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## The Ministry and Power of the Holy Spirit

*"But the helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and remind you of all things which I said to you." - John 14:26, Diaglott.*

THIS prophetic promise of Jesus had its initial fulfillment at Pentecost, and was spoken to the Apostles on the night that he instituted the memorial of his coming death. Manifestly, the words have a direct application to the Apostles, as they were the ones who needed to be reminded of the things Jesus had said to them, not only for their own benefit, but also for the benefit of all for whom they would record them.

Jesus had been their constant companion and teacher for three and a half years. They had learned to rely upon him for guidance in all the affairs of their lives; they felt their utter dependence upon him; and so the news that he was about to leave them and go where they could not follow, had filled them with sorrow and apprehension. Jesus had more than once told them of his' coming sacrifice and death, but their preconceived ideas had apparently made it impossible for them to comprehend. They were looking for a Messiah that would exalt their nation above the nations of earth and would bring the blessings promised by the Prophets, so they were not prepared to believe him. Peter wanted to know why he could not go where his Lord was going. "I will lay *down* my life on your behalf," he said; but as Jesus foretold, the night did not pass before Peter had denied him with cursing.

Unmindful of his own approaching trial and suffering, Jesus, in his realization of the sorrow and need of the Apostles, spent most of the remaining time at his disposal, in ministering to them the assurance that divine power and wisdom would take care of them; that a helper would be with them continually to give them aid and guidance. As our text says, this helper would be the holy spirit which the Father would send in his name or stead; and it would not only constitute their teacher, guiding them in the matter of truth, but would also recall to their minds all the things he had previously said to them.

**JESUS OPERATING THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Greek word that is translated as "helper" in our text, is used only by John. The four times it occurs in his Gospel, it applies to the holy spirit, and is rendered by the various translators as *comforter*, *helper*, and *advocate*. This is also the word that is translated as advocate in First John, chapter two, verse one, where we are told that "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Therefore, the holy spirit which dwells in the mind, and heart of each one whose consecration has been accepted of the Father, operates for them in our, Lord's name or stead, since it was in his name that we received the spirit.

In the Apostle Paul's writings we have a verification of this fact. He does not use the same word that John uses, but a word of similar meaning by which he shows that both our Lord and the holy spirit intercede for us. In Romans 8:26, 27 he says: "In like manner also the spirit assists our weaknesses; for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought; but; the spirit itself intercedes with unspoken groans. And he who searches the hearts, knows what is the mind of the spirit, because according to God it intercedes on behalf of saints." (*Diagott.*) On the other hand, in verse thirty-four we read: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh *intercession* for us. This is the same word used in connection with the operation of the holy spirit, and so we can see that it operates in full accord with the work of Christ on behalf of saints.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

But what is the holy spirit? And how is it manifested? To other than Bible Students it would be necessary to answer these questions; for the men who translated our King James version of the Bible, believed it to be a person, equal in every respect to the Father and the Son, Therefore, whenever possible, they gave it the name *Ghost*, and designated it by personal pronouns. Brother Russell's exposition of the matter in Volume Five of the Scripture Studies, very fully and definitely shows the fallacy of this view, and he points out, that in those texts where it has been possible to construe it as being a person, it is solely because it reflects the mind, will, power, and influence of the one from whom it emanates. It is holy therefore, because God is holy, and because it is the exercise of his mind, will, power, and influence,, in and for those who are being fitted for the heavenly inheritance.

The literal meaning of the Hebrew "ruach" and the Greek "pneuma" which are often rendered by the word "spirit," is wind or current of air, and we find them translated by the word "wind" more than one hundred times in our King James version. For example, Psalm 1:4 reads: "The chaff which the wind driveth away." The fitness of this translation is readily seen because of the manner in which they at that time threshed their grain. Then again in John 3:8 we read: "The wind bloweth where it listeth." In the context of this latter citation, our Lord gives us an indication of the basic thought underlying the word wherever it occurs; for he says, "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or ' whither it goeth." In other words, it is an invisible power or influence and is properly applied to God's mind or power or influence which are invisible.

The theory that only the literal meanings of Hebrew or Greek words are necessary or proper in their translation; is certainly disproven by the variety of ways these two words must be translated to convey the meanings of the texts in which they are found. For example, it would not make very good sense to change the word "mind" to wind or to spirit in Proverbs 29:11, where we read, "A fool uttereth all his mind."

## **MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT**

When the spirit of God "moved" or "brooded upon the face of the waters," it was his power that caused them to bring forth in harmony with his will; and when his holy spirit is received into our lives, it is his influence and power that causes the change that takes place within us. The holy spirit has been manifested in many, many ways; and when we search the Word in an attempt to list these, we very soon come to a realization that there is no intelligence or power that has not come from God; not from the Son, nor from the holy spirit, but from God. Therefore, when our Lord Jesus, in his prehuman existence, exercised authority and power in the creation of all things that were made, it was because the wisdom and power to do this 'was communicated to him by God through the holy spirit. Jesus testified, "I can of mine own self do nothing." (John 5:30.) "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. . . Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." - John 12:49, 50.

Since, as we are told, all things came into being through the Logos, and apart from him nothing has been created (John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6), therefore it was the spirit of God exercised through him that "brooded upon the face of the waters." The skill and intelligence of the workmen that wrought all the various parts and paraphernalia for the tabernacle service, were but the manifestation of God's spirit operating through them, for we read: "Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab and every wise hearted man in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded." - Exod. 36:1.

The holy spirit's operation therefore is manifested in the "brooding upon the face of the waters"; the imparting of skill and cunning to craftsmen in fashioning and furnishing the tabernacle; the giving of understanding and ability, to Moses and the Elders of Israel to establish and operate a form of government that has been a criterion for all attempts at righteous government since that day. To the judges and leaders of Israel the holy spirit gave power and wisdom to keep that nation separate from the idolatrous nations all about them. To Joseph and Daniel it gave ability to interpret dreams; and all the true prophets of God were inspired by it to foretell coming events and the out-working of God's plan. But in this case, it was more or less a mechanical operation, for they themselves were not given to understand the things they prophesied. With the coming of our Lord, however, there was a change of operation: Jesus received the spirit without measure. (John 3:34.) This was at the time he symbolized his consecration by water immersion, for John testified saying, "I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode on him. And I knew him not [as the Son of God, the Messiah]: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the holy spirit. And I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God." - John 1:32-34.

