

Beauties of the Truth

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Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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"I Will Be What I Will Be"

Etymology of the words "Yahweh" and "Ehyeh"

While the word "Jehovah" is used in some versions of the Bible, the general practice of replacing it with "LORD" in most Bibles has concealed some of the most profound and beautiful thoughts in the word of God. The disciple who correctly understands and appreciates the deep significance and beauties of this sacred name will never desire to bury these beauties under other names, nor will he ever use this sacred name in vain.

The name "Jehovah," represented by four Hebrew letters with a Latin equivalent of Y.H.V.H., should preferably be translated YaH-WeH according to eminent Hebrew scholars. "Yahweh" is, without exception, transliterated this way by Rotherham, and is almost always regarded as the third person singular, masculine, imperfect tense. This word comes from the root *hawah* — and is an old form of the root *hayah*.

The word *yahweh*, when used as a verb, means "he becometh" or "he will become." When used as a name it has the meaning "he who becometh," or "the becoming one." In the first person singular a companion form of the word *yahweh* is found in the word *ehyeh*. *Yahweh* is the word another would use when speaking to third parties about the Most High. For example we read in Psalms 91:2, "I will say of Yahweh, He is my refuge and my fortress."

Ehyeh is the word God would use when speaking for Himself and of Himself, assuring His hearers that He would become or do as the occasion required. He would be(come) what they needed Him to be(come). In Exodus 3:14 this is the word used by God at the burning bush when appointing Moses to be the instrument of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The King James Version reads, "I AM THAT I AM." The Hebrew text has, *ehyeh asher ehyeh* and should be translated in the imperfect or future tense, "I will be what I will be," or "I will become what I please to become."

REVELATION OF THE NAME

In Exodus 3:14, when God revealed Himself to Moses at the bush, the 400-year period of Abraham's seed being in bondage was near its end. The iniquity of the Amorites was almost full (Genesis 15:13-16), the time for Israel's deliverance was due, and soon God would deliver Israel through Moses. God's promise and pledge of that deliverance is found in the wonderful name which the Most High God used to commission and encourage Moses. When Moses declined, God said, "Certainly I will be with thee."

Moses replied, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you and they say to me, 'What is his name?' What shall I say unto them?" (Exodus 3:13-15 Leeser translation).

"And God said unto Moses, 'I will be that I will be:' and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, 'I will be' hath sent me unto you."

"And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Everlasting One, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you."

Thus while the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were in grievous bondage, crying day and night for deliverance;

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God was preparing a great deliverance for them. “Go and tell them that ‘I who will be what I will be’ hath sent thee unto them” (Exodus 3:14). God related His ability and intention to meet their great need, and to become to them all that they needed, “I have seen their affliction ... I have heard their cry ... and I am come down to deliver” (Exodus 3:7, 8). Further, by the very revealing of His holy name, *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, meaning, “I will be to you what you need me to be,” God promised deliverance.

The second revelation of the holy name on the mountain-top is found in Exodus 34. In Exodus 32 and 33 Israel had broken the solemn covenant by their idolatrous sin — they had taken another God. In strict justice God could have destroyed them. Responding to the greatly distressed, repeated pleas of Moses, God affirmed His gracious intention to be to this erring people all that He was pleased to be. This would be done in such a way, and in such conditions, that Moses could assure Israel for all time that “He will become [to you] what He will become.”

YAHWEH ELOHIM¹

In Exodus 34:6 we read, “And Yahweh passed before him and proclaimed, ‘I AM YAHWEH, YAHWEH ELOHIM, Merciful and gracious: longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth.’ ” Never before had such words been heard by mortal man. Here, at last, the Most High God proclaimed His compassion and pity for sinful, fallen man, in terms of tenderness and indescribable beauty. From that time on, the prophet and psalmist wove into their records this most gracious promise, the assurance that the divine power was adaptable to any circumstance, to any difficulty, to any necessity, *ehyeh asher ehyeh* — I will be to you what you need Me to be.

COMPOUND NAMES OF YAHWEH

In the Old Testament various compound names of Yahweh reveal Him as meeting every need of man; from man’s fall into sin until the end or restitution to perfection. They serve as memorials of that Name in connection with some crisis in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They commemorate the display of divine assistance so that later generations would know how Yahweh had helped them in their need and how Yahweh had become what they needed Him to become.

