish and luxurious age, it is the rarest quality found but it is the most needed as the end approaches.

In Search of a City

“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:8, 10 NASB).

The Call

“**N**ow the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing’” (Genesis 12:1-2 NASB).

In the twelfth chapter of Genesis the Bible shifts from a commentary on the history of the human race to a man called Abram. He lived in the city of Ur of the Chaldees and was the first person to be called

a Hebrew in scripture. The meaning of the word Hebrew is interesting, “one from beyond,” no doubt referring to the fact that he had come from beyond the river Euphrates.

Mentioned in the Bible as the hometown of Abraham, Ur around 2000 BC was the center of a wealthy empire that drew traders from as far away as the Mediterranean Sea, 750 miles to the west, and the Indus civilization — called Meluhha by ancient Iraqis — some 1,500 miles to the east.

Why Call Abram? What Made Him Special?

It seems that Abram’s family worshipped pagan gods like everyone else in the land of Ur who were known for worshipping Nanna, the moon god. This is supported by Joshua saying to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac’” (Joshua 24:2-3 NASB). However it appears that Abram, like Noah before him was a faithful follower of the Almighty God.



Abraham and his entourage departing from Haran

There appeared no special reason for God to call him. As we follow his journey, he shows his human short comings, he lies about his wife twice, does not wait for God to provide the promised seed, has a child with Hagar, Sarah's handmaiden and later drives Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness (Genesis 21:8-21).

What makes Abraham so special is God's election, God choosing who to bestow a special grace. One that would not just bless Abraham but would at the right time bless the whole world through his seed. It is very difficult to understand the foreknowledge of our Heavenly Father and how He uses this to fulfil his purposes. The Apostle Paul gives the following example

“And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, “THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.” Just as it is written, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED [loved less]” (Romans 9:10-13 NASB).

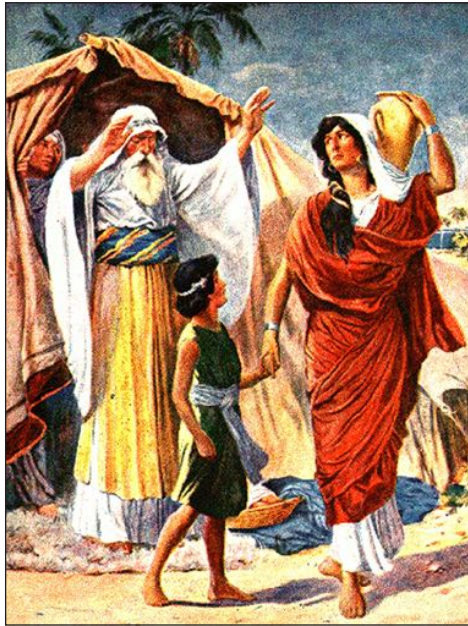
God knew that Isaac would be far more interested in his father's inheritance, the spiritual blessing, than Esau. Esau should not be considered as evil, but he was far more interested in worldly possessions shown by his first two marriages to Hittite women, giving him access to trade with their families.

Abraham Did Not Know His Destination

Another aspect of Abraham's call was that it required faith and his reliance on God to provide what He had promised. God told him to “Go forth from your country” from a city that was secure, with good prospects to make a living for Abram's family and in to following God's instructions into the unknown. He was just told “Go to the land I will show you.” We can imagine those who knew Abram in Ur questioning his mind to uproot his family, father, servants, and his livestock to head out into the unknown. He was leaving for a land that God would show him, and this required his faith in God, a life of depending upon God.

A Parallel Lesson for Christians

Our life of faith begins when we accept Christ, to solely trust in Christ's finished work. Through the acceptance of Christ, we are saved. The Jews saw their salvation as coming from obedience to the law, that is through works of the flesh. The problem was they could not keep the law as James states. “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become



Hagar and Ishmael departing

guilty of all” (James 2:10 NASB). We still do good works, as a result of our salvation — not for salvation. Also, as Christians following God's call, the Lord continually teaches us of our insufficiency and his sufficiency. Essentially, he teaches us how to depend on him and live the life of faith. James brings out the point “that faith without works is useless.” Earlier in the chapter James gives us an example of faith without works. “If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?” (James 2:15-16 NASB).

Abraham's Journey

What was the need for Abraham to start this journey from his birthplace to a land chosen by God? There are clues in the history of the human race.

- In the days of Noah evil was prevalent amongst the people. This was 1656 years after Adam was driven from the Garden “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them” (Genesis 6:5-7 NASB). Only Noah found favour with God.

- In the days of Nimrod, the lessons of the flood had been lost and men's hearts were once again turning against God. They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:4 NASB). It appears that it was only 339 years before once again God had to intervene. The LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech.” So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city (Genesis 11:6-8 NASB).

- God's decision to have Abraham leave Ur was no doubt to protect him from the influences of the people around who were idol worshippers. Abraham's journey was not straight forward to the promised land, he would be a sojourner and an alien in a foreign land.

Ur of the Chaldees

This was the birth place of Abraham and it was from here that his father Terah took the family north to Haran. “Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there. Terah and his family followed the River Euphrates upstream for about 600 miles to the city of Haran. The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran” (Genesis 11:31-32 NASB).

Haran in Mesopotamia

This was a large city and possibly Terah had moved here for business reasons. Some claim that he renamed the city Haran after his son. It appears that they may have been in the city for about 5 years before Terah died. Possibly God waited till this time as Abraham would have to leave his father behind and this was no longer the case. “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.’ So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran” (Genesis 12:1-4 NASB).

Haran to Shechem

The journey was approximately 500 miles, traveling through Damascus, the city from which Eliezer had come from (Genesis 15:2) to reach Shechem. “Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus, they came to the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land” (Genesis 12:5-6 NASB). The last part of the verse is interesting when considering the promise from God. “The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So, he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him” (Genesis 12:7 NASB). God did not tell Abram how he would possess the land, and yet Abram built an altar to the Lord. By this solemn act of devotion, Abram openly professed his religion, established the worship of the true God, and declared his faith in the promise.

Shechem to Bethel

Abram’s journeys continued about 30 miles to the south, to Bethel. “Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the

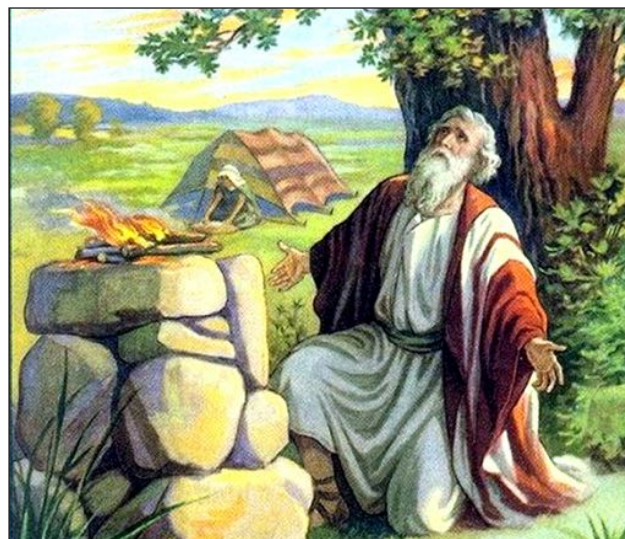
name of the LORD” (Genesis 12:8 NASB). Bethel was the first place that we are told that Abram pitched his tent indicating his intent to settle there. This is the second record of him building an altar to the LORD. The name Bethel means “house of God,” and it is quite possible that it was Abram that named the place.

Bethel to Egypt

Abram continued south from Bethel towards Negeb, that is the southern part of Judah to the area known today in part as Gaza. No doubt in search for pasture and water for his stock. He had to continue south, as we are told, “Now there was a famine in the land; so, Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land” (Genesis 12:10 NASB). It was here that Abram’s faith was tested. Sarai was very beautiful and thus desirable, and Pharaoh’s officials mentioned this to Pharaoh. Sarai was taken to Pharaoh’s house. Abram was concerned that if they knew she was his wife they may have killed him, so he tried to pass her off as his sister. God struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues for taking Sarai. “Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, ‘What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?’” (Genesis 12:18 NASB). Pharaoh provided safe passage for Abraham and his family.

Return to Bethel

“So, Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold. He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD” (Genesis 13:1-4 NASB). It was at Bethel that a dispute arose between Abram’s and Lot’s herdsmen over pasture rights. This resulted in Abram settling in the land of Canaan and Lot settling in the cities of



Altar at Bethel

the valley as far as Sodom. Lot's choice would have consequences. "Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD" (Genesis 13:13 NASB).

Bethel to Hebron

This was about 7 miles to the northeast of Bethel. Before departing Bethel for the oaks of Mamre in Hebron, Abram was given more details of God's plan. "The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you" (Genesis 13:14-17 NASB).

Dan

The events that took place at these locations are recorded in Genesis 14. This chapter presents Abram in the unexpected character of a warrior. The occasion was this: "The king of Sodom and the kings of the adjoining cities, after having been tributaries for twelve years to the king of Elam, combined to throw off his yoke. To chastise their rebellion, as he deemed it, Chedorlaomer, with the aid of three allies, invaded the territories of the refractory princes, and defeated them in a pitched battle where the nature of the ground favoured his army. 'Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country' (Genesis 14:10 NASB). He hastened in triumph on his homeward march, with a large number of captives and booty" (JFB). "They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom" (Genesis 14:12 NASB).

It is at this time that Abram became aware of the situation "Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies with Abram. When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan" (Genesis 14:13-14 NASB).

Shaveh — The King's Valley

This appears to be close to Salem. It was there that Abram met Melchizedek. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' He gave him a tenth of all" (Genesis 14:18-20 NASB). Abram had



Abraham with Melchizedek

won the war and was thus able to take the spoils of war from the King of Sodom who offered Abram the spoils of war. Abram's answer shows his character. "Abram said to the king of Sodom, 'I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, I have made Abram rich'" (Genesis 14:22-23 NASB).

Hebron

Upon Abram's return to Hebron the Lord God makes many promises, reaffirming his promise of an heir. God speaks of the fact that his descendants will be strangers and would be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years (Genesis 15:1-21). Sarai, still being childless, offers Hagar to bear a child. Hagar bears a son which causes troubles between the women. Hagar is driven from the camp, but the angel of the Lord tells her to return. She would bear a son and call him Ishmael (Genesis 16:1-16). This was 11 years after Abram had departed Haran.