Jesus, therefore, is the one through whom we receive the baptism of the holy spirit; for just as in the tabernacle picture, the holy anointing oil was all poured upon the head of Aaron by Moses, whence it flowed down to his body members; so, in antitype, God anointed Jesus with the fulness of his own mind, will, power, influence, and Jesus in turn has imparted this holy spirit to his body members in proportion to their capacity and ability to use it.

The amount of the spirit that we individually receive, seems to be in direct proportion to the depth and faithfulness of our consecration. Not that anything less than our all is ever accepted of the Father, but that we differ in what constitutes that all, and in the manner and degree in which we are able to present that all in service.

## **VESSELS IN THE LORD'S SERVICE**

We recall a very forceful illustration of this that was given at a Brooklyn Convention in 1944 by our Brother Sonntag. In effect he said: Just imagine you are viewing a large table on which there is placed a variety of vessels dedicated to the purpose of ministering a very pure, life-giving water. In the center is a tall, gracefully formed vase, beautiful in outline and contour; it indicates refinements, lovely traits and manners, so to speak. Here beside it is another vase, almost as tall but not so well formed: its appearance is not so graceful, and it will not pour as smoothly and easily. Then over on this corner of the table stands a jug. Its capacity is large but it is amore difficult to pour from, as the water is apt to come in blurbs or gurgles. Then here beside the jug is a large pail. Any one attempting to drink from a vessel of this shape is apt to get wet outside as well as inside. There are also a variety of pitchers -- very serviceable vessels -- and bottles, bowls, flasks, beakers, mugs, goblets, glasses, cups, and saucers.

What a conglomeration! But if each and all have been emptied of whatever they may have contained before they were placed on the table, they can all be used to minister the good water to the thirsty. The water will of course conform to the contour of the vessel into which it is poured: but this does not change the water, nor diminish its value to the thirsty, for the water does not obtain its value from the vessel, but from the fountain from which it came. It is evident, too, that some of these vessels have far more capacity than do others, and can therefore be used in a much larger way. The little flat saucer does, not hold much and may often need refilling, but in its very open simplicity it may be just the vessel most suited to minister to some poor, thirsty creature.

Likewise, there is just as great a variety in the human vessels that are filled with the holy spirit, and they differ just as greatly in their capacity and in their outward form and ability to manifest that spirit. The spirit that fills the saucer-like individual is just the same as that which fills the Apostle Paul or John or Peter or whoever it may be; the one is sanctified just as fully as is the other, for the individual does not sanctify the spirit, the spirit sanctifies the individual, and is given as fully as the capacity of the individual will permit.

And so while the illustration is apt in the sense that the Lord accepts us as we are when he cleanses and sanctifies us by his spirit, yet, unless we could think of some magic quality in the water that would gradually change the contour of all those vessels so they would eventually conform to the shape and beauty of the tall vase in the center, it comes short; for the object and work of the holy spirit in us is to transform us into the image of Christ. "Whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." - Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18.

## **GOD'S WORKMANSHIP THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Do we comprehend the magnitude of this work of the spirit? Do we give it free course in our lives through earnest, whole-hearted submission and prayerful, cooperation? Or do we incline to indifference and slackness in our consecration, permitting the fleshly mind and body to exercise the natural tendencies of self-indulgence, impatience, fault finding, evil surmising, and the many other traits that hinder and strangle the influence of the holy spirit within. When we permit the natural tendencies to take their course, then "we walk after the flesh" - we help to fix and establish ungodly traits; and if we continue in this way, there will come a time when we cannot be changed, when we will lose all desire for change and so shrink from the effort necessary to godliness. Such become "carnally minded," which we are warned will mean death. - Rom. 8:6.

Every time we acquiesce in the evil tendencies of our fallen nature, we "grieve the holy spirit of God, whereby we have been sealed unto the day of deliverance." (Eph. 4:30.) Rather, says Paul,

"Let *all* bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving, one another *even as God for Christ's sake* hath forgiven you." - Eph. 4:31, 32.

In doing this we "walk after the spirit." We show that we have become the children of God, that the begetting received of him has resulted in our quickening: for it is the spirit that quickens, that causes us to be patient when we would naturally be impatient, to be forgiving when feelings of bitterness are striving for mastery over our minds; to be gentle in our speech and attitude when the fleshly spirit is clamoring to have its way. If we give way to the natural tendencies with no thought or endeavor at restraint, it indicates that either we never possessed, the Lord's spirit, or else we have quenched that spirit to a degree where it no longer operates. This in one who had been a partaker of God's spirit. would mean annihilation. - Heb. 6:4-6.

The holy spirit never coerces our wills; it counsels adherence to God's commands. It is the still, small voice of the Lord in our hearts striving to be heard above the clamorings of the flesh. Satan's spirit, on the other hand, seeks to dominate and control man's will so as to enslave him and force him into a course; of action. And as a result of sin and imperfection, both mind and body have become so weakened and perverted, that even our best. endeavors, fall short of the divine standard. But God, beholding not the flesh which he knows cannot do perfect works, but beholding the desires and intents of our hearts as these are manifested in our endeavors to do perfect works, judges us according to the will of the heart and not according to the abilities of the flesh. Therefore we are admonished: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." - Prov. 4:23.

We have been left free to follow the dictates of our own wills, for the only worship and service accept, able unto the heavenly Father is that which emanates from the heart as a free-will offering. "God is a spirit: and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24.) So then, if we give heed to the voice of the spirit beseeching us to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12:1), and in doing this become tender hearted, kind and sympathetic, meek and forgiving, not requiting evil with evil nor abuse with abuse, but exercising love toward all, having special consideration for our brethren, since they are the special targets for Satan's venom, then if faithful to the end we can expect to be declared "overcomers."

The ministry and power of the holy spirit in us is then, first of all a work of enlightenment and grace: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." (Eph. 5:8.) And when we have responded to this enlightenment of the spirit, and have yielded ourselves in full consecration to the doing of God's will, the spirit then becomes the seed of begettal, the start of a new life, the planting of a hope that branches out into heavenly aspirations for spirit-life in union with our Lord.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us ["again" not in the original text] unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." - 1 Pet. 1:3-5.