“**Yahweh-Jireh,**” Yahweh will provide (Genesis 22:13, 14). When Abraham was offering up Isaac in sacrifice, we read in Genesis 22:7-8 that Isaac said, “Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” We find in verses 11 and 12 that Isaac was spared and that in verse 14 this compound name is introduced for indeed, “Yahweh will provide,” and He did provide a sacrifice. The great fulfillment of this is in John 1:29, 36.

“**Yahweh-Ropheka,**” Yahweh [that] healeth (Exodus 15:26). We find this compound name used in the account of the healing of the waters at Marah (Exodus 15:22-26). It



Tablets of the Law, received by Moses when God gave His name

reappears later when the Psalmist sings, “Bless Yahweh, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits ... who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction” (Psalms 103:2-4). While the immediate context of Exodus 15 and Psalms 103 indicates physical healing, this could also refer to the healing of spiritual sickness (James 5:14, 15).

“**Yahweh-Nissi,**” Yahweh my banner (Exodus 17:15). In Exodus 17:8-15 we find the battle with Amalek at Rephidim was carried out under the banner of Yahweh. The rod that Moses held up was the banner of Yahweh. The rod was the symbol and pledge of His presence with Israel as their Shepherd, their Ruler, and their Leader. It was held not over Israel, nor over their enemies, but toward heaven in prayer to bring down the promised help secured by covenant promise and relationship. Spiritually, Amalek represents the flesh, and the battle of that day illustrates the war of the spirit against the flesh (Galatians 5:17). Victory is wholly due to Yahweh.

“**Yahweh Shalom,**” Yahweh gives peace (Judges 6:24). In Judges 6:21-24 Gideon was spared from death after seeing the angel of Yahweh. To commemorate this event he built an altar and called it “Yahweh Shalom” (Judges 6:24), that is “Yahweh our peace” or “Yahweh gives peace.” From one perspective the whole ministry of Yahweh finds expression and illustration in Judges Chapter 6. We learn from verses 1-5 that Yahweh hates and judges sin; from verses 7-18 that Yahweh loves and saves sinners; from verses 19-21 that this salvation comes only through sacrifice (Leviticus 9:24 and Judges 13:19-23, cited from Romans 4:1, Leviticus 16:32-24, Hebrews 9:23-28, 10:1-4, 11, 12.)

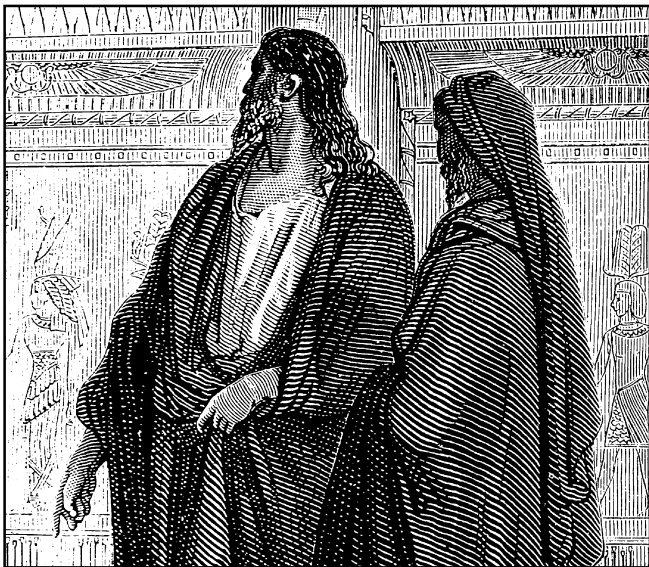
“**Yahweh Tsidkenu,**” The Righteousness of Yahweh (Jeremiah 23:6 and 33:16). Jeremiah, looking far down the stream of time, sees Israel and Judah cleansed from defilement and sin and made worthy to bear the name of their God. He calls them *Yahweh Tsidkenu*, or “The Righteousness of Yahweh.” Further, in Jeremiah 33:16, *Yahweh Tsidkenu* appears to refer to the name of the entire Church,

the New Jerusalem our Lord Jesus and His Millennial reign (see *Studies in the Scriptures*, Volume 5, pages 42, 43). This name is appropriate for the glorified Church since she not only shares her Lord's sufferings for righteousness but is promised a share in all the glories of her Lord as a wife shares her husband's honor and name (Colossians 1:24, Revelation 3:12, 19:7, 21:9-10).