The next event was when Abram was ninety-nine years old. His name was changed from Abram (Exalted father) to Abraham (father of a multitude) "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you" (Genesis 17:5-7 NASB). It was now that the circumcision of the flesh of the foreskin was commanded (Genesis 17:10-14).

During Abraham's sojourn in Hebron, "Then God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her'" (Genesis 17:15-16 NASB). Abraham's and Sarah's age meant that this promise seemed impossible. God stated, "Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed

time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son'” (Genesis 18:14 NASB).

Gerar

This was in the land of the Philistines and Abimelech was the king. The king took Sarah as again Abraham had declared that she was his sister. (Actually, a half-sister Genesis 20:12.) God intervened in a dream to the king, stating that Sarah was married, and he would die. Abimelech answered “Lord, I am innocent! Would you destroy me and my people? Abraham himself said that she was his sister, and she said the same thing. I did this with a clear conscience, and I have done no wrong.” Sarah was returned to Abraham with Abimelech giving Sarah gifts either as an atoning gift or a testimony of her innocence in the sight of all.

Beersheba

Abraham settled here and Sarah conceived and gave birth to Isaac, who was circumcised on the eighth day. The child grew and was weaned and was mocked by Ishmael who was then driven out. Sarah stated, “Send this slave and her son away. The son of this woman must not get any part of your wealth, which my son Isaac should inherit” (Genesis 21:10). God made promises to Hagar. “I will make a great nation out of his descendants.” It was here that Abraham and Abimelech made an agreement over the well and Abraham remained here for many days.

Mount Moriah

“Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you’” (Genesis 22:1-2 NASB).

This was the most extraordinary test of Abraham’s faith and obedience in offering his long awaited son to the Heavenly Father. He arose early in the morning and took the three day journey to the mountain chosen by God. Isaac asked, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” and Abraham replied, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.”

The willingness of Isaac to follow the instructions cannot be overlooked. A lad of sixteen could have easily overpower his aging father. Just as Abraham was about to kill Isaac, the angel of the Lord intervened. “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now, I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

Abraham’s faithfulness was rewarded. “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (Genesis 22:16-18 NASB).

Hebron — The End of the Journey

It was here that Abraham bought land so that he could bury Sarah who died at one hundred and twenty-seven years. Although all the land he had travelled through was promised to him by God, he had to buy the cave of Machpelah to provide a sepulchre for his family. Abraham died at one hundred and seventy-five after one hundred years sojourning in the promised land, and yet never received the promised inheritance. He was buried with Sarah.

“Lord, Increase Our Faith”

(Luke 17:5 NASB).

When we read and meditate on such portions of God’s Word as the 11th chapter of Hebrews, we begin to realise something of the value and importance of faith. It is very precious in the sight of God. “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:1,6 NASB).

Dr. Strong’s definition of faith is — “persuasion, i.e., credence, conviction of the truthfulness of God (which implies acceptance of His Word of truth),

reliance upon Christ for salvation; then constancy in such profession; then assurance, belief, fidelity.”

Dealings With Israel

In His dealings with the children of Israel, God revealed, in a measure, His glorious attributes. God’s perfect standard of righteousness — holiness — was held up before the people in the Law Covenant. The children of Israel were told that if they would keep God’s Law perfectly, they would gain life. But because of inherent sin and imperfection, not one of Adam’s children could measure up to the standard of perfection required by the Law. This is clearly shown

by Paul in Romans 3:9-28.

This provision of God's grace to justify repentant believers in Jesus Christ is indeed glad tidings. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH" (Romans 1:16-17 NASB). In our Lord's Day some of the people said to Him "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (John 6:28-29 NASB).

So that we may have an enlightened and intelligent belief in Christ as our Saviour from sin and death, and that we may have an ever increasing faith in God, we need first of all some knowledge. "Christ is made unto us [first] wisdom [which implies knowledge, enlightenment]; then righteousness [justification], then sanctification, and redemption [deliverance]" (1 Corinthians 1:30. ASV).

Elements of Faith

Faith may be said to have in it the two elements of intellectual assurances and heart reliance. Both the head and the heart — the intellect and the affections — are necessary to the faith without which it is impossible to please God. With some, faith is all emotion; with others, it is all knowledge. But neither of these elements alone can withstand the fiery tests to which faith is subjected. Both must be present and remain, if our faith will endure to the end, and be found unto praise, honour, and glory at the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The trial of our faith to which our Lord and the apostles refer, is a trial not only of our intellectual knowledge of divine truth, but also of our heart reliance upon God. In both respects, the true child of God will find himself severely tried. Let him see to it that he has a "Thus saith the Lord" for every item of his belief. Let him study the doctrine and get a clear understanding of every element of the truth. Let him become rooted, grounded, settled, and established in the doctrines of God, and give earnest heed lest at any time he let them slip. "For this reason, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it" (Hebrews 2:1 NASB).

With faith well grounded in the fundamental principles of divine truth, let every consecrated child of God see to it that he also continues to cultivate heart reliance in the "great and precious promises." The Apostle Peter tells us "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation" (1 Peter 4:12-13 NASB). Whenever we



The Apostle Peter

pass through a fiery trial and still retain not only our faith in the doctrines, but also our confidence in God, our reliance in His promises, our integrity of heart and purpose, and our zeal for truth and righteousness, then our characters have grown more Christ-like, and hence more pleasing to God, who subjects us to discipline for this very purpose.

Severe Testings

The Apostle Peter tells us that the faith of those called throughout the Gospel Age will receive a severe testing. He says, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7 KJV). In the present time, when gold is comparatively a rare metal, it has a special value. Therefore, the apostle compares it to the faith of the little flock, to whom alone, of all humanity, will be given the glory, honour and immortality promised to those who overcome.

Hence the trial of the faith of this class is very important. None will be admitted to membership in the Body of Christ who has not been tested and proved by the Lord. But let us remember that our testing is not to see whether we are perfect according to the flesh. On the contrary, God "knows our frame; He remembers that we are but dust" (Psalms 103:14 NASB).

What God is seeking in us is the development and perfection of faith. We are tested to see whether we believe in Him as a faithful, wise, loving, and true God, and in His Son as our Redeemer, who purchased us with His own precious blood, and as our Advocate who now covers our blemishes, past, present, and future, with the robe of His imputed righteousness. These are the elements of faith which He will test thoroughly, and which must grow stronger as time goes by. Without strong, well tested faith in God and His promises, we cannot please Him and become members of the elect class which He is now selecting.

Not by Chance

The trial of our faith is not left to chance. It is supervised by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who is



Jesus will refine us as silver.

represented by the prophet. “He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness” (Malachi 3:3 NASB). In one sense of the word, He came as that refiner at the first advent. During the entire Gospel Age, He has continued that refining work in His people, that the offering to the Father might be an acceptable one.

First of all, our Lord laid down His life in fulfilment of the types of the Law, thus demonstrating His absolute trust, loyalty, and faith in God. The church of Christ must be similarly tested and proved in respect of their obedience, trust, and loyalty to the Father. They must be willing, not only to trust God when things are favourable, but trust in His providences when they cannot see the outcome. To attain this degree of faith, they must pass through manifold trials and testings, that they may demonstrate their faith and loyalty.

Works Versus Faith

The question arises, why should God bless faith rather than works? The answer is that works are dependent upon the ability of the worker, and that the whole race of Adam has become unable to do perfect works, on account of the fall of their first parents. None can be perfectly just, perfectly wise, perfectly loving; in our present imperfect condition this is impossible.

Therefore, in His wisdom and love, God avoids making His test along those lines in which we are absolutely incompetent and makes it along the line of faith in His wisdom, His love, and His promises. To doubt any of these would be to weaken the basis of our hope. We realise that we are in a fallen condition; that we are dying like the remainder of the race. We have heard through the Word of God that He has provided a Saviour, but we see that things continue much as they were, despite all that God and Christ have done. Our faith, however, assures us that God, who knows the end from the beginning, is working all things according to the counsel of His own will, and that in due time He will establish righteousness in the earth (Ephesians 1:11, Psalms 72:1-7).

What a splendid example of faith we find in Abraham. Our respect for his faith rises higher and higher as we

behold the various manifestations of his confidence in God, and his obedience to the divine command. We say to ourselves, Oh that we might have in fullest measure this abounding faith, this willing obedience, this trust, resting securely in God — this assurance that He is able to accomplish all that He has promised, even though the accomplishment of it should make necessary a resurrection from the dead! For the apostle assures us that Abraham meditated upon this matter — respecting the fact that Isaac was his legitimate heir and had been so acknowledged of the Lord, saying, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” He could see no other way that God’s Word could be true; yet so strong was his faith that he trusted that the Lord was able to raise his son from the dead in order to fulfil the promise. “He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type” (Hebrews 11:19 NASB).

The Faith of the Gospel Church

This is exactly the kind of faith that the Lord desires in the spiritual seed of Abraham — the Gospel Church — a faith that will trust Him even where it cannot trace Him; a faith which recognizes His perfect wisdom, perfect love, and perfect power. It is not a faith, however, that is a spontaneous growth, under present fallen conditions. It requires years for its development. Abraham had not this degree of faith when first he entered the land of Canaan as a pilgrim. It was a faith that had grown through His continued intimacy with his Almighty “Friend.” His previous trials had already contributed to the development of this, his finished faith; the long waiting and frequent disappointments in respect of Isaac had been beneficial; the attempt to assist the Lord in the fulfilment of the promise, in the begetting of Ishmael, and the subsequent rejection of Ishmael as not being of the Lord’s arrangement, had no doubt helped to establish the patriarch in his confidence that God’s purposes are immutable, and His power unlimited.