Then following begettal; the spirit becomes the quickening power; it begins the process of our transformation, the changing of our thoughts and impulses from following the unholy, natural tendencies to the cultivation of the fruit of the spirit. The spirit is also the power that causes the fruit to grow; but we have to cooperate by the cultivation of the soil, so to speak; we must keep

our hearts free from love of the weeds of self-ease and unholy desires of the flesh, *and* must nurture the spirit's planting. We must "give all diligence in adding to our faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. For *if these things be in you and abound*, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, he cannot see afar off, and hash forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the father brethren, *give diligence* to make your calling and election sure: for *if* ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto you into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2. Pet. 1:5-11.)

- *John T. Read.*

## Jehovah, a Covenant God

*"I am ... the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." - Exodus 3:6.*

WHEN Moses at the burning bush was told that he was to lead his people out from Egyptian bondage a question presented itself to his mind: How would his message be received? He had been absent from Egypt for forty years, and thus out of touch with his fellow Israelites. They were, at this time, a slave race, helplessly in subjection to the ruling Pharaoh, a condition from which they had no means of escaping. To approach them with so startling a communication as deliverance would occasion just such a response as Moses anticipated: "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 shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?"

The descendants of Jacob had been for a long time in immediate contact with the many ideas of Deity prevalent in Egypt. From Smith's Bible Dictionary (Vol. I, page 501) we get the information that "the Israelites in Egypt appear during the oppression, for the most part, to have adopted the Egyptian religion" (Josh. 24:14; Ezek. 20:5-8). In Egypt there was a multiplicity of gods, one of which was Apis, the sacred bull. Thus the idea of the golden calf set up by Aaron at the instigation of the people (Exod. 32:16). It was, therefore, a logical assumption on the part of Moses, to expect that he would be asked as to who it was that sent him. Which god? What is his name? We might think that they would be aware of the accounts of the experiences of their fathers as revealed in the sacred writings; but they had no sacred writings. The book of Genesis, of which Moses is regarded as the author, had not yet been written. The traditions handed down to them had evidently grown dim. Now God is about to reveal himself to the descendants of the patriarchs in a very special manner; hence the reply to Moses' query: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, . . . The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." - Exod. 3:14, 15.

A name is that by which a thing or person is identified; thus the "my memorial" refers not to God being the I AM, but to his being the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, forever, throughout all generations.

All nations and individuals in times of stress call upon God for his special favor and blessing; but there is no attempt to identify this god to whom they appeal. Now the Voice that speaks to Moses defines himself as the "I AM" and identifies himself as Jehovah, "the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob." The Voice does not say "I WAS" but "I AM"; and as this is asserted in connection with the name Jehovah, he is therefore the unchanging God, and as such is Israel's God today, as then. Jehovah's promises to the fathers are unimpeachable. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" - Numbers 23:19.

What might seem to be a puzzling statement is found in Exodus 6:3: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty [El Shaddai], but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them." We might ask, Wasn't the name Jehovah mentioned many times in Genesis? And didn't Abraham call the name of the place where he had offered up the ram, as a substitute for Isaac, Jehovah-jireh (Gen. 22:14)? The Septuagint (C. Thomson's translation) renders Exodus 6:3, 4 thusly: "Though I did not clearly manifest to them my name

Jehovah, yet I established this my covenant with them to give them the land of the Chananites." The Companion Bible has this note, "The *name* Jehovah was known as the covenant name; but was not known so as to be understood." As the patriarchs "died in faith, not having received the promises" so solemnly given to them, they could only know Jehovah as a Promiser. Now, through Moses, Jehovah is to reveal himself as a Keeper of promises.

The use of the name Jehovah in Genesis is easily accounted for when we consider that Moses being the author, as is generally agreed, writing for the benefit of his people, and after the revelation to him of the significance of the covenant name, would use the name by anticipation.

### **ISRAEL'S FAILURE**

After Israel arrived at Sinai, Jehovah proposed an added covenant with them, besides the covenant made with Abraham (Gal. 3:17-19), the keeping of which would constitute them a "kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." This proposal was agreed to by all the people as "they answered together and said, All that Jehovah has spoken we will do" (Exod. 19:8). Alas, how far they were from understanding what an undertaking they had entered into! The ten commandments were given (Exod. 20:1-17) of which the first was, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me"; and the second was, "Thou shalt not make ... any likeness ... nor bow down thyself to them." We especially call attention to these two, for when Moses came down from the Mount with the two tables of the law in his hands, and discovered the people falling down and worshiping the golden calf, "he cast the tables out of his hands and brake them." Why? Because the covenant was broken. What now? Is God frustrated from being the covenant God by the people's action? Of course not. Had he not assured Israel, through Moses, that he is the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob forever?

### **THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM**

After the affair of the golden calf, Moses was given instructions concerning the Tabernacle, the Priesthood, and the sacrificial offerings. The apostasy necessitated the sacrificial system if Israel was to continue to be dealt with as a covenanted people. Under this system the sins of the people were typically put away on each successive Atonement Day, and the covenant, in effect, renewed. Thus Israel continued to be chosen people to see if they could, by obedience to laws, become a kingdom of priests, the inheritors of the promise to Abraham.

There is a passage in Jeremiah 7:22, 23 which throws some light upon this. In Jeremiah's time the Jews were not neglectful of the temple, and the offerings. "The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD" were their lying words (Jer. 7:4). But their general practice was to "steal, murder, commit adultery, and swear falsely, and to burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods" (Jer. 7:3-11). Then in verses 22, 23 the Lord by Jeremiah says: "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices, but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, ... walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you. . . ." There was no mention of a sacrificial system until after the breaking of the covenant in the affair of the golden calf.

### **ANOTHER COVENANT; ANOTHER FAILURE**

When the children of Israel were about to cross the Jordan into Canaan, another covenant was made with them (Deut. 27-30), besides the covenant made with them at Sinai (Deut. 29:1). The covenant made with them at Sinai had to do with their being "a kingdom of priests, a holy



nation." The covenant on the plains of Moab had to do with their tenure of the land of Canaan: blessings for obedience; curses for disobedience. But Moses was not to lead the Israelites into Canaan for, shortly after this covenant was proposed, Moses was called up to Mount Pisgah to view the land from afar, and died there (Deut. 34:1-6). A change of leadership occurred. As Jehovah had spoken to the people by Moses, he now spoke through Joshua. "And Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of Jehovah, that he had done for Israel." - Joshua 24:31.