“Yahweh Shammah” Yahweh is there (Ezekiel 47:13, 48:35). This name signifies Yahweh's abiding presence with His people. Ezekiel begins and ends with Yahweh in describing the future apportionment of the land and of that “City of Peace” in its midst when he declares, *Yahweh Shammah*, or “Yahweh is there.” Between the great vision of Yahweh in Chapter 1 and the closing words, “Yahweh Shammah” — “Yahweh is there,” is the unsparing record of man's failure and sin as judged by Yahweh. Nonetheless, His justice and judgment works to His glory, because it works in harmony with His Wisdom and Power and is tempered by His Love. Ezekiel ends with the one thing that is central to the new heaven and new earth, and that is, *Yahweh Shammah* or *Yahweh is there*. (Revelation. 21:1, Isaiah 65:17, 66:22, 2 Peter 3:13). (Exodus 33:14, 15, 1 Chronicles 16:27, 33, Psalms 16:11, 97:1-5, 12, Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5, 6).

THE 23RD PSALM

Yahweh Ra'ah, Yahweh my shepherd (Psalm 23). In the 23rd Psalm, David, King of Israel, reflecting upon his youthful days as a shepherd, gave utterance to the phrase: “Yahweh my Shepherd” — *Yahweh Ra'ah*. The lion and bear had fought to rob him of his sheep, but at risk to himself he had been their defense. He had sought out the lush grass and quietly flowing waters for his flock, and guarded them while they fed. He had been to them what they needed him to be, a provider, a defender, and a healer. In this Psalm the pious mind of the shepherd boy, now King in Israel, sees himself with all his people as the sheep of Yahweh's pasture. David



Moses and Aaron, sent to Pharaoh in the name of God

had taken the words spoken to Moses at the bush, adapted them to the life of a shepherd, and had drawn the lesson of peace and comfort because *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, had become the Great Shepherd to his flock, both fleshly as well as spiritual Israel.

Verse 1: “Yahweh my shepherd — *Yahweh ra'ah*. We note that the word “is” does not appear in the Hebrew text and has been supplied by the translators. Words such as this should be read as an explanation of joyous discovery. The following phrase, “I shall not want,” that is, “I shall lack nothing,” is assured because, *Yahweh-Jireh*, Yahweh will provide (Genesis 22:14, Psalms 34:9, 10, 84:11).

Verse 2: “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.” The Hebrew means choice pastures of tender grass. “I shall not lack provision” (Matthew 6:25-33, Luke 12:22-30). “He leadeth me beside the still waters. Here the Hebrew means “waters of rest.” “I shall not lack peace” because “Yahweh-shalom,” “Yahweh our peace” or “Yahweh gives peace” (Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 12:1, 2, 5:1, Ephesians 2:14, Colossians 1:20, Judges 6:24).

Verse 3: “He restoreth my soul,” or, “I shall not lack restoration of soul.” This means justification to life in spiritual application (Psalms 103:4). He redeemeth my soul from destruction (Exodus 15:26) because *Yahweh-Ropheka*, or “Yahweh healeth thee.” “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. I shall not lack correct guidance.” In Hebrew, “leadeth” is “he guides,” and this is assured because *Yahweh Tsidkenu*, or, “Our righteousness is of Yahweh” (Psalms 119:67, 71, 75, Jeremiah 23:6, 33:16).

Verse 4: “Moreover, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall not lack the Divine presence and protection” (Psalms 91:1, Romans 8:31-34). “I will fear no evil: for thou art with me,” nor shall “I shall not lack courage in the ‘dark hour’ “ (Ephesians 6:10-18, Ezekiel 48:35), because *Yahweh-Shammah*, or “Yahweh is there” — “Yahweh is ever present” (Psalms 139:1-12). “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,” and hence, I shall not lack true comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4).

Verse 5: “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence or my enemies. I shall not lack protection, preservation, and honor” (Isaiah 54:17, Psalms 149:5-9). “Thou anointest my head with oil.” Hence, “I shall not lack the true joy of thy holy spirit,” in mountaintop and valley experiences, because *Yahweh Makkadishkem*, or “I Yahweh do sanctify you” (Leviticus 20:8). “My cup runneth over,” that is, “I shall not lack fullness of blessing.” It is both a cup of joy and a cup of sorrow, but always a cup of blessing (Romans 8:28, 31-39).