So it is with the spiritual seed of Abraham, the Christ, the Church. Our faith is a work of time and patient endurance of trials and testings, which, rightly received, work out for us an increase of knowledge, an increase of faith, and an increase of fellowship with God, until, by the Lord’s grace, we later on reach such a development of faith in Him as sometimes surprises ourselves, and assures us that we have made some progress, because at the beginning of our way we could not have endured the same trials successfully. We see that in many respects even our faith is a gift of God — that while we exercised some faith in the beginning of our experiences, yet the development of it to such a condition and degree as will be acceptable to God is of God’s grace, through His providential leading, dealings, and instructions. To Him, therefore, we must render the praise, not only for the glorious results, but also for the faith and the works of this present time, which fit and prepare us for the coming glory and blessings.

Spirit of the World Contrary to Christ

Our Lord's teachings were contrary to the spirit of the world and so adverse to its policy that His disciples felt that to adopt His methods and principles and discard their own former ideas, in yielding themselves as true disciples, they needed a stronger, firmer faith than they had yet been called upon to exercise. They were quite persuaded from the purity and nobility of His character, and from His miracles and His teachings, that He was indeed a teacher sent from God; yet remembering the requirement of discipleship — "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions" (Luke 14:33 NASB). They felt that to continue in this attitude of discipleship would require a growing faith that would rise to every emergency of His requirements. Hence their request — "Lord, increase our faith."

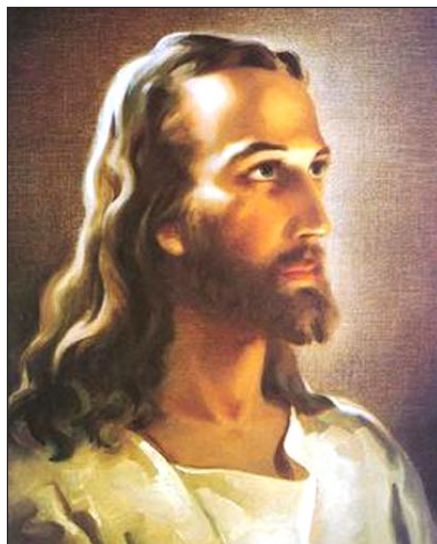
They were quite right in their reasoning, for the Lord shows that the true disciples must make progress in the school of Christ toward the full overcoming of the spirit of the world. This progress can be achieved only by faith — by full, implicit confidence in His teaching and training as will keep them continually as earnest, diligent pupils under His guidance and instruction. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4. ASV).

This is very suggestive of what is signified to be an "overcome," to whom pertains all the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel of Christ. It is simply this — that day by day we attentively heed and patiently carry out the instructions of our infallible Teacher and Guide in full, unquestioning faith in His wisdom and love, no matter how heavy the daily cross will be or how severe the discipline. It is indeed a tedious, life-long process, but the end will be glorious; and even the daily discipline, patiently and meekly borne, will bring the present rewards of conscious progress in the great work of overcoming and of a nearer approach to the goal of a ripened Christian character. All of this is implied in the beautiful words, so expressive of the faith and fervent devotion of true discipleship.

*"Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee,
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me."*

Increase of Faith

While Jesus made no direct answer to this request for an increase of faith, His whole subsequent course with the disciples was a fulfilment of it. And so it will be with us if, in a similarly true spirit of discipleship, we pray, "Lord, increase our faith." The increase of faith will come, not by a miraculous infusion, but in the



Jesus, our example

natural process of Jesus' leading and training. In the school of experience, in following His leading and in the blessed results of each step of the way, faith develops and grows.

As servants of God, we owe Him the full measure of our ability; hence, we may not feel that we have merited or earned the great blessings of heavenly inheritance and joint heirship with Christ. We have merely done our duty; but God, with exceeding riches of grace, has prepared for those who lovingly serve Him, rewards far beyond that for which they have asked or hoped. We can do no works beyond what duty requires; even at our best our

service is marred by imperfections and could never find acceptance with God except as supplemented by the perfect and finished work of Christ.

In order that the Christian may be strong in faith, God has provided a protection and urges us to "take unto you the whole amour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (See Ephesians 6:10-18.) We are exhorted to have our "loins girded about with truth," implying that we are servants of the truth; and we are to "have on the breastplate of righteousness," implying faith in the righteousness of Christ as the ground of our acceptance with God.

It is also implied that we love righteousness and seek to conform our lives to the principles of righteousness and truth as revealed in Christ and in the Word of God.

The Necessary Components

In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul speaks of the "breastplate of faith and love." Our feet are to be "shod with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace." We are to be ready always to speak the Word of the Gospel in the spirit of our Lord, with meekness and reverence. Then we are to have "the shield of faith" — confidence in God — faith in His power and wisdom and love. It is faith in God, the use of the shield, that will quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Then we must have the "helmet of salvation," for the knowledge of the truth respecting God's plan and purpose is important. Paul calls "the helmet," "the hope of salvation."

Then he mentions the "sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God." We must depend in the struggle of this "evil day" upon the Word of God, "It is written." We must use no darts like Satan's — anger, malice, hatred, strife. And "the sword of the spirit" can be possessed only by careful study and leading of the spirit after consecration — after enlisting in the Lord's army. In verse 18 the apostle urges upon us the importance of prayer, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

Four Distinctly Separate Parts

The Bible Teachings (Part Nineteen) — Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering, Atonement

The careful student will note in the words quoted four parts distinctly separate: God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church, and the world. God and the world are in opposition. Divine sentence of condemnation passed upon all the human family, determining that they were out of covenant relationship with God — imperfect, unable to keep the Divine requirements, and therefore under death condemnation. In due time God sent forth His Son, with the avowed object of reconciling the world. Jesus did not even attempt to do so. He confined His efforts entirely to the Jewish nation and amongst them to the seeking for the “lost sheep,” as many as the Father would draw to Him.

Him that Hath Ears to Hear

Having finished His ransom-sacrifice, He ascended on high and applied it, not for the world, but for those who should believe on Him and become His followers by consecration. The Apostle was one of these, as He explained to others, and incidentally to us of the same class today. The results of our Lord’s appropriation of His merit on our behalf, was our consequent harmony with God and share in the reconciliation, not done by our Lord, but in a measure committed to us, His “members.” He says, as above quoted, “God hath reconciled us to Himself through Jesus and hath given to us the ministry (service) of reconciliation”; not the service of our own reconciliation, which is already passed, but the service of making known to the world the great fact that through the merit of Christ’s death, whosoever wills may return to harmony with God, be reconciled to Him. Our message is that this reconciliation is eventually to reach the whole world, but that, at the present time, it is intended only for “him that hath an ear to hear.”

Church’s Ministry as Ambassadors

As ambassadors for God, as “members” of The Christ, it is our ministry or service in the world to carry the message to all who can hear it — to persuade men, to encourage them by word and example, to be reconciled to God — to accept His terms and conditions and to submit themselves fully to His will. This ministry or service in the present time affects merely the gathering of “the household of faith,” including the “elect,” but this is not the end of the service. Those faithful in the present work of the ministry of reconciliation will be counted worthy by the Lord of a share in the glorious work of the future. The reconciliation of that time will differ from the message of the present time. For we persuade, we urge, we entreat, we lay down our lives for the

brethren. We seek by word and example to encourage, to entice them to the Lord — to have fellowship in His sufferings and in our ministry.

The Church’s Ministry of the Future

The ministry of the future will be entirely different — it will be glorious. Instead of suffering and sacrificing and being rejected of men, the future reconciliation work will be accomplished on a plane of glory. Our Lord and Head, glorified, will be the King of kings and Lord of lords. We, His humble followers, will be “changed” by the power of the First Resurrection and, as “members” of His “glorious Body,” we will sit upon His throne. We will exercise under Him the office of Prophet, Priest, King, Mediator between God and men, the world. No longer will men be entreated, but, on the contrary the Law shall go forth from Mt. Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:5.) And “the soul that will not obey that Prophet shall be destroyed from among His people,” after full, fair warning and helpful advice (Acts 3:25).

Present and Future Ministry of Reconciliation

This ministry of reconciliation committed to the Church, now and hereafter, is sometimes referred to as the ministry of the New Covenant — the service of bringing Israel in covenant relationship with God anew. These royal priests serve the New Covenant by way of making; ready, under the guidance of their Head, the sacrificing of their restitution rights as under priests. The duties and privileges of this “royal priesthood” are now a sacrificing service; by and by a reigning, restoring and teaching service. “As He was, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17).

The Righteousness of God in Him

2 Corinthians 5:21 above quoted tells how our Lord became the sin offering for us, the household of faith, and that this is in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. In other words, we His “members” may be the channels through whom His merit would be applied for the propitiation of the world’s sins, under the terms of the New Testament, or bequest, in His blood. This is in harmony with Paul’s statement that God’s mercy through Christ will be extended to Israel through the Church. As it is written, “They shall obtain mercy through your mercy.” It is God’s mercy through Christ which will pass through the Church to natural Israel to whomsoever wills of all the families of the earth. Thank God for the privilege of this ministry of reconciliation committed unto us (Romans 11:27) (Z1910-6).

Contacts

Berean Bible Institute, Inc.

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Published by the Berean Bible Institute, Inc.
PO Box 402, Rosanna, Victoria, Australia 3084
Email: australianbiblestudents@gmail.com
Website: australianbiblestudents.org

Editorial Committee

Ray Charlton, Adam Koczyk, Matthew Christopher

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Australian Bible Students Online Convention

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Details in October, December People’s Paper

The Bible Teachings

On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom,
Sin Offering, and Atonement.

This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute in the 1970’s and sets out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the next part of this 274-page book. For Brethren who would like to read more of the content, it is available at:

www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf

At the End of the Tunnel

In the not-too-distant past, our railroad trains were equipped with kerosene lamps, lighted only after the darkness had set in. Unlike the electric lights on our modern trains, the kerosene lamps each had to be individually lighted by the porter.

Sometimes, during the day, a train had to pass through dark tunnels. Because these periods were comparatively short, the lamps were not lighted at such times. The people would sit in the darkness, awaiting the light as the train emerged from the tunnel.

On one of these train trips, a little girl was running up and down the length of the train, very much to the dismay of her mother, who had time and time again asked her to sit down beside her, so that she would not fall and hurt herself if the train should suddenly lurch around a curve. However, the little girl was too busy enjoying herself and did not heed her mother’s request. Suddenly, the train entered one of these dark tunnels, plunging from the brightness of noonday into the darkness of midnight. Everything went quiet; the little girl’s laughter and the patter of her feet could no longer be heard. Everyone wondered what had happened to her, until the train emerged into the light again, when, lo and behold, there sat the girl on her mother’s lap, her little arms tightly clasped about her mother’s neck!