After the decease of Joshua, from then on God spoke to his covenant people by various means, as we read in Hebrews 1:1: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto our fathers by the prophets" -- by dreams, by visions, by angelic visitors, by direct inspiration of the holy spirit, etc. - The messages of the prophets, for the most part, were addressed to the nation, to the people as a whole; and often began with "Thus saith Jehovah." Generally their message was to call attention to the terms of the covenant by which they inhabited the land. Centuries later it was given to Jeremiah to warn of the impending judgment that was to fall upon Jerusalem and the nation because iniquity had so spread that they had become like the people which they had dispossessed (Deut. 28:63, 64; Jer. 16:10-13). It was by the Chaldeans that the dispossession occurred. - 2 Kings 17:22, 23; 25:8-11.

We call to mind that after the destruction of the temple by Nebuzaradan (2 Kings 25:8, 9), there was no possibility of keeping the Atonement Day ritual. Not only was the temple destroyed, and the people captive in Babylon, but the Ark of Testimony with its Mercy Seat was gone. No longer could sacrificial blood be sprinkled upon it; no longer was the Shekinah glory in the Most Holy. The glory of their God, Jehovah, had abandoned the temple and the holy city before this (Ezek. 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:23). Has Jehovah now abandoned his covenant relationship with Israel? Far from it! The very dispossession of the land, and their removal from it, was in conformity to the covenant. Their God, even though they were in captivity in Babylon, conveyed a message to Daniel by the angel Gabriel, that the Sinaitic, or Law covenant, would be continued for seventy sevens, or four hundred ninety years; and that as the last week of that period arrived it would be marked by the appearance of Messiah, the Prince; and that in the midst of that last week (of years) Messiah would be "cut off, but not for himself." He would cause the (typical) sacrifice and oblation to cease by offering himself as the true sacrifice for sin (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:27). (For more on this, see S.S. Vol. 2; chapter 3). Yet Jehovah would continue his covenant with Israel until the end of the "seventy weeks."

### **A NEW DISPENSATION**

As stated previously, the messages of the prophets were addressed to the people as a whole, to call to their mind the conditions by which they possessed the land; but when John the Baptist came on the scene his message was different in this respect: he spoke to the individual conscience, "Repent" ... "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." And he baptized in the Jordan as a symbol of repentance and dedication to walk in a way worthy of repentance (Matt. 3:1-6). John's ministry was only to the house of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the covenanted people.

When Jesus sent out his disciples to announce his coming to the various towns and villages, he "commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5, 6). "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). Jesus was ministering within the covenant arrangement. And when the holy spirit came upon the waiting disciples at Pentecost, all present were Israelites, those within the covenant relationship. It was not until some

time after Pentecost that the gospel message was sent to Cornelius, the first Gentile to be received into the fellowship of-saints, as a prospective heir of the promise to Abraham. - Gal. 3:29; Eph. 2:11-19.

We might illustrate God's program by the use of one of the parables of Jesus. Luke 14:16-23. In this parable the first call is by invitation. Those invited refusing to attend the supper, the servants are sent "into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." But there still being room at the festal board, the servants are sent out into the highways and hedges with the instruction to "compel them to come in." The interpretation of this is simple: those who refused to attend were the leaders of the nation of Israel, those who might have understood Jesus and his message, they being the more familiar with the Scriptures; but they "received him not" (John 1:11). The second call was to the poor of the nation whom the leaders despised (Matt. 11:25-30), those to whom Jesus sent his disciples by twos with the instruction, "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And even of these there were comparatively few who responded. As there was still room, the gospel message was sent to the Gentiles, according to the prophetic word (Hosea 1:10; 2:23; Isa. 65:1). As Jesus said on another occasion; "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). God had covenanted with Abraham to raise up a seed to "bless all the families of the earth" (Gen. 22:18), and as natural Israel was a failure under the law covenant arrangement, God, having predetermined to have a kingdom of priests, sent his Son into the world, born under the law, who, by faithfully performing all the terms of the law covenant, became heir to the promise of that covenant -- the right to be a priest and a king. He was the promised Seed of Abraham. - Gal. 3:19.

### **MYSTERIES**

But a mystery is involved here, that is, that "Christ is not one but many" (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:11-22). Jehovah, still dealing in accordance with his promise, is "taking out of the Gentiles a people for his name" (Acts 15:14). These have the same faith as did Abraham (Rom. 4:13-25), and, having the same quality of faith, they are the children of Abraham, and "children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." And being Christ's they are "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26, 29). The elect church of this age of special grace is the kingdom of priests, the holy nation, the peculiar people which God is raising up according to his promise to Abraham. - 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

But "has God cast away his people whom he foreknew?" Hear what Paul writes: "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery . . . that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." That is, into this covenant relationship as Abraham's seed. Then "all Israel shall be saved" from their blindness and ungodliness, and brought into oneness with their covenant God, Jehovah. "As it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." - Romans 11:25, 26; Isaiah 59:20.

### **GOD'S FAVOR RETURNING TO ISRAEL**

That this age of special grace is coming to a close is seen by the returning of Israel to the promised land (Deut. 30:3-5; Isa. 11:11, 12; Jer. 23:7, 8; Ezek. 37:11-22). Those who are familiar with the prophecies concerning the end of the age have, with deep interest, watched the rebirth of the nation of Israel, and her conflicts with the Arab people. The success of Israel's relatively small army against great odds has been phenomenal. The issue so favorable to Israeli forces can only be accounted for by the testimony of the Scriptures, that an unseen force is being actuated on their

behalf (Zech. 14:3). Already Jerusalem is become a "burdensome stone for all people" (Zech. 12:3). Even the United Nations knows not what to do about settling the Israeli-Arab situation.

For decades students of the Bible have seen atheistic Russia as the "Gog of the land of Magog" mentioned in the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel, who, with many nations with him, shall come up against Israel "like a cloud to cover the land." "Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought [for them - Israel] in the day of [previous] battle" (Zech. 14:3). "And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; ... and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah" (Ezek. 38:22, 23). "So the house of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah their God" (Ezek. 39:22-28). Note that the scripture does not say that God will be known in the eyes of many nations simply as God. No! but as Jehovah, the covenant God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, - "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." - Exodus 3:15.