Verse 6: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” This means “I shall not lack the divine favor in my earthly pilgrimage” (Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 4:14-16), “and I will dwell in the house of Yahweh forever,” or “I shall not lack a heavenly home when my earthly sojournings are finished” (John 14:2, 3), because *Yahweh Ra'ah* — “Yahweh, my Shepherd.”

“EHYEH ASHER EHYEH”

We read in Philippians 4:19, “My God shall supply all your need ... by [or through] Christ Jesus.” Paul was well acquainted with the three words, *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, spoken to Moses at the burning bush. These three words reveal the strange and wonderful doings of Israel’s God, and our heavenly Father, as He majestically moved along the highway of time and history. Sometimes assisting, and sometimes chastising the hosts gathered to His name, but all the time He was faithful to that name (Hebrews 10:23, 11:11). *Ehyeh asher ehyeh*, or “I will be what I will be in every circumstance.” “I will bless you when faithful, I will chastise you when faithless,” was always the basis of His attitude to Israel to whom His name was first made a pledge and a promise. Today that promise stands as firm and unailing to the Church of the Firstborn as it did to Israel of old. *Ehyeh asher ehyeh* — I will be all you need to make your calling and election sure.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The revelation of the holy name to Moses was partly in the wilderness of Midian and partly on the top of Horeb, where it was revealed for all time. That holy name contained the nucleus of the entire plan of redemption, as the execution of the complete intention of the Divine Plan was embodied in that particular sacred name. For a whole age Yahweh had neither blessing nor favor for any people except Israel (Amos 3:2) but that exclusive favor to them was a means to an end, for we have the promise to all mankind that, “The Law shall go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” In that day, when Israel is refined and purified, Yahweh’s love like a mighty flood will flow to all nations. The people whom Yahweh gathered around His holy name will to be vessels of His mercy to all. Thus, that wonderful name — too holy for Jewish lips to utter — stands as a pledge and a promise to bless all nations from the heavenly seed and through Israel, Abraham’s earthly seed:

There was a revelation of the Name;
There was a revelation in the Name.
This Name is Yahweh’s Name,
to which He will always be faithful.

He revealed that Name to Israel, but its pledge and promise was for all because the *need* which Yahweh pledged Himself to meet in Israel was in reality the *need* of all men everywhere.

Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh — I will be what I will be — this is my name forever and this is my memorial to all generations (Genesis 3:15). Amen! and Amen!

— Bro. David Skein²

(1) While the author never addresses the translation of *Elohim*, a god or mighty one, this is a title of office added to the sacred name (Russell, C. T., *The Atonement between God and Man*, Volume 5 of “Scripture Studies,” page 66-67).

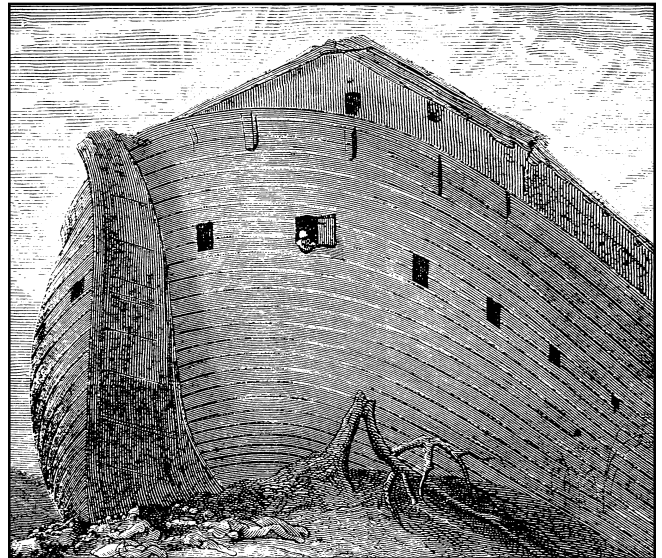
(2) The late Bro. David Skein was a convert from Orthodox Judaism and was thoroughly schooled in Hebrew. This article came from a discourse he gave.

Names of Ten Antediluvian Patriarchs

In Hebrew, as in most Oriental languages, we find that all proper names are significant words. Instances of this occur in almost every page of the Hebrew scriptures. As an example, Genesis 5:3-32 lists the names of ten antediluvian patriarchs from Adam to Noah, inclusive. These are (1) Adam, (2) Seth, (3) Enos, (4) Cainan, (5) Mahalaleel, (6) Jared, (7) Enoch, (8) Methuselah, (9) Lamech. Lastly we read, “And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: And he called his name (10) Noah, saying, ‘This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.’”