How often we, too, are so childish in our pursuits — wanting to have our own way — until some trial, some tragedy, some bereavement, sends us scurrying back to the Father’s bosom.

A. C. Frey

“Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10 NASB).



The Day Thou Gavest

The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended,
The darkness falls at Thy behest;
To Thee our morning hymns ascended,
Thy praise shall sanctify our rest.

We thank Thee that Thy Church unsleeping,
While earth rolls onward into light,
Through all the world her watch is keeping,
And rests not now by day or night.

As o'er each continent and island
The dawn leads on another day,
The voice of prayer is never silent,
Nor dies the strain of praise away.

The sun that bids us rest is waking
Our brethren 'neath the western sky,
And hour by hour fresh lips are making
Thy wondrous doings heard on high.

So be it, Lord; Thy throne shall never,
Like earth's proud empires, pass away;
Thy Kingdom stands, and grows for ever,
Till all Thy creatures own Thy sway.

Author: John Ellerton (1870)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZJs0-0Qa2g



*His compassions never fail.
They are new every morning.
Great is Thy faithfulness.*

Lamentations 3:22-23

John Lang



God Will Provide

“For I know the purposes which I am purposing for you, says Jehovah; purposes of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11 MKJV).

Of all the Old Testament heroes of faith, Abraham surely stands out as one of the greatest. His whole life was a journey of faith from God’s first call to leave home and kindred, and through the various tests which God saw fit to send. To him also were given great and wonderful promises to apply through the seed of promise. Of Abraham it is stated that he was the friend of God.

The greatest of Abraham’s tests of faith was that recorded in Genesis 22:1-19, wherein God asked Abraham to offer up the son of promise, even Isaac. Even here we see that Abraham faltered not but set out with faith and resoluteness to do God’s will.

As Abraham set out, his party consisted of himself, Isaac, and two of his young men, and they journeyed three days towards the place appointed of God. There the young men were left behind, the remainder of the experience being too personal for any outsiders to share. The heart of Abraham no doubt bled as he went on with his beloved son, but we see no wavering of his faith until he stands with knife raised to offer up his son. Just at that point he stands alone before God, with nothing but his faith to support him in the final moments of trial.

In our testing experiences, friends may come so far, but in the final issue we stand alone before God. Do we know Him so well as to be able to trust Him like Abraham in the face of the impossible situation? Abraham had no other seed acceptable to God, nor any prospect of other such seed, nor was there any way but to obey God, yet he believed still that God could do the impossible. How appropriately he is named the father of all them that believe, the faithful seed out of all nations. Let us urge each other on to greater trust like his; God may be calling us to sacrifice some treasure, something we even feel is essential. If we

go ahead in faith and obedience, God will overrule in His own way, just as He did for Abraham.

What a great picture there is here of God’s own giving of His only begotten and well-beloved Son; how beautifully the story of Abraham and Isaac foreshadows the so great love of God in the giving of His first Christmas Gift to mankind and its mighty cost.

Turning now to Isaac, we see a picture of unquestioning obedience to his father, Abraham. Without murmur or complaint, he goes with Abraham the long three days’ journey by foot. How it reminds us of our Saviour’s three and a half years’ journey of service and self-sacrifice over the dusty roads of Palestine. Then, after leaving the two young men, Isaac carried the wood for the offering, even as our Lord bore His own cross to Calvary.

The only recorded conversation between the two is that given in verses 7 and 8. Isaac sees the very evident preparations for an offering and asks what is a very natural question. “And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham

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said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So, they both went together” (Genesis 22:7-8 MKJV). Yes, even if the “lamb” was to be Isaac, the son of promise who was to be a father of nations. The lesson surely is that we too should trust God even where we cannot trace His designs and purposes. The mind of our Heavenly Father is so greater than the limits of men’s minds, and His immediate call to us may make no apparent sense. Why in Abraham’s case should a reasonable God ask for such an apparently futile act. The offering of Isaac would not in itself achieve any purpose or blessing. In fact, humanly speaking, it could only cut right across God’s earlier promise of blessing to all mankind through the seed of promise. With much justification, Abraham might have argued back with God on these lines, yet Hebrews tells us that Abraham believed that God was able to restore Isaac to life, if need be, which we are told is what did happen in a figure. Of course, the testing and proving of Abraham in itself was the glorious purpose of this experience, even as in our lives it is the trial of our faith that teaches patience and strengthens hope.

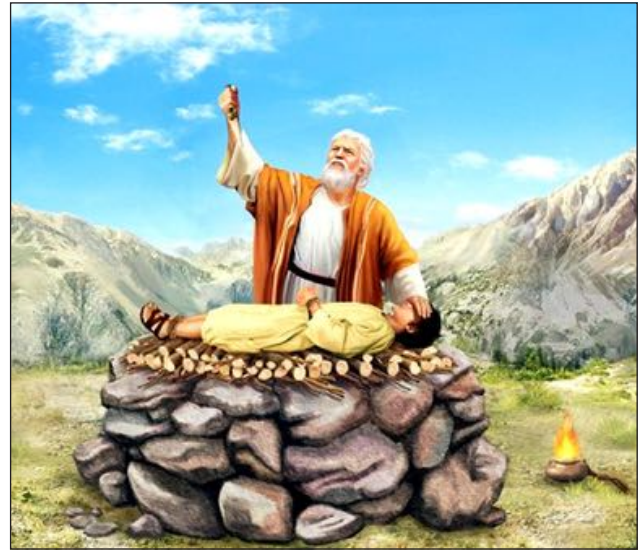
Because of his faithfulness in this last and greatest trial, God confirmed and enhanced His earlier promises to Abraham, and through him and his seed, even Christ, and all of the faith of Abraham, we have been blessed and ultimately shall all mankind be blessed. Though you and I may not see the purpose of God’s dealings with us, let us not murmur or complain, but rather, as did Abraham, believe in our God as the God of all-seeing wisdom and love who does indeed work all things together for good to them that love Him and are called according to His purpose.

Looking again at verse 8, “God will provide himself a lamb.” Yes, there was the ram caught in the thicket, verse 13, and this was offered instead of Isaac. How Abraham’s heart must have rejoiced to see God’s loving hand in this provision; he had trusted that God would provide though he could not know just how or when. So, God will not tempt us beyond what we are able to bear, but with the trial will provide the way of escape when He sees we have learned His will, so that we may be able to bear whatever experiences He sees are best for us.

The Lamb of God

Best of all, this part of the account reminds us of the Lamb of God provided as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. God, as a righteous judge, demanded the life sentence of all mankind. All our lives were forfeited by Adam’s sin, but God has provided Himself a Lamb, even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, “the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8, Rotherham). How wonderful is God’s provision that even before the need existed the remedy for sin had been appointed and prepared.

As it was in the case of the ram offered instead of Isaac, so the offering of our Saviour was a substitutionary one.



Abraham offering Isaac, as God would offer Jesus

God had asked Abraham for the offering of his son, not that Isaac’s death would have atoned for sin or had merit in itself, but that Abraham’s faith and suitability for God’s purposes might be finally tested. Our Lord Jesus Christ has, however, tasted death for every man — in every person’s place — on the cross of Calvary. There He gave up His perfect life that all who by faith, even the faith of Abraham, claim Him as Saviour might escape the penalty and power of sin. In this age, God is drawing to Him only those that He wills for His purposes. But to all who hear His call to their hearts in this time, what a wonderfully rich provision there is in Christ — “the unsearchable riches.”

To any who have not yet made God’s provision their own, the Christmas season again presents the challenge of the cross of Christ. The human race, dead in sin, sorrow, and suffering, desperately needs the grace of God, and we praise Him that He has provided blessing beyond human conception to be revealed in due time. But to those who have the ear to hear and the heart to respond, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. The need of each one of us for a Saviour requires no emphasis; in our own hearts we know it is truly so. Why not then take God’s provision to our hearts now — accept God’s greatest of all gifts at this Christmas time, and make the new year a year of new life and joy in Christ. May His holy Spirit speak to each of us at this season, and if we have not yet laid hold on life in Christ may we receive grace to heed the call and to follow Christ in full devotion to His will and service. For us all, may His spirit make the new year one of renewed zeal for His service, for more love for the brethren, for greater trust in His all-seeing overruling day by day.

Let us all earnestly seek to be built up in faith, through trial though it be, to learn the daily lessons of submission and obedience, knowing that He who has provided the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world, even your sin and mine, will day by day provide all our needs through His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

The Sin Offering of Atonement

“He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

Jesus instructions to his disciples, “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans” (Matthew 10:5 NKJV), are interesting, considering that he preached to the Samaritans and used the story of the Good Samaritan to show the Jewish people how they had strayed interpreting the Law.

The Gospel message speaks of the good tidings that God has given his only begotten Son to take Adam’s place in death, which has made possible the wonderful statement of John in our theme text. This highly esteemed gift of God to mankind is the center of his eternal purpose to take out from among men a people for his name, and through them, in association with Jesus, eventually reestablish the human race in perfection here on earth. The process by which this is accomplished is the Sin Offering, a term with typical significance showing the manner and the sequence in which the value of Christ’s sacrificed life is used to carry out God’s grand objective for man’s salvation. “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:5).

The doctrine of the Sin Offering is very important. We acknowledge that we are not justified by the extent of our understanding, but by the fullness of our faith (Romans 3:28, 5:9). Nevertheless, clearer understanding enhances our appreciation and enlarges our faith in the Heavenly Father and his great divine plan of the ages.