In Deuteronomy 32:8 there is a statement which gives some insight into the significance of many events of history as those events have to do with Israel in relationship to other nations "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." This implies that all national boundaries are determined by what God, at any given time, is working out in his program concerning natural Israel. But is this to the detriment of other nations? By no means! Was not the gospel message proclaimed to the Bethlehem shepherds (Luke 2:8-11), "Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people?" Assuredly it was; and so shall it be.

Present-day events, fulfilling prophecy, indicate that the present order of things, this present evil world, will soon pass away to give place to Messiah's reign, and that Israel, chastened and penitent, with Christ acknowledged as their king, shall be exalted above all other kingdoms. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain [kingdom] of Jehovah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains [kingdoms] . . . and all nations shall flow into it. And many people 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 his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-5). And this is thoroughly in harmony with Psalm 2:8; "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession."

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Footnote: In this article we have used the word Jehovah where the Authorized Version has the capitalized LORD. We are aware that the word Jehovah might more correctly be rendered Yahweh (see Rotherham's notes on Exod. 3:14, 15), but the reader will be more familiar with the 1901 Edition of the American Revised Version's Jehovah.

- F. A. Essler

## **What Say the Scriptures?** **Basic Bible Studies No. 6 - The Messianic Promise**

*"I have laid help upon One that is mighty." - Psalm 89:19.*

OUR studies have now considered the creation of man, the original transgression, and the Divine subjection of the human race to experience sin's consequences. Adam's greater vitality could resist the working of death for 930 years, but each succeeding generation found the life-span steadily decreasing. Moses, 2000 years after the Fall, could reflect: "All our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Ps. 90:9, 10). Human life has become "a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). Death reigns triumphant through sin, suffering fills the earth, and "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." - Romans 8:22.

From this tragic aspect of human existence we turn with relief and expectation to the consideration of Bible statements which bespeak a glorious "time of restitution." For though the "creation" is helpless, the Creator is near, and has already taken steps to help. Witness the Psalmist's testimony"

"This shall be written for the generation to come:  
And the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.  
For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary;  
From heaven did the Lord behold the earth;  
To hear the groaning of the prisoner;  
To loose those that are appointed to death;  
To declare the name of the Lord in Zion,  
And his praise in Jerusalem;  
When the people are gathered together,  
And the kingdoms,  
To serve the Lord." - Psalm 102:18-22.

Whatever be their local application, we glimpse in these remarkable words a Divine Plan of magnificent scope -- even the eventual redemption of all mankind. This has been the Creator's purpose from the beginning; and as soon as Adam's fall had made it necessary, the mercy of God foretold this redemption, and further, that it would center in a great Deliverer, a Messiah (Anointed One) who would "restore all things." Like a small stream ever increasing as its tributaries add to it, so the Messianic predictions multiplied until they foretold almost every circumstance in the life and character of the most extraordinary personage that ever appeared among men. They have marked out the precise time and place of his birth; they have described with wonderful exactness the distinguishing features of his office and character; they have displayed with equal beauty and truth the effects and consequences of his Advent. All converge in Jesus of Nazareth. "To him give all the Prophets witness" (Acts 10:43). "For all the promises of God find their Yes in him" (2 Cor. 1:20, R.S.V.). *The testimony of Jesus is*, clearly and evidently, *the spirit of prophecy* (Rev. 19:10). This is its ruling and vital principle. Divested of this, it loses its power. Viewed in this light, we behold in prophecy a harmony which delights, a grandeur which

astonishes, and from the result of the whole arises such evidence as carries conviction to the understanding, giving basis for a hope sure and steadfast, an anchor of the soul.

The first foreview of mercy and deliverance through a personal Deliverer is embodied in the Divine words of sentence against Satan:

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." - Genesis 3:15.

These enigmatical words have been emphasized as the *Protevangelion*, or First Gospel, the original root-promise of God; and for all their brevity, express three most important truths:

(1) The *coming* of a Seed, and that *not* of Adam, but of Eve. The wonderful significance of this emphasis upon the woman will become apparent in our later study concerning the Ransom Sacrifice.

(2) The *suffering* of this Seed, which experiences injury, though' not vitally, from the Serpent.

(3) The *triumph* of the Seed, in the bruising (crushing) of Satan's "head." St. Paul alludes to this destruction in Romans 16:20: "The God of peace shall bruise [margin: tread] Satan under your feet shortly."

Such is the original Promise, given to Adam and Eve ere they were driven from the Edenic home. Like the acorn the oak, it frames the mighty growth of later revelations.

Sixteen centuries later, the prophetic words of Noah (Gen. 9:25-27) limit the Messiah's lineage to the race of Shem

"Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

"God shall enlarge Japheth and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

Thus the patriarch foresaw in the main outlines of the three great branches of this second family of man

(1) For the descendants of Ham, *servile degradation*.

(2) For Japheth's posterity, *vast enlargement and political supremacy*.

(3) For the race of Shem, *religious supremacy and sacred renown*.

Some five hundred years pass. The Bible, ignoring human events in general, confines its records as a whole to the line of human beings through whom the Divine purpose shall be accomplished; and thus to Abraham, the Semitic patriarch, is communicated the third expansion of the Messianic Promise. To this venerable person the glorious prediction is now confirmed with an oath:

"By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord... that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; . . . and *in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*" - Genesis 22:15-19.

It is a noteworthy fact that the faith of Jews, Arabs, and Christians in the One Living God is traceable back to this towering figure. The three greatest religions are thus of Semitic origin. All worship the God of Abraham.

Four hundred years later we reach the glory of Moses, whose wonderful life was truly a prototype of the greater Deliverer. His words to the nation of Israel are directly predictive of the Messiah

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, *like unto me*; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15). This "likeness" may be better appreciated by considering the following parallels\* from the many that could be drawn:

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\*See also January-February 1965 *Herald*.