If we take these ten names and translate them literally (the scholarship of the Kittel Commentary being used) and place them in their proper order, we would have the following sentence in English: “Man, appointed, miserable, lamenting, the God of Glory, shall descend to instruct, his death sends to the afflicted, powerful overthrower, consolation.” In this we see a veiled promise of the Lord Jesus Christ and his ministry.

— John Trzyna



The ark at rest following the deluge

Hebrew “Roots” in Strong’s Concordance

One of the great blessings contributing to an improved understanding of the Bible for non-speakers of Hebrew and Greek was the first printing of the James Strong’s Concordance in 1894. A little assistance in understanding Strong’s references to Hebrew words may be of help since the language structure is so different from English and Romance languages.

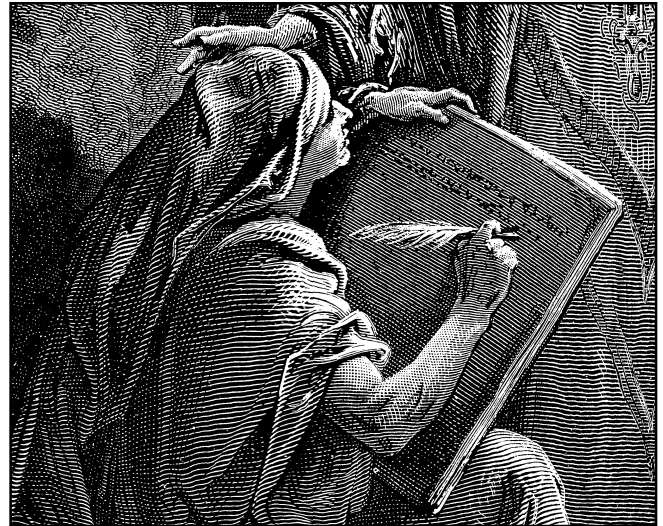
Consider the Hebrew word “to write” (Strong 3789). “To write” consists of three letters k-t-b and the dictionary notes that it is a “primary root.” When first starting out it does help to know something about the overall structure and shape of the Hebrew language, for like other Semitic Languages, Hebrew is based on what is normally called a “consonantal root system.”

What this means is that almost every word in the language is ultimately derived from one or another “root” (usually a verb) that represents a general, and often quite neutral, concept of an action or state of being. Usually this root consists of three letters. By making changes to these letters, the original root concept is refined and altered.

There are many ways to make these changes: letters are added to the beginning of the root or tacked on at the end; the vowels between the consonants of the root are changed; extra consonants are inserted into the middle of the root; syllables are appended to the end. Each of these changes produces a new word — and a new meaning. Meanings seem literally to grow out of the root like branches of a tree. But the original, basic idea of the root persists, in one way or another. As we shall soon see, “roots” are then adapted to modern speech and can express ideas never found in the Bible such as building off this root to form the word “typewriter.”

It is easier to see this by taking this specific example and showing what has grown off this root over time, the following examples come from modern Arabic. {1} Since Hebrew and Arabic are close sister languages, this is a completely reasonable comparison. The three consonants, k, t, and b — combined in that order: k-t-b — do of course also connote the idea of writing in Arabic. The simplest word based on those letters is *kataba*, which means “to write.” That is the root. If you go to an Arabic dictionary and look up the root *kataba*, you will find, among many other entries, the following (the three letters of the root are printed in bold type so that they stand out).

k ataba	to write
k attaba	to make someone write
t a kaataba	to write to each other; correspond
ist a ktaba	to dictate
k itaab	book
m aktab	office
m aktaba	library (also bookstore)
k aatib	clerk
m iktaab	typewriter
m ukaataba	correspondence
m ukaatib	correspondent, reporter
m uktatib	subscriber
k utubii	bookseller
k utayyib	booklet
m akktuub	written (or letter)



Baruch, a scribe serving Jeremiah

The connection of all these words with the underlying idea of writing is clear in context, but often is less obvious if you did not know the “root.” Once you read it, you see the connection you might not have noticed on your own. Now take another look at the list of k-t-b words. Apart from the fact that the sequence k-t-b appears in every word, you can also notice certain kinds of changes that might easily be seen as patterns that could be repeated with other roots.