A Ransom for All

As we have studied, the word ransom signifies “a price to correspond” (1 Timothy 2:6, 1 Corinthians 6:20). Adam was disobedient and a sinner, and because of this he was condemned to death (Genesis 2:17, 3:19). And because he was the potential father of the human race, the sentence not only affected him, but all of his children — the human family. Before Adam sinned, he was perfect and therefore the one chosen to be his Redeemer had to be correspondingly perfect. But there were no perfect human beings since all inherited Adam’s condemnation, and all had sinned. So, God sent Jesus, who was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners (Hebrews 7:26) to be the ransom for Adam and the entire human race. When, therefore, Jesus died on Calvary’s cross, a sufficient price had been laid down to redeem Adam and all his progeny. In the strictest sense of the term, the ransom-price thus provided was the great and only efficient offering for sin that was acceptable to the Heavenly Father (Galatians 3:13). However, this merit has not as yet been placed in the hands of justice on behalf of

Adam and his race, although it has been almost two thousand years since it was provided.

The Merit of Jesus’ Sacrifice

What did Jesus do with the merit of his own sacrifice? The Scriptures tell us that forty days after his crucifixion Jesus ascended to his Father (Acts 1:1-9). The Apostle Paul states, “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:24). The “us” spoken of in the text are the footstep followers of Jesus, the household of faith during the Gospel Age. This entire transaction was pictured in the Law. Jesus, speaking to the Jews, said, “Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me” (John 5:46).

The writings of Moses, in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, furnish us with a beautiful illustration of how the merit of Christ is used to accomplish the eternal purpose of the Heavenly Father. Here is described how the atonement for the sins of the Israelites was accomplished. We are told by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 13:10-13 that those ancient ceremonies were types or pictures — the reality of which is the sacrifice for sin by Jesus and his footstep followers during the Gospel Age (Hebrews 9:10-14). The humanity of these real sin offerings was pictured on the typical Day of Atonement in the animals; the new creature was pictured in the high priest. The Tabernacle itself was constructed with three compartments — the Court, the Holy, and the Most Holy. The Court represented justification, perfect humanity. The Holy pictured the spirit-begotten condition. The Most Holy well illustrated heaven itself — the presence of God.



Torah Scroll, such as would contain Leviticus 16

The Typical Day of Atonement

It is important to remember then, in applying this type, that the Court of the Tabernacle represents our justified humanity; the Holy represents the spirit-begotten condition of those pictured in the Court; and the Most Holy represents heaven itself, our resurrection hope.

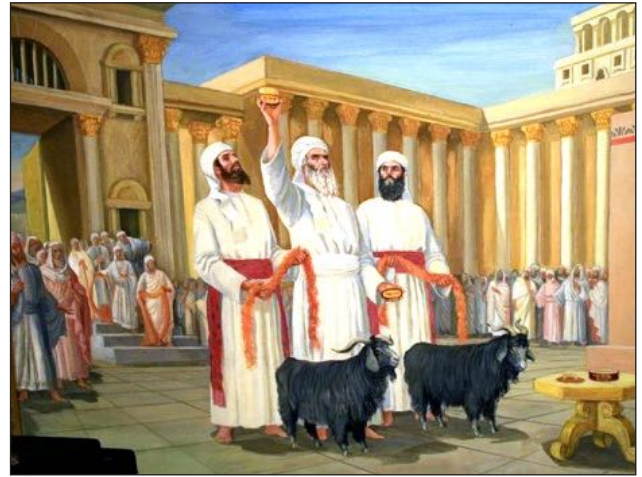
There were three animals principally that were used on the typical Day of Atonement — a bullock, and two goats. Lots were cast by the high priest to determine which of the goats was to be called the Lord's goat and subsequently used as a part of the Sin Offering. The remaining goat became the scapegoat. The first sacrifice on the Day of Atonement was the bullock. Aaron took the blood of the bullock, together with live coals from the altar in the Court, and his hands full of incense, into the Holy of the Tabernacle. There he placed the live coals upon the Golden Altar and crumbled the incense over the burning coals. Soon the compartment was filled with the smoke and aroma of the incense. But Aaron had to wait in the Holy until the smoke of the incense had penetrated into the Most Holy before he could enter into this compartment with the blood and sprinkle it upon the Mercy Seat. The Most Holy, we remember, represented the presence of God himself.

How beautifully this incense identifies with the perfection of our Lord Jesus and the way his sacrifice was offered for the three-and-one-half years of his ministry. It was a sweet perfume unto God, for it showed the love and zeal with which his life, represented in the blood, was poured out. After the incense had penetrated into the Most Holy, the blood of the bullock was taken within and sprinkled upon the propitiatory, or lid of the Ark of the Covenant, which pictured God's justice. This offering was for Aaron and his house (Leviticus 16:11). The Lord's goat was then slain in the Court and its blood also was taken by the same high priest, Aaron, into the Most Holy and sprinkled on the Mercy Seat. The blood of the goat was handled exactly as was the blood of the bullock. This offering was for the people (Leviticus 16:16).

Antitypical Meaning

Antitypically, the bullock represented our Lord Jesus, and his offering — the merit of his sacrificed life — was presented to God in heaven itself. The Apostle Paul, in Hebrews 9:24, states, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are [merely] the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." The apostle is pointing back to the Tabernacle, when the high priest, on the Day of Atonement, sprinkled the blood of the bullock on the propitiatory. This was a picture or a figure of the reality.

It is well to notice that there was a difference between the statement of the Apostle Paul and the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus. Aaron applied the blood for himself and his house. The reason Aaron



Two goats presented on the Day of Atonement

included himself was because he was an imperfect man. It was necessary, therefore, that an atonement be made for him also. This was not required for Jesus, because he was perfect. He was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners.

A Willing Sacrifice

What did Paul mean when he stated that Jesus appeared in the presence of God for us? When Jesus died on the cross, wasn't that enough to redeem us and the whole world of mankind? The Scriptures state that he died for our sins, but "was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). In John 10:17 we read the words of Jesus, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." This does not mean that he is going to take his fleshly life back, because he has given that life for the life of the world. His purpose was to take the value of that life. He said, "No man taketh it from me" (John 10:18). In other words, he did not forfeit his life as Adam did. He said, "I lay it down of myself." This was a willing offering by our Lord Jesus for "us" and the whole world of mankind. "He is a propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

Again, in John 10:18 we read, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power [the right] to lay it down, and I have power [the right] to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." God gave him the authority to do this. When Jesus died on the cross, the ransom-price was provided. But God purposed that this offering had to be made in a certain place, just as Aaron had to offer the blood of the bullock, not in the Court, or the Holy, but in the Most Holy, representing heaven itself. This was the figure or picture of the true. After Jesus died on the cross, had he not later appeared in the presence of God according to the plan of God, the entire arrangement would have been to no avail. "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22,23, "Christ the first fruits"). This was the offering for sin, and it had to be accomplished exactly according to instructions. Jesus

gave the only perfect offering for sin, and he followed the Lord's arrangement in presenting it.

“A Priest Forever”

It was not possible for Jesus to function as a priest and offer sacrifices here on earth, because under the Law, which was in effect at the time, only the Aaronic priesthood was so authorized. In Hebrews 7:12 the apostle states, “For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.” It is important to notice how Paul analyzes this statement. “For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe [he was not of the tribe of Levi, but the tribe of Judah], of which no man gave attendance at the altar.” No one from the tribe of Judah had any authority to make an offering for sin, and this included our Lord. In verses fourteen and fifteen we read, “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest.” In other words, there had to be another priesthood — the Melchisedek order of which Jesus was the head — in order for him to make an acceptable offering unto God (Psalms 110:4).

In Hebrews 8:1-4 we read, “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” Jesus, after his resurrection, assumed his role as the head of the heavenly priestly order of Melchisedec. Then Paul continues, “A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” Men made the first, the typical Tabernacle. But the Lord shaped a true tabernacle — the church of the Gospel Age. “For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the Law.”

When Jesus appeared on high in the presence of God for us, he appeared as a priest after the order of Melchisedec, because that offering had to be made in heaven. When we, as the footstep followers

of Jesus, have completed our part in his offering (for it is in his offering that we have been invited to participate), the merit of his sacrifice which has been applied on our behalf must then be returned to God to be subsequently applied on behalf of the world of mankind.

It can be clearly seen that the ransom-price and the Sin Offering are closely related. Jesus provided the ransom-price when he died on the cross. It is impossible that any other person could share in this, for it was only he that was perfect and acceptable to God as a sacrifice. It was the ransom-price that Jesus presented to the Father for us. We received the full value of it, and by it we are justified — our humanity is reckoned just. Because of this we are made acceptable to God as a sacrifice, and we are invited to be sharers with Jesus in his sacrificial offering. We add nothing to it nor do we take anything from it, but by the experiences we have in our walk as footstep followers of Jesus, we are enabled to develop the fruits and graces of the Spirit which are necessary if we are to attain to the heavenly reward.

The Lord's Goat

Our part in the sacrificial offering for sin was pictured in the Lord's goat. We believe that all the called, justified, and spirit-begotten of the church of the firstborn developed during the Gospel Age were represented in the two goats. When the high priest cast lots to see which would be the Lord's goat, Jehovah was picturing the selection of the more than overcomers to be members of the church. And it is only these who are counted as being represented in the Lord's goat and who become sharers in our Lord's offering for sin. The remaining goat pictured the Great Company, who did not share in the offering for sin. The sacrifice of the Lord's goat, which was accomplished in exactly the same manner as that of the bullock, pictured the church of the Gospel Age who faithfully endeavored to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

The Apostle Paul, in Romans 6:3, states, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” We were baptized into his death; we became sharers in his death, not our own. In verses four and five he continues, “Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” When we indicated our willingness to participate in our Lord's offering and were justified, we began laying that justified life down in sacrifice as Jesus did, and by doing this we were counted as sharing in his death. This is not our offering, but his offering. When the last member of the body of Christ has been offered up, then the same merit that justified these footstep followers of Jesus will be used by the heavenly Father on behalf of the remainder of the



High priest Aaron, representing Jesus, our High priest

world of mankind.

Recall to mind the statement that was made at the beginning of this study that described what the Sin Offering is — the Sin Offering pictures the manner and sequence in which the merit of the ransom sacrifice is applied. First it is applied on behalf of the church, and then on behalf of the world of mankind. The only way we share in it is that the value or merit is passed on to us first, in order that we might be reckoned as worthy to share in our Lord's death. The church does not share in the ransom, which had already been given and accepted before the church was formed.