- (1) Moses and Jesus both were saved from violent death in infancy.
- (2) Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing to suffer afflictions and death for his people. Jesus refused to be made a king for the same reason.
- (3) Moses contended with the magicians, who acknowledged his divine power. Jesus contended with the evil spirits, who acknowledged him as "the Holy One of God."
- (4) Moses was a lawgiver, a prophet, a worker of miracles. Jesus was also, and greater.
- (5) Moses gave the people bread in the wilderness. Jesus fed the thousands, and will yet feed the world with "living" bread.
- (6) Moses had power over the sea. Jesus "rebuked the sea, and there was a great calm."
- (7) Moses was the meekest of men. Jesus was "meek and lowly of heart."
- (8) Moses slew the paschal lamb. Jesus was "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
- (9) Moses ratified a covenant with blood. Jesus' blood ratified the "everlasting covenant."
- (10) Moses was victorious over kings and nations. Jesus is King over all the world.
- (11) Moses raised a brazen serpent in the wilderness. Jesus was raised on the cross.
- (12) Moses was a nation's mediator. Christ is the world's mediator.

In David, Israel's great king, the line of descent of the Coming One is narrowed to a chosen family of Judah's tribe. David is called a prophet by the Apostle Peter, and the "sure mercies" promised him are wondrously embodied in Psalms prolific in their reference to the Messiah. Therein we learn that:

- (1) David's seed was to be enthroned forever.
- (2) The Kingdom of his illustrious descendant was not to be merely Jewish, but universal.
- (3) The King would be David's Son (first human), yet David's Lord (then spirit).
- (4) This King, before his enthronement, would undergo rejection and suffering; death and resurrection.
- (5) This King would, like Melchizedek, exercise priestly functions.

Later, the great Prophets of Israel enlarged on the Messianic Promise, even to minute details. The revelations through Daniel, the "beloved of Jehovah," are in some respects the most remarkable in the Old Testament. Here we find a twice stated prediction of four great empires, succeeded by the Kingdom of God; we learn of Israel's eventual restoration, of the resurrection of the dead, and of other great events linked with the Messiah. From Daniel we learn the exact chronology of the Advent and also that Messiah would "be cut off, but not for himself."

The actual coming of the Savior in the Babe of Bethlehem occasioned glorious utterances still further illuminating the Messianic Hope. These we find in the angelic messages to Zacharias (Luke 1:17), to Mary (Luke 1:28-35), to the shepherds (Luke 2:10-14), in the prophetic words of Zacharias (Luke 1:67-79), and Mary (Luke 1:46-55), and in Simeon's prayer (Luke 2:28-32, 34, 35). All were preeminently a theme of exultant joy and rhapsodical praise, yet mingled with a faint note of solemn sadness. For the Holy Child born into the world was destined, by the grace of God, to die for all men.

To enhance our appreciation of the Messianic predictions, we subjoin a Scripture table of the principal prophecies (P.) and the record of their fulfillment (F.) in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

- (1) That a Messiah would come:

P. Gen. 3:15: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

F. Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman." "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." See also 1 John 3:8.

- (2) The Messiah's descent:

P. Gen. 9:26: "Blessed be Jehovah the God of Shem.

F. Luke 3:36: "Jesus . . . the son of Shem. "

P. Gen. 12:3;. 22:18: "In thy [Abraham's] seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

F. Luke 3:34: "Jesus ... the son of Abraham."

P. Gen. 26:4: "In thy [Isaac's] seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

F. Luke 3:34: "Jesus . . . the son of Isaac."

P. Num. 24:17: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."  
See also Gen. 28:14.

F. Luke 3:34: "Jesus ... the son of Jacob."

P. Gen. 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,  
nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

F. Luke 3:33: "Jesus . . . the son of Judah." See also Heb. 7:14.

P. Isa. 11:1: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." See also verses 2 to 5.

F. Luke 3:22: "Jesus . . . the son of Jesse." See also Rom. 15:12.

P. Jer. 23:5: "Behold, the days come, with the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch." See also Isa. 9:7; Ps. 133:11; 89:3, 4, 27.

F. Acts 13:23: "Of this man's [David's] seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus." See also Luke 3:31; Acts 2: 30; Luke 1:32.

(3) The place of the Messiah's birth:

P. Mic. 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem . . . out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler of Israel."

F. Matt. 2:1: "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea." See also John 7:42.

(4) Messiah to be born of a virgin:

P. Isa. 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

F. Matt. 1:18: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit." See also Luke 1:26-35.

(5) The flight into Egypt:

P. Hos. 11:1: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

F. Matt. 2:14: "When he [Joseph] arose, he took the young child, and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt." See also verse 15.



(6) The Messiah should have a forerunner

P. Mal. 3:1: "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." See also Isa. 40:3 and Luke 1:17.

F. Matt. 3:1: "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." See also Luke 7:27; Mark 1:2, 3; Matt. 3:11, 12.

(7) The Messiah a Prophet:

P. Duet. 18:18: "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee."

F. John 6:14: "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." See also John 7:40; Luke 24:19; Luke 7:16.

(8) The Messiah to preach first in Galilee:

P. Isa. 9:1, 2: "In Galilee of the nations, the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light."

F. Matt. 4:12, 17: "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." See also verses 13 and 16.

(9) The Messiah to receive God's spirit

P. Isa. 11:2: "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit' of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord."

F. Luke 2:52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." See also Matt. 3:16, 17.

(10) The Messiah would perform great miracles:

P. Isa. 61:1: "The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." See also Isa. 35:5, 6.

F. Matt. 11:4, 5: "Jesus . . . said, Go and show John those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."

(11) The Messiah was to enlighten men

P. Isa. 9:2: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

F. John 12:46: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." See also Luke 2:32; Acts 26:18; Eph. 5:8; John 8:12.

(12) The Messiah a Savior:

P. Isa. 59:20; 62:11: "The Redeemer shall come to Zion." "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold thy salvation cometh.' "

F. 1 John 4:14; Luke 2:11: "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." "Unto you is born . . . a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

(13) The Messiah a Shepherd:

P. Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:23: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." "I will set up one shepherd over them, . . . even my servant David." See also Ezek. 37:24.

F. John 10:14, 16; Heb. 13:20: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. Other sheep [that is, the Gentiles] I have which are not of this fold.... and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." "Our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep."

(14) The Messiah a Priest:

P. Ps. 110:4; Zech. 6:13: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." "He shall be a priest upon his throne."

F. Heb. 4:14; 2:17: "We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." "That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

(15) The Messiah a Sacrifice for sin:

P. Isa. 53:6, 10, 11, 12; Dan. 9:24: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin. . . . He shall bear their iniquities. . . . He bare the sin of many." "To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness."