To show what happens, let us see what the prefix of “m” with a vowel means if we take a completely different root and see how this works. For this example let us examine the root d-r-s (Strong 1875). Once again, this is a simple verb described in Strong’s as a “primary root.” It means to “follow” but by implication, “to seek, to ask.” In Arabic the meaning of d-r-s (the verb is *darasa*) is the same and it is rendered, “to study.” We can now see the connection when we look at Strong 4097, “midrash,” meaning “an investigation,” and we can now see why the Strong’s dictionary references the Strong 1875 root. In English newspapers, we have now become familiar with the Arabic word for schools “madrasa” where the word “madras” has come to mean a school that focuses on the study of the Koran.

We could follow the rules for building off of the roots for all the other words on the list, but it should be remembered that most native speakers of the language do not think about the system in this kind of clinical way, any more than speakers of Romance Languages think about how their tongues are related to Latin or any more than English speakers think about the difference between “strong” and “weak” verbs. It is an instinctive process for the native speakers of Semitic language. But for foreigners learning the language it is important to know that when they embark on understanding Hebrew that they are studying a language the key to which lies in its underlying structure of three-consonant roots.

— Richard Doctor

(1) Adapted from Nicholas Awde and P. Samano, *The Arabic Alphabet — How to Read and Write it*, Lyle Stuart, Kensington Publishing Co., New York (1986) page 15.

Lo, I Am With You Always

(This lesson is continued from the previous issue. The first portion took us through the miracle of Jesus stilling the tempest after awaking from sleep in a storm tossed boat. Then the miracle of Jesus' feeding of the 5000 was introduced, after which he sent the disciples in a boat across the Sea of Galilee, as he went into a mountain for solitude and prayer. Here we resume the lesson.)

John 6:17 tells that when the apostles got into the boat to go to the other side, the boat was headed in the direction of Capernaum. Mark 6:45 more specifically states the destination was Bethsaida, which was close to Capernaum.

The disciples set out in the boat, and as the Matthew account resumes, we are told: "The ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary" (Matthew 14:24).

The description of the wind as "contrary" did not simply mean that the disciples were buffeted about by a storm. The thought is that they did not seem to make any progress. They were determined to go to the other side of the sea, to their destination, but the wind seemed to be in constant opposition to them. Being from the Galilee area, they were familiar with such storms, but this particular storm was most unusual. The Matthew account says that the ship was "in the midst of the sea." John's Gospel adds the detail that the disciples rowed approximately 25 to 30 furlongs, that is, a little more than three miles (John 6:19). In their furious rowing against this storm, they had progressed a little over three miles in their diagonal course across the sea. In other words, after all this rowing, they had gotten only to the middle of the sea, which was the point of no return. If they turned around and tried to go back to the shore whence they had come, the distance would be just as great as it was to proceed to their destination.

There is still another detail to observe. Incidentally, in studying the Bible, we are rewarded if we compare Scripture with Scripture — and, in this case, the four Gospel accounts agree with each other because they all contain valuable clues. "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea" (Matthew 14:25).

The time of night in which they arrived in the midst of the lake was the "fourth watch." The fourth watch was reckoned as follows: from 6 p.m. (sunset) to 9 pm was the first watch, from 9 pm to midnight was the second watch, from midnight to 3 am was the third watch, and from 3 am until 6 am (sunrise) was the fourth watch. In other words, the apostles arrived in the middle of the lake after 3 am in the morning.

The disciples would have originally set out in the boat no later than 6 pm because they would not want to row in the



Feeding of the 5000

pitch dark, and it would not have taken much time to go to the other side if all conditions had been normal. But what happened? They had been rowing with all their strength against this storm for over nine hours. They had been rowing all this time, straining themselves desperately, yet they were only in the middle of the lake.

The Gospel of Matthew continues: "And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear" (Matthew 14:26).

We should keep in mind that these were hardy fishermen who were not given to fear and trepidation. However, this storm was most unusual. It seemed as if all the demons were let loose in connection with the fury of the storm. Then, when Jesus walked across the water — the disciples never having witnessed anything like this event before — they were sure they were having all sorts of apparitions and visions. In fact, the Word indicates they thought they had seen a phantom.

The next development to observe is that when Jesus acted as though he would pass by the disciples, they cried out to him. Jesus then "spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid" (Matthew 14:27). There is a psychological factor here as well as other important lessons. For instance, the fact Jesus acted as though he would pass right on by means that if we want divine grace and strength in our lives, we must call on the Lord for his mercy, his strength, and his grace. If we try to do things in our own strength and handle burdens we cannot bear, we will not get a blessing.