The Sufferings of Christ

The sufferings of Christ are not the Sin Offering. In the Bible, suffering never atones for sin. It is only the blood that is effective as a means for the cancellation of sin. (Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:22). The sufferings have only to do with proving and perfecting those who would be partakers of the Sin Offering. It is only those who overcome the world and its influences who become those typified by the Lord's goat. Those

who do not fully overcome are represented in the scapegoat and become a part of the Great Company.

In Hebrews 5:8, 9, we read, "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." His sufferings perfected Jesus as a new creature. In 1 Peter 2:21 we read, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps." As we endeavor to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, we are to meet the experiences the Heavenly Father permits in the same spirit as Jesus met his. If we do these things, we will develop in our spiritual minds the fruits and graces of the Spirit, without which we could not be acceptable as part of the offering for sin (Galatians 5:22, 23).

The Apostle Peter summarizes our lesson with these words, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter 5:10).

Abram and Lot

"Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran and settled there" (Genesis 11:31 NASB).

Abram's journey to the promised land started with God's instructions "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house to the land which I will show you" (Genesis 12:1 NASB). It is interesting that God's instructions included "from your relatives," and yet we read "So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him" (verse 4). This would cause conflict later in Abram's journey.

Abram's journey took him through the land of the Canaanites, it would be a nomadic lifestyle, a tent as his abode waiting for "the city which hath foundations." Once Abram arrived at Shechem, it was here that the LORD appeared to Abram, previously He had called or spoken but as Abram exhibited his faith the LORD then promised "To your descendants I will give this land" (Genesis 12:7), and it was there that Abram built an altar to the LORD. There is no record of Lot being spoken to by the LORD, nor did he build an Altar to the LORD.

Test of Faith

"Now there was a famine in the land; so, Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land" (Genesis 12:10 NASB).

Abram's faith in God's protection was tested. He moved from the land of promise to Egypt, denying that Sarai was his wife for fear of his life, resulting in Sarai being taken to Pharaoh's house. It is then that the LORD intervened with great plagues on Pharaoh and his household (Genesis 12:11-20).

Our spiritual nourishment can never be obtained from the wisdom of this world (symbolic Egypt). But if we find ourselves on holy ground (the place of separation) in a condition of spiritual famine, feeling that we lack something. Let us abide close to our altar with the Lord. Having once made a mistake, let us immediately, like Abram return to that higher ground.

Their Separation

Abram, with Lot returned to Bethel, to the place where Abram had built an altar to the Lord and here, he called on the name of the LORD (Genesis 13:1-5). Lot and Abram had walked together since the start of their journey from Ur, but this was soon to end. Abram had been treated well by Pharaoh resulting in an increase in his stock and male and female servants (Genesis 12:16). This increase in temporal prosperity would bring strife. In chapter 13 we read, "Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. And the land could not sustain

them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock" (Genesis 13:5-7 NASB).

Here we see Abram as the peace-maker "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left" (Genesis 13:8-9). Lot was given first choice of the land. "Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere—this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah — like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. So, Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus, they separated from each other" (Genesis 13:10-11 NASB).

Lot's choice is interesting, the valley of the Jordan was well-watered, like "the garden of the LORD" but with evil in its midst (Genesis 13:13). Lot could represent those who live religious in outward things, striving to please God and mankind, but succeed in doing neither. They take the right steps because others take them, making sacrifices because others do so. They are righteous but wholly unable to walk where the men of faith venture, as they resolutely press on to what they perceive are the best things of the world.

Lot's Decline

Lot's decline was gradually shown by him first settling in the cities of the plain (Genesis 13:12). Then, later he settled in Sodom (Genesis 14:12), even sitting in the gate of Sodom.

Lot's decline is illustrated by what happened to this area of the Jordan valley, once fertile and productive, ending in the lifeless Dead Sea of today. Lot soon became involved in the battle of four kings (Babylonia) against the king of Sodom and Gomorrah, being taken captive along with his possessions. Once Abram heard of this, he led his three hundred and eighteen strong men to rescue Lot (Genesis 14:1-17).

While these things happened to Lot, Abram remained on the high ground living with faith in the Lord's promises. He received the blessing from Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-19) and to him alone God revealed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

It appears that Lot was accepted in Sodom and in the evening was found sitting at the gate of Sodom, possible being granted the official position at the seat of justice (Genesis 19:1, 9). The arrival of two angels really was a test for Lot. They were invited



Abram and Lot

into his home for the night, rather than staying in the town square. Trouble soon arose. "Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; and they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them'" (Genesis 19:4-5 NASB).

Lot, instead of calling upon the Lord, tried to solve the problem by offering his two daughters. This was not what the town's men wanted. It was then that the angels acted, blinding those who wished them harm. Lot endeavoured to please the Lord. He pictures those who try to be righteous and hold onto the truth but fail to grasp its inward spirit. True believers dwell apart from the world with God. Like Lot, some are taken in by the sensual things of this life. Lot, who strove to improve Sodom, which was doomed to failure. Similarly, the world cannot be saved at this time.

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Contrasts of Divine Revelation

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8 ESV). The Apostle John expands this thought. "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:15-17 NASB).

Lot had settled in Sodom but found no peace there. Apostle Peter wrote "and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds)" (2 Peter 2:7-8 NASB). Lot's problem was his choice of friends. "Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4 NASB).

The Heavenly Visitors

There is a quite a contrast in the timing of the divine messengers who came to Abram and Lot.

Abraham — "Now the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth" (Genesis 18:1-2 NASB).

Lot — Note, Abraham received three visitors, one of them the Logos, the frequent spokesman of God.

He received them in the heat of the day, picturing the light of full favour. Lot received two messengers in the evening, picturing the fading light.

“Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground” (Genesis 19:1 NASB).

Their Place of Residence

Abraham — Up high by the plains of Mamre in his tent door, temporary place of abode. He was alert, looking out over the land, the land of promise. He was separated from the world with faith that God would do what he promised. He received none of the promised land having to buy land to bury Sarah in a cave in the field of Machpelah in Mamre.

Lot — Lot had a house, a permanent dwelling amongst the worldly people in the lowest level of the plain in Sodom. He was sitting at the gate, a place of power, possibly hoping to correct the faults of others, he even called them brethren (Genesis 19:7).

The Reception for Their Guests

Abraham — He ran to greet them, showing his enthusiasm and the desire to offer them hospitality. and said, “My Lord, if now I have found favour in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by. Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant.” And they said, “So do, as you have said” (Genesis 18:3-5 NASB). His offer is readily accepted.

Lot — Lot does not appear to show the same enthusiasm. “He rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground” (Genesis 19:1 NASB). Although welcoming, he did not run with the same enthusiasm as Abraham. His invitation was originally denied “No, but we shall spend the night in the square.” Lot then strongly urged them to stay. Unfortunately, their communion with Lot was marred by the Sodomite men surrounding his house demanding to have relationships with the two visitors.

Lot’s experiences that night could be blamed on him trying to appease two masters and thus unable to satisfy either, the Lord or the world. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon” (Matthew 6:24). Abraham as much as was possible had separated himself from the world.

The Feast Provided for the Guests

Abraham — “So, Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it and make bread cakes.” This is a very generous amount of bread. Abraham also ran to the herd and took a tender and choice calf and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it (Genesis 18:6-7 NASB). Abraham spared no expense or effort to serve his guests. “So, Abraham hurried into the tent

to Sarah, and said, ‘Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it and make bread cakes.’ Abraham also ran to the herd and took a tender and choice calf and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it” (Genesis 18:6-7 NASB).

Lot — “He prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate” (Genesis 19:3 NASB). The word translated feast is more correctly rendered a banquet of wine (Esther 5:6, 7:7, Isaiah 25:6). The Septuagint renders it “a drinking” an acceptable service but not as costly as Abraham.

Both made sacrifices, but it was only Abraham who gave “a tender and choice calf.” Paul reminds us “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Romans 12:1 NASB).

Their Respective Families

Abraham — Then they said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” (Genesis 18:9 NASB) (The angels knew Sarah’s name) Sarah had been instrumental in preparing the bread cakes for the meal. Unlike when Abraham was in Egypt, he did not try to pass off his wife as his sister.

Lot — In Lot’s case there is not mention of his wife being involved in the preparation of the meal. When the messengers were in danger, Lot did not call on the Lord for assistance but tries to appease the men of Sodom with the offer of his virgin daughters.

While we are in this present evil world our purest principles are in danger of being abused. Lot had hoped to change the world that he lived in. His principle, like ours can be put in danger of perils or defilement. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2 NASB).

Attention to the Guests

Abraham — “He prepared and placed the food before them; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate” (Genesis 18:8 NASB). He was there as their servant, giving his full attention to them.



Abraham with angelic visitors

Lot — “But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him,” (Genesis 19:6 NASB) Lot had to leave the guests and handle the problems of the world that he chose to live in. Lot found that the men of Sodom actually held him in contempt.

Jesus states that those who like Lot, try to live in the spirit and in the world “but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful” (Mark 4:19 NASB).

Message from the Angels

Abraham — “I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.” (Genesis 18:10 NASB) The long-awaited son of promise was to come. Abraham was also warned of the destruction that was to happen. In declaring the fate of Sodom to Abraham, the Lord spoke to him as a friend, saying, “the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do” (Genesis 18:17).

Lot — The message to Lot was a warning. “Whom-ever you have in the city, bring them out of the place; for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it.” (Genesis 19:12-13 NASB)

The Reactions of the Hearers

Abraham — “And Abraham replied, “Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27 NASB). The LORD had confidence in Abraham and did not hide what he was to bring upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham was so concerned that he pleaded with the LORD not to destroy the cities if there were even ten righteous in the city. Abraham looked down on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. There is a wonderful statement about Abraham “that God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived” (Genesis 19:29 NASB).

Lot — Lot acted quite differently when he received the message “for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it” (Genesis 19:13 NASB). There was no pleading to the LORD to save the city. The only message was to his family “Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city. But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the LORD was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city” (Genesis 19:15, 16).

Lot compromised all three parts of the angel’s command! Lot was told to flee to the sanctuary of the mountains so as not to be swept away with the destruction. He pleaded to be allowed to go to a small town Zoar (little). Mountains were a symbol of God’s dwelling place, but it appears that he did not believe



Destruction of Sodom

God could deliver him there. Maybe he was still not willing to leave the world behind. His father’s name Haran meant mountaineer indicating that Lot whose name means “covered” should have had confidence in the Lord.