F. Eph. 5:2; 1 John 2:2; 1 Pet. 3:18: "Christ hath given himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God." "He is the propitiation for our sins." "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

(16) The Messiah an Intercessor:

P. Isa. 53:12: He "made intercession for the transgressors."

F. Heb. 9:24; Rom. 8:34: "Christ ... is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." "Christ who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

(17) The Messiah a King:

P. Ps. 2:6: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." See also Ps. 132:11; Isa. 9:6; 55:4; Jer. 23:5, 6; 30:9; Mic. 5:2; Hos. 3:5.

F. Luke 1:32, 33; "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever."

(18) Messiah's Kingdom superior to all others:

P. Ps. 89:27, 36; Dan. 7:14: "I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.... His throne as the sun before me." "There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion."

F. Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:21: "The Prince of the kings of the earth." "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come." See also 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16; Phil. 2:9.

To these larger features of the Messianic Promise can be added many details such as the manner of Messiah's public entry into Jerusalem (compare Zech. 9:9 with John 12:13, 14); his betrayal by a disciple (compare Ps. 41:9 with Mark 14:10); for thirty pieces of silver (compare Zech. 11:12 with Matt. 26:15); with which a potter's field should be purchased (compare Zech. 11:13 with Matt. 27:6, 7); Judas' office taken by another (compare Ps. 109:7, 8 with Acts 1:16-20); the accusation of false witnesses (compare Ps. 27:12; 35:11 with Matt. 26:60, 61); Messiah's silence when accused (compare Isa. 53:7; Ps. 38:13, 14 with Matt. 26:62, 63; 27:12-14); smitten and spat upon (compare Isa. 50:6 with Mark 14:65); hated without a cause (compare Ps. 69:4; Ps. 109:3-5 with John 15:23-35); suffered vicariously (compare Isa. 53:4 with Matt. 8:16, 17); was cruelly mocked and derided (compare Ps. 22:7, 8, 12, 13 with Matt. 27:39-43); was crucified (compare Num. 21:9 with John 3:14); numbered with transgressors (compare Isa. 53:12 with Matt. 27:38) given vinegar and gall (compare Ps. 69:21 with John 19:29); his garments divided and lots cast for his vesture (compare Ps. 22:18 with John 19:23, 24); not a bone of him broken (compare Ps. 34:20; Exod. 12:46 with John 19:32, 33); his hands and feet pierced (compare Ps. 22:16 with John 20:25-27); his side pierced (compare Zech. 12:10 with John 19:34, 37); dying with malefactors, is buried honorably (compare Isa. 53:9 with Matt. 27:57-60); rises from the dead (compare Ps. 16:10 with Matt. 28:9); ascends into heaven (compare Ps. 68: 18 with Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9).

The preceding is but a summary of the predictions concerning the Promised Seed of the Woman. Nevertheless if but one man had predicted all these, giving the time, place, manner, and other circumstances of the advent, life, doctrine, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Messiah, his prophecies would be truly astounding, and the most wonderful thing in the world. But these prophecies, by a succession of men widely separated from each other by time and space, over a period of four thousand years, foretell the same stupendous event. Here, therefore, the hand of God is manifest; and the variety of circumstances predicted concerning one person so many years before he was born, and of such an extraordinary nature—all accomplished in Christ, and in no other person that ever appeared in the world—point him out with irresistible evidence as the Messiah,

THE SAVIOR OF MANKIND.

- *W. J. Siekman*

(The subject of the seventh article in this series will be: "*The Ransom Sacrifice.*")

## **Meditations**

*'If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him,  
and will sup with him, and he with me.'* - Revelation 3:20.

"In the grand oratorios of life  
God writes us unexpected rests!  
These break the rush, the strain,  
the storm, the strife,  
And are our surely needful tests!"

- *Poems of Dawn*, page 192.

SPEED seems to be the keynote of the 20th century world. It is possible to crowd as much into one day as our grandparents did in a week. Swift travel and labor-saving equipment have brought this about. It is so easy to be caught up in the modern whirl, packing so much into one day of even Christian activity, as leaves no room for Christ. The reminder to pause, to rest, to listen, to take stock, is sometimes as necessary to us in the busy round as a halt sign at a busy road crossing. That STOP! WAIT! LOOK! signal, which in the business world safeguards life, has its equivalent protection in the life of the spirit.

### **"BEHOLD I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK"**

Jesus often knocks for admission. The knock may not always be heard above the busy clamor of thought and activity. There is so much to think about, so much to do, the attention becomes so involved that we may be out of hearing range, or the friendly rap registers no response. In a busy household on a busy day, visitors are rarely welcome. A knock at the door is more likely to prove an irritable interruption. Not many go to the door in a state of joyous expectancy, hoping it will be some treasured friend, in whose society they can relax, listen, and be refreshed, who is always heartily welcome and for whose presence every chore is gladly abandoned.

Yet Jesus is such a visitor. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." - Rev. 3:20.

He gave us to understand that the necessary thing is food for the spirit more than a busy round of activity that leaves no time to rest, to sit, awhile with him and listen to what he has to say. The busy Marthas, rushing around on their various errands, filling up a program crammed with busyness, feeling the strain of their activities, are admirable people. The world would be lost without them. The quiet, contemplative, dreaming Marys give to it its beauty, its other-world visions, but it needs the bustling Marthas to organize and translate them into action and reality.

Since nature has mixed the elements so well in most of us, it becomes increasingly needful to listen for that knock upon the door of the heart that we may be better informed when to be up and doing, what to be doing and when to keep quiet, to rest and take in new strength. For that is the purpose of the rest, the reason for the Master's knock on the door.

On those crowded days when work piles up so that we seem to be outfaced with it, when we are behind schedule before we have started, when any delay or hindrance or accident is likely to find

us underneath the load, fretted, frustrated, and limp, that is the time when Jesus knocks. You protest you are too busy, you haven't time to stop; you have so much to do. Your works are of the most unselfish order, but the Master says: "I have spread the meal, cease your labors. Come and sup with me and I with you."

A ready response to that gracious call brings its own reward. The door that shuts out the crowded day, that calls a halt to the busy program, shuts in "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." - Phil. 4:7.

How refreshing is that short rest! That brief pause for quiet thought, a reassessment of our situation, a reappraisal of our liabilities and assets, the reassurance of the promise: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." - 2 Cor. 12:9.