When the disciples cried out, the Master rescued them immediately or, as Matthew 14:27 says, "straightway": "Straightway Jesus spake unto them." Not only did this lesson help the disciples to develop more faith, but also it was designed to benefit future Christians. Accordingly, through the Gospel writings, this lesson of the apostles' experience has been passed on to the Church throughout the age.

And there is another point: One cannot reason properly under conditions of panic. The first thing Jesus did, therefore, was to assuage the apostles' fear. His manner of

addressing them (“Be of good cheer; [for] it is I; [so] be not afraid”) began to console them. Nevertheless, they were still doubtful.

“And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me [to] come unto thee on the water. And he [Jesus] said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus” (Matthew 14:28, 29).

Thus we see not only that Peter had some faith but also that he seemed to be stronger in faith than the others, at least on this occasion. Peter tested the power of this personage he was addressing — the One who had claimed to be the Messiah and had said, “Be of good cheer; it is I” — and in this test Peter received proof, for he began to walk on the water, showing the measure of faith that he had.

But the account next tells us what happened when Peter began to think about the power of the wind: “When he saw the [boisterous] wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me” (Matthew 14:30).

It is true that on many occasions in our Christian life and experience, we do great deeds by the power of God’s Spirit — miracles are performed in our lives in the strength of the Lord — but even the strongest followers of Jesus have periods in their life of little faith. They experience a season, as it were, of little faith, a period of crisis. But Matthew tells us that “immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him” (Matthew 14:31). Peter was in the throes of desperation and beginning to sink really fast when he cried, “Lord, save me.” Under the urgencies of the case, Jesus caught Peter quickly and said unto him, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Matthew 14:31).

Jesus reprimanded Peter in a gentle way, and also the others. Remember that Jesus had done likewise in the earlier incident on the Sea of Galilee when he was asleep in the stern of the boat. When the disciples awoke him, he said (paraphrased), “Don’t you have faith? What is the matter with you?” The rebuke was of this nature because he wanted to press upon them the lessons this experience was designed to teach. Under other circumstances, he might not have spoken this way.

Of course some might ask, Why don’t the other Gospel accounts mention this lesson about Peter? With all four Gospel writers, in recording incidents in the life of the Master and their association with him, some were impressed with a particular experience or detail in that experience and viewed the matter from a certain standpoint, while others were impressed along another line. In this case, the others, by nature, probably did not want to expose Peter as having this weakness. But we appreciate that the holy Spirit brought the incident to Matthew’s attention to record because the lesson is very helpful. The incident can be a source of consolation when we go through periods of great trial. It helps us to realize the Lord’s mercy — and that even the strongest Christians have times when they need help, the Apostle Paul being an example.

The account continues: “And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased” (Matthew 14:32).

Notice the line-upon-line, precept-upon-precept method of teaching. In this instance, when Jesus stepped into the boat, he did not rebuke the wind and the waves. The first time, when he was asleep in the boat and the disciples awakened him, he had to rebuke the wind and the waves to show that the reason the storm ceased suddenly was because of his power. When Jesus exercised that power, when the disciples heard him do the rebuking, they saw the immediate and drastic effect of a great calm, showing him as Master of the sea and the wind. In the second account, when the disciples stepped into the boat and a great storm arose as had previously occurred, Jesus did not again need to rebuke the wind and the waves because the disciples already knew why the storm suddenly ceased. The Master leads us the same way — little by little — and in connection with our growth and development, certain experiences do not have to be repeated when we have already learned the lesson.



Jesus walking on the sea

When the wind ceased, “then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him”; that is, when Jesus stepped into the boat, the other disciples rushed over to him and prostrated themselves at his feet (Matthew 14:33). “They ... came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.” The disciples did not say this in their hearts in the first account, when Jesus was asleep in the boat. Rather, they were sore amazed and wondered, “What manner of man is this, that he can still the wind and the waves?” (Mark 4:41, paraphrase). Now they were ready for the next step of development. Instead of remarking, “What manner of man is this?” they said, “Of a truth thou art the Son of God.” Thus we see a progression, and this is the manner in which the Lord leads his people, namely, from grace to grace, and from knowledge to knowledge.

The Apostle John was very observing, very perceptive, for his Gospel reveals certain details not noticed by the others. For example, when the disciples realized Jesus was not a phantom, when they saw how he rescued Peter, when the wind ceased and the disciples joyously received Jesus into the ship, John observed something else: “Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went” (John 6:21).