If we follow Abraham’s example, we are promised “You are My friends if you do what I command you. “No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you” (John 15:14-15 NASB). To the worldly Jesus speaking of the Holy Spirit states, “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8 NASB).

After the Destruction

Abraham continued to faithfully follow the Lord’s direction and testing’s, even to being willing to sacrifice his only son. The apostle Paul states, “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8 NASB).

Lot changed his mind after arriving in Zoar. “Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave, he and his two daughters” (Genesis 19:30 NASB). His safety had been assured by God if he went to Zoar. The move to the cave in the mountains was a disaster. The daughters got Lot drunk with wine, “Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father” (Genesis 19:36 NASB). The resulting births started the Moabite and Ammonite nations.

Lessons for the Christian

As Christians we have a bird’s-eye view of these two patriarchs who illustrated the proper and improperly steps for those who wish to draw near to God. Abraham and Lot walked together since leaving Ur until they went their separate ways. Abraham continued to walk with God in faith. Lot on the other hand put trust in his own wisdom and that of the world. Abraham lived

in tents; Lot had a more permanent dwelling in a cave. We are given the follow encouragement. “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1 NASB). Why? Because we walk by faith not by sight.

Jesus uses the example of Lot’s wife. “Remember Lot’s wife. Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it” (Luke

17:32-33 NASB). Lot’s wife had turned back, failing to remember the warning “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away.” We cannot look back without the risk of losing what is before us.

“No one, after putting his hand to the Plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

Divine Paradoxes

“Because thy loving kindness (favour) is better than life, my lips shall praise thee” (Psalms 63:3).

There are two ways in which this text may be viewed, both of which are very proper. One way is to consider it merely from the viewpoint of the Psalmist and what he meant. The other is to consider it from the standpoint of prophecy. We understand the Prophet David to mean that to have God’s favour is more desirable than life; that is to say, he would rather die than live without divine favour. The other way, of viewing it prophetically, is to suppose that here, as in many other places, the Psalmist represented The Christ, Jesus the Head and the church His members.

Our consecration is unto death. God has invited us to present our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto Him, and He has given us exceeding great and precious promises for the life to come. Therefore, because of our love for Him and for the principles of righteousness for which He stands, we are not merely willing to lay down our lives, but glad to lay them down. We are glad to lay down our human lives in doing the things that are pleasing to God.

Another of David’s Psalms gives us the thought that in God’s favour is everlasting life (Psalms 30:5). These paradoxical statements are in harmony with the other divine paradox, that “he that loses his life shall find it.” He that surrenders his earthly life shall gain glory, honour, immortality, the divine nature. We are glad that we can appreciate these glorious things represented in the divine favour extended to the church and we gladly lay down our lives. We have chosen the better path.

“Therefore, my lips shall praise thee.” The Scriptures declare “for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” (Romans 10:10 NASB). We

may say that to live righteously is one of the best ways of proving our obedience to the Lord. Yet there are some who try hard to live pleasing to the Lord, who might be restrained from making a confession of Him. There are reasons for the blessing which we receive from confession. One reason is that it is a witness to the world — showing forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness; and a second reason is that this witnessing has a good effect on ourselves. We enlist our natural forces to support this witness, and thus bring into unison all the powers of our nature.

The preaching of the Gospel brings opposition. If our Lord had gone about casting out demons, healing the sick, etc., and had not told anything about the divine plan, He would probably have been looked upon as a fine character — as a man going about doing good. But because he preached differently from the scribes and Pharisees, and His preaching of the truth infringed upon the teachings of those about Him, it roused their ire.

So, it is today. All the persecution comes about from making known the truth. In no time that we know has this not been true. In the dark ages and through the Gospel Age, preaching the truth has brought upon those telling the good tidings, persecutions from those

whose minds have been benighted by the prince of darkness. In proportion as we open our lips and tell of the Gospel of the Lord, we are opposed by Satan and those who are blinded by him. With the lips one might praise God, and with the lips he might injure men. The lips of this class consecrated to God — those who are laying down their present life in His service — should be devoted to His praise, to showing forth the glorious character and loving kindness of our God, to telling forth the wonders of the divine plan, which is marvellous in our eyes.



The Psalmist David

Out of the Abundance of the Heart

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks ... For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:34, 37 ESV).

The above words of our Lord indicate that the heart and the mouth are under very special scrutiny, the former representing the individual character, and the latter being an index of the character. It is in this same view of the matter that these words of wisdom were penned — “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you crooked speech and put devious talk far from you” (Proverbs 4:23-24 ESV). The indication is clear that a right condition of the heart is necessary to right words, for “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks,” as experience testifies to every man. It is therefore just that our words should be a criterion of judgment in the Lord’s estimation, as He tells us they are.

Our first concern, then, should be for the heart, that its affections and dispositions may be fully under the control of divine grace, that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there; that justice, mercy, brotherly kindness, faith, meekness, temperance, and love may be firmly fixed as the governing principles of life. If these principles be fixed, established in the heart, then out of the good treasures of the heart, the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness, wisdom, and grace. Of our Lord Jesus, whose heart was perfect, in whom was no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, it was said, “Grace is poured into thy lips,” and again, “All bare him witness and wondered at the gracious words that were coming out of his mouth” (Psalms 45:2, Luke 4:22).

So wise, just, and true were the Lord’s words that though His enemies were continually seeking to find some fault, it is said, “And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marvelling at his answer they became silent” (Luke 20:26 ESV). And others said, “No one spoke like this man” (John 7:46 ESV). Thus our Lord left a worthy example to His people, which the Apostle urges all to follow, saying — “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person (Colossians 4:6 ESV). And Peter adds, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” — wisely and in accordance with the spirit and mind of the Lord. Again, it is written, “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.” “Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.” “The words of a wise man’s mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his



From an abundant heart

talk is evil madness.” “Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore, let your words be few” (Psalms 34:13, Proverbs 21:23, Ecclesiastes 10:12, 13, Ecclesiastes 5:2. ESV).

Job, in the midst of all his afflictions, was very careful not to sin with his lips. He knew that his words would be taken by the Lord as an index of his heart, and he was careful to keep both the heart and his words right. “He said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips” (Job 2:10 ESV). “The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21 ESV). There was no spirit of rebellion in a heart out of whose abundance came such words of loving submission, patience, and faith under severe testings, and that, too, without a clear vision of the divine wisdom in permitting them.

The Psalmist puts into the mouths of God’s consecrated and tried people these words of firm resolution — “I said, ‘I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so long as the wicked are in my presence’” (Psalms 39:1 ESV). How necessary to the stability of Christian character is such a resolution, and the self control which develops under an adherence to it. The world, the flesh, and the devil oppose our way; there are fightings within and storms without, and many are the arrows and darts aimed at the righteous, and the safe attitude of the Christian in the face of the opposition of the world is to be silent, and to allow the Lord to work all these trials for our good, for the servant is not above his Lord. As Jesus took the opposition of sinners against Himself with such humble patience, so should we. “Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured” (Hebrews 13:13 ESV). Jesus also stated, “Blessed are you when

people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!" (Luke 6:22 ESV).

The Psalmist suggests, "I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so long as the wicked are in my presence" (Psalms 39:1 ESV). Again it is written, "Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin" (Proverbs 13:3 ESV).

So, we see what importance the Lord attaches to our words, for if our words are rebellious, or disloyal, or frivolous, or flippant, or unkind, unthankful, unholy, or impure, the heart is judged accordingly on the principle that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45 ESV). Thus, our words in all the varied circumstances of our daily life are bearing testimony before God of the condition of our hearts, and the Psalmist puts this prayer into the lips of all the Lord's people — "Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with men who work iniquity and let me not eat of their delicacies!" (Psalms 141:3-4 ESV). "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer" (Psalms 19:14 ESV). "My lips will pour forth praise, for you teach me your statutes. My tongue will sing of your word,

for all your commandments are right. Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts. I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight" (Psalms 119:171-174 ESV).

In many things we are all faulty. If any one does not err in word, he is a perfect man, able to control the whole body (James 3:2). But such a man does not exist; we all need to continually plead the merit of our Saviour and Advocate, while we strive daily to perfect holiness in the reverence of the Lord. Therefore, let your words be few; let them be thoughtful and wise, as uttered before God, and not rash, hasty, and ill considered. Let your conversation be as becomes the Gospel of Christ. The Apostle Paul reminds us "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8 ESV). Thus, out of the good treasure of the heart we shall be able to speak words of truth and soberness, and so honour and glorify Jesus and our loving Heavenly Father.

"Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others, of what sort soever they be: for thou thyself also hast many failings which must be borne with by others"
(Thomas A. Kempis, 1380-1471).

“For This He Did Once”

The Bible Teachings (Part Twenty) – Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering, Atonement

“For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens: Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s; for this he did once, when he offered up himself” (Hebrews 7:26, 27).

Book of Hebrews Was Written to Combat The Thought That the Law Covenant was Perpetual.

Had St. Paul written this epistle for the purpose of explaining the typical and antitypical Sin Atonement, he would have written differently. Up to this time he was merely combating the prevalent thought amongst Jews of his day that the Law Covenant and its priestly arrangements were Divinely intended to be perpetual. Whoever so thought would be unable to discern the fact that God intended a new priesthood, symbolised by Melchizedek — one combining the kingly with the priestly office. Until the Jews could get this view of the matter, they could not properly understand:

(1) That the Jewish nation and priesthood and sacrifices and legal code must pass away.

(2) St. Paul would show them the Divine intention

of a New Covenant with a new high priest and new under priests and better sacrifices for its institution.

(3) Only by so seeing could they comprehend the Gospel message: that Christ the New Creature is the High Priest of a new order and that we, "His members," are the under priests of that new order, as spirit-begotten New Creatures. Only from this standpoint could they comprehend how the spirit begotten Jesus, as the Priest, could put to death Jesus in the flesh and make of Him a sin-sacrifice. Only from this standpoint could they understand how the members of Christ, under the headship of the glorified High Priest, could follow in His footsteps of sacrifice and, begotten of the holy spirit as New Creatures, present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God through the merit of the High Priest already entered into the Most Holy as

their Advocate and the Mediator of the New Covenant for the world. Only from this standpoint could they understand how we are called of God to suffer with Christ, that by and by we, His members, may share His glory — as His Bride.

Claim that Both Bullock and Goat Represent Jesus

Our text declares that Christ our High Priest “needeth not daily (continually) as those typical high priests, to offer up sacrifices- first, for his own sins, and then for the people’s — “for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” Turning to the record of Leviticus 16, we find that the typical Priest made two offerings: the first “for himself and his house,” and the second for all the remainder of “the people” of Israel. The first sacrifice was a bullock. The second was a goat. These St. Paul elsewhere refers to as the typical “better sacrifices” (Hebrews 9:23). Let us meet the question squarely. What is signified by these two sacrifices — the bullock and the goat? Our opponents, and indeed everybody else, say that the death of our Lord Jesus is the antitype of both- the slain bullock represents Him and the slain goat represents Him. They tell us that both sacrifices took place at the same time, being finished at Calvary.

Admonished to Study Tabernacle Shadows

We recommend to all a careful prayerful review of the teachings of “Tabernacle Shadows” — a re-examination of the first principles of the “mystery of God.” Meantime we briefly rehearse certain features of the teachings applicable to the text under consideration.

First for His Own Sins

In the preceding verse (26) the Apostle declares our High Priest “holy, harmless and undefiled, separate from sinners.” We should not, therefore, understand his statement in the 27th verse, that Jesus offered up sacrifice “first for His own sins” to mean the contrary of what he had just stated- that our Lord had no sins. We should understand him here, in harmony with his statement elsewhere, to refer to the Church as the Body of Christ. The “Head” was perfect, but the “Body” was imperfect. The Head needed no covering during the day of sacrifice, but the Body needed the white linen garments symbolical of justification. It is the Church, therefore, that is referred to as “himself,” His “members,” for whom He offered the first sacrifice — His personal sacrifice finished at Calvary. [Paul referred to the High Priest as a whole — Head and Body. “He (the father) hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4).]

Himself — the Household of Faith

The Leviticus account shows that this first offering was not for himself only, but also “for his house” — in the type the house or tribe of Levi; in the antitype



Jesus, who gave himself for us

the “household of faith” — the “great company.” We cannot think of any objection that any reasonable mind could offer to this explanation, which is the only one that in any sense of the word fits the facts. At one time we supposed that only these two classes were intended to be saved. And as a matter of fact, no others are yet saved in any sense of the word. Unbelievers have not escaped the “condemnation that is upon the world.” The unregenerate have not received the mark of Divine acceptance of the holy spirit. “The whole world lieth in the Wicked One” — unto this day (1 John 5:19).

Privilege to Become Dead with Him

The type shows us that the great Priest not only sacrificed, but additionally that he made appropriation of the merit-of that sacrifice in the “Most Holy” before he offered the second sacrifice — “the Lord’s goat.” How was this fulfilled? We reply that forty days after our Lord completed His sacrifice at Calvary and arose from the dead, He ascended on high, appeared in the presence of God for us (His members or Body and His house). He applied the merit of His sacrifice on our behalf, and secured for all consecrated believers of this Gospel Age full reconciliation with the Father and full privilege to become dead with Him to earthly interests and restitution favours, and alive with Him to the glories, honours, and immortality of the spirit nature.

Manifestation of the Father’s Acceptance

The manifestation of the Father’s acceptance of the arrangement was given at Pentecost. The disciples and others, “about five hundred brethren,” had already exercised justifying faith and had already consecrated to be dead with Him, but this arrangement could not go into effect until it had the Father’s approval. And God could not approve nor consider our sacrifice “holy and acceptable” (Romans 12:1) until our great Redeemer, the Chief Priest of our order, had appeared for us and applied on our behalf the merits of His sacrifice — justifying us to restitution rights. As soon as these were properly credited to us, our sacrifice of them could be accepted, and no sooner. Hence the Pentecostal blessing signifies:

Significance of Pentecostal Blessing

- First, that our Lord's sacrifice was every way acceptable to the Father.

- Second, that it had been applied to the household of faith, including His proposed Body.

- Third, the Church there waiting at Pentecost was representative of the entire Church and household of faith of this entire Age.

- Fourth, the importation of the holy spirit — signified God's acceptance of the Church's sacrifice already tendered — signified the killing of the Lord's goat as represented in the type. Thus, the two sacrifices of the great antitypical High Priest have already been performed, though the second one has not yet been completed.

The first one Jesus made at Jordan, when "He offered up Himself." There the Father's acceptance of His sacrifice was indicated by the descent of the holy spirit upon Him in the water. That sacrifice He finished at Calvary, as we have seen. His second sacrifice — "the Lord's goat" — was offered at Pentecost and acknowledged by the holy spirit. This work of sacrifice in the various members has progressed for over eighteen centuries. Soon, we believe, all the sufferings of the Body of Christ will be accomplished. Already the members have begun to go beyond the veil and to be joined to the Head. Soon the last member will have completed his share in these sufferings of Messiah and shall have passed beyond the veil. Then a little while longer and the special tribulations of the close of this Age upon the "great company" class will serve for the destruction of their flesh, that they may attain spirit conditions on a lower plane than the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 5:5).

The Consummation

Thus, will be accomplished first, the glorification of the Head; secondly, the union of the members to the Head will complete the glorious High Priest, who, as Prophet, Priest, and King, will be the great Messiah, the great Mediator of the New Covenant, which through natural Israel will bless all the families of the earth. The scapegoat class will constitute the servants of the glorified Priest.

Why Paul Says, "This He Did Once"

Does anyone inquire why our text says, This he did once, after specifying two offerings, "first for his own sins, and then for the people's"?

"Once" Used in Sense of "Already"

We reply, that when the Apostle wrote these words the High Priest had already made both sacrifices, and had sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High, awaiting the time when the last member of His Body



Pentecost Blessing, the holy Spirit

shall have suffered with Him faithfully unto death — awaiting the end of this Age — for the inauguration of the great Mediatorial Kingdom which is to bless Israel and the world. "Once" is here used in the sense of already. This He did already.

"Daily" Used in Sense of "Continually"

Do any inquire what is meant by "daily" in the statement, "Who needeth not daily to offer up sacrifice"? We reply that the word daily here is used as we frequently use the term, in the sense of continually. We have already called attention to a similar

illustration, where Daniel's prophecy speaks of antichrist taking away the daily sacrifice. We have shown that this signifies that antichrist set aside the merit of the continual sacrifice of Jesus. (See Volume 3, *Studies in the Scriptures*, page 25.)

The "Better Sacrifice" Offered but Once

As a matter of fact, the sin-offerings here described were not performed every day, but merely on a certain day every year — "year by year continually," or time after time on the appointed day of the year. In this text the thought would be that our High Priest needs not to be continually repeating His "better sacrifices," as did the earthly priests year by year, repeat the types.

The once doing of this sacrificial work in the beginning of this appointed "Atonement Day" is sufficient for all time. And as the High Priest, when the first sacrifice was finished, applied its merit for justification to His Body and to His house, so at the end of the second sacrifice — the sacrifice of the Lord's goat, which typified His "members," He will present the blood of that sacrifice to God on behalf of the world. But He will not apply it directly on behalf of the world, because the world is in no condition to be reconciled to God; hence we are shown that with the blood of these two sacrifices the High Priest will seal or negotiate the New Covenant with Israel, that under its terms all the families of the earth will have the privilege of its blessings — the mediatorial blessing.

In the type the blood of the goat was sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat or propitiatory, just the same as the blood of the bullock, but for a different purpose. As the first was for the Body, the "members," and the household, the second was not for those, but for all the people of Israel other than those represented in the tribe of Levi. The antitype of this is clear and shows us that the great High Priest will apply the blood of the antitypical goat on behalf of all the world of mankind, who by restitution and instruction will be brought into relationship with God as His Israel — under the terms of the New Covenant.

Contacts

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PO Box 402, Rosanna, Victoria, Australia 3084

Email: australianbiblestudents@gmail.com

Website: australianbiblestudents.org

Editorial Committee

Ray Charlton, Adam Kopczyk, Matthew Christopher

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The Bible Teachings

On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom,
Sin Offering, and Atonement.

This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute in the 1970's and sets out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the next part of this 274-page book. For Brethren who would like to read more of the content, it is available at:

www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf

Using Love to Obtain

There was once a little girl who knew the way to get just what she wanted from her daddy. If it was a pair of skates, or a new hat, she came rushing up to him as he sat in his easy chair, and nestling in his arms said, "Daddy, I love you so. You are the best daddy ever. I would just do anything for you." Then, sooner or later, when she wanted something very badly, in the end Daddy would pay.

There were other times when errands were waiting for someone to run them, or when Daddy was tired and wanted quiet, that his little girl seemed to forget how much she loved him. Of course, she was just a thoughtless young lady, and not consciously hypocritical. She was also quite, quite human. Many of the sons and daughters of Adam find words easier than conduct, promises simpler than performance, and loving words cheaper than loving deeds.

— A. C. Frey Collection

"If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?"



How Faithful?

What contemplations will be ours
When sinks life's setting sun,
As we review in closing hours
The race which we have run?

Will noble deeds, and kindly act
And faithful service to our king,
Disclose a life of sacrifice
Of love obedient to his will?

Or have the days been vainly spent
And opportunities let go,
With world and pleasure crowding in
While work for God the morrow waits?

Blessed Bible

*BLESSED Bible, precious Word!
Boon most sacred from the Lord;
Glory to His name be giv'n
For this choicest gift from heav'n.*

*'Tis a ray of purest light,
Beaming through the depths of night;
Brighter than ten thousand gems
Of the costliest diadems.*

*'Tis a fountain, pouring forth
Streams of life to gladden earth;
Whence eternal blessings flow,
Antidote for human woe.*

*'Tis a mine, aye, deeper, too,
Than can mortal ever go;
Search we may for many years,
Still some new, rich gem appears.*



**Every good thing given and
every perfect gift from above,
comes down from the Father
of lights, with whom there is no
variation or shifting shadow.
(James 1:17 NASB)**