Imagine witnessing this development! The disciples had just been over three miles away, in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, and they had been rowing with their utmost strength against the storm for over nine hours to get to that position. But when Jesus stepped into the boat, “immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.”

Jesus was laying the basis for some very important lessons. Here we see that with the Master and in his strength, all things are possible. What from a human standpoint would have been impossible was accomplished with ease when the Master took control. Immediately the ship with the disciples was on the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

Additional spiritual lessons can be gathered. For instance, in the first storm, Jesus was asleep in the boat. During the second storm, he was not in the boat but was on a mountain praying. Jesus was leading the apostles to a further development of faith. When he was with them asleep in the boat — when he was actually there — their faith should have been strong enough to have confidence in him. Since he rebuked the wind and the waves on that occasion, he did not have to repeat that particular lesson in exactly the same way. The disciples were now ready for the little stronger test of his not being in the boat but on a distant mountain away from them.

In the darkness of that moonlit night, the apostles were in the storm, and great fear was in their hearts. When the Master ultimately delivered them and calmed the storm, they gained another important lesson; namely, whether he was with them or far apart made little difference, for nothing can shorten the hand of divine mercy to save.

The Mark account tells us that when Jesus was absent and in the mountain, he could see the boat from the peak (Mark 6:48). This detail shows that Jesus knows what is going on even though we may feel he is absent from us. He has the ability to keep matters under control and to keep his followers under watchful solicitude. That is not the problem — the problem is with us and with our lack of faith.

As the disciples reflected on the experience of Jesus’ walking out on the water to them, they would have been amazed at the ease with which he traversed the lake. He calmly and easily walked atop the sea, whereas they had been rowing and rowing and struggling. Moreover, he appeared to them at the peak of their crisis, and only after they had called upon him did he save them.

With the deliverance occurring in the fourth watch of the night, there is a symbolic meaning, a dispensational lesson. The fourth watch of the night was just before sunrise, and so at the very end of the age, when troublous conditions are

upon the earth and fierce, fiery trials come on God’s people, Jesus will be with them. Jesus will be there, and he will save them as new creatures beyond the veil. Peter’s experience seems to suggest that even some of the strongest of the Lord’s followers may have a momentary faltering of faith, but Jesus will deliver them. In fact, the Scriptures indicate that just as the storm was calmed suddenly, so at the end of the age, when conditions are at their worst, the days will be cut short so that the storm will not harm others unnecessarily (Matthew 24:22).

We are reminded of another Scripture: “Lo, I am with you alway[s], even unto the end of the world [or age]” (Matthew 28:20).

The implication is that although Jesus would be far away in heaven when he ascended after his crucifixion, yet he would have the same abilities and powers and would be with his people all down the Gospel or Christian Age, “even unto the end of the age.” This latter phrase suggests, further, that at the very end of the age, God’s people will have an especially hard trial or experience, but Jesus will be there to solace them.

— Frank Shallieu
(Finished his course March, 2006)

Lamech

In our last issue appeared an article on Enoch and Elijah, suggesting that the quiet taking of Enoch represents the raising of the sleeping saints, whereas the climactic taking of Elijah represents the taking of the last members of the body of Christ amid the tumults closing the Harvest.

We then noticed that Methuselah, the successor of Enoch, may represent the same class as Elijah, for Methuselah lived to the very year of the flood, which Jesus used to represent the *apokalupsis* which closes the Harvest (Matthew 24:39).

We also noticed that Methuselah’s son, Lamech, lived 777 years, perhaps a picture of the True Church, just as the 666 of Revelation refers to the False Church.

But in this case, how does Lamech, as a picture of the Church, differ from Enoch or Methuselah? We suggest that Lamech represents the saints who live into or during the harvest, but die before its close. Lamech died before the flood, but not long before the flood. He died but five years before the flood. Since the previous article was published, an observation has come to light which may support this.

The 777 years of Lamech, and the 5 years by which his passing preceded the flood, are both involved in this feature. The product of these numbers is 3885.

This number happens to be the sum of the three prophetic spans in Daniel chapter 12 which lead to the parousia of Christ — namely, the 1260, 1290, and 1335 days of Daniel.

This suggests that Lamech represents the saints who live beyond the fulfillment of these three prophetic markers — that is, they live into the *parousia*, even though they do not live to the *apokalupsis*.

— David Rice