It may be only a few minutes, but spent in the presence of the Lord it changes the tenor and tone of the day. From frenzied haste to calm leisured action, from snapping strain to sunny ease, the day rolls out unwrinkled, successful, and satisfying. We have supped with him and he with us, and how immensely invigorating and sustaining has been the brief visit, the heavenly intercourse with the Unseen Guest.

"The way is sometimes weary  
To yonder nearing clime,  
But a little talk with Jesus  
Hath helped me many a time.  
The more I come to know Him,  
And all His grace explore,  
It sets me ever longing  
To know Him more and more."

- *Poems of Dawn*, page 99.

In the Gospel by John, chapter 21, verses 1 to 13 (John 21:1-13), there is an incident recorded in the post-resurrection ministry of our Lord that is full of instruction for us in these latter days. The appearances of the risen Lord had become fewer. Weary of waiting the active Peter announced, "I go a fishing." Ready to follow his lead, the other disciples went along with him. They fished all night but caught nothing. It was a vain labor. When morning dawned, a stranger stood on the shore and called out to them: "Children, have ye any meat?"

It was a common custom in that land for some hungry wayfarer to hail a fishing boat in the hope of getting some fish from the catch to make himself a meal. The form of the stranger could scarcely be discerned in the early light of day, and his salutation was one in common usage. Unaware of his identity, they sent back one word across the gray waters, "No!"

They did not trouble to explain or apologize for their lack of food, or try to hide or check their disappointment, the frayed patience of cold, wet, tired, hungry men who had toiled all night and caught nothing. It was a blunt, disgruntled, and unfriendly "No" which reached the stranger. But an answer came back that probably made Peter and John look at each other-an unspoken thought between them. "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find."

Past experience had taught them the lesson of obedience. They cast the net as instructed and found it so full they could scarcely pull it to the shore.

What a scene was that in the early morning with the sun shedding his first beams on the quiet coast! Peter stopping only to put on his fisherman's coat and girdle, springs into the sea, forgetful of all but haste to reach the feet of his Lord. Slowly, the others pull for the beach with the heavily laden net. There, to greet the eyes of tired, hungry men, a fire burned, fish cooking upon it and bread beside it. The Master had made for them a meal, but that it shall not be a one-sided affair he bids them bring their share to it of the fish they have caught.

Peter, who now has the impetuous strength to haul up the full net single handed, landed the catch. They counted them, marveling that the net had not broken with the weight of them.

The Master waits to warm and feed them, to converse with them. There is no reprimand, no question, only the invitation: "Come and dine." Without a word they gather round him, each busy with his thoughts. He took fish and bread and gave to each of them. What would *we* give to have been there, to have shared in that meal, prepared and served by the risen Savior in a continuation of his ministry to men?

The privilege is ours still. He still calls across the tumult of our hours, when tired, frustrated, and empty, we occupy the time with a busy getting and doing which adds little or nothing to the spiritual treasure we bear in these earthen vessels. "Tis not thy work the Master wants, but thee."

### **"WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING"**

With Christ in the boat the storm became a calm. With Christ on the shore, his counsel filled the net. With his spirit within the inner chamber of the heart each day becomes a triumph.

Courage crowds out care, and glorified common sense directs the duties, trims the tasks, and slows down the hurried pace. Love that empties itself in service dominates all human contacts. Courtesy, kindness, compassion, and sympathy; calm strength which lifts life's load with ease, which takes in its stride its numerous changes these are some of the outer evidences of the inner rest with him who said: "Take my yoke upon you... my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." - Matthew 11:29, 30.

"How much we need that pause, that rest,  
That converse with the Unseen Guest."

- *Selected*

## The Question Box

*"I have said, 'Ye are gods ... but ye shall die like men.'" - Psalm 82:6, 7.*

### *Question:*

Will you please review Psalm 82, with special reference to Psa. 82:6-7. In your discussion will you please say if the "gods" in Psa. 82:6 are the same as those mentioned in Psa. 82:1. Then, too, I was told recently that the Hebrew word which, in Psa. 82:8, is translated "God" (singular), would better be translated "gods" (plural), and that in both Psa. 82:6 and 8 the reference is to the Church. Your comments on this point also would be appreciated.

### *Answer:*

To my understanding the word "gods" in verse 1 refers to the judges of Israel. The Hebrew word *elohim* here translated "gods" has this meaning elsewhere. See, for example, Exodus 21:6; Ex. 22:8, 9, 28.

These judges were as gods to the rest of the nation. They were not to be worshiped as God, but they were to act in his stead. They represented him. Insofar as they discharged the duties of their office faithfully, their decrees were as the decrees of God. This principle should be true of all judges everywhere, but it was especially true in the theocratic state of Israel. The office was sacred, no matter how far short of faithful performance of its duties the incumbents fell.

Expositors, generally, are agreed that the "gods" in verse 6 are the same as the "gods" in verse 1.\* Thus understood, the Psalm bears the descriptive title given it by Rotherham in his *"Studies in the Psalms"* as "The Judgment of Unjust Judges." Moulton, in his *"Modern Reader's Bible"* gives the caption: "God in judgment on the gods." The Westminster Study Edition of the Bible supplies the title: "God Condemns Unrighteous Judges."

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\* Brother Russell at one time shared this view. However, he then believed that in both verses 1 and 6 the reference was not to unjust judges but to the Church (Reprints R338, R421, R1410). Later, he came to agree with the generally accepted view of the scholars that in verse 1 the reference is not to the Church but to unjust judges; however, he did not abandon his belief that verse 6 applied to the Church. - S.S. Vol. V, pages E68, E69.

Psa. 82:1 is attributed, generally, to the Psalmist, Asaph, as is also Psa. 82:8, while the intervening verses, Psa. 82:2-7 inclusive, are understood to apply, in their entirety, to the unjust judges of Psa. 82:1.

In this generally held viewpoint, Psa. 82:6-7 are understood to be the concluding words of God's judgment of the judges, and may be paraphrased thus: "Gods though I myself have styled you, you are, nevertheless, but mortal men. As mortal men ye shall die; yea, as princes whom I have overthrown in their rebellion, ye shall ignominiously fall."

In Psa. 82:8 the Psalmist, having listened to this righteous judgment of God on these unjust judges, calls on God to arise, and put an end to the perversion of justice, by himself judging not Israel only, but all nations.

To my understanding, there is nothing in our Lord's reference to this Psalm, in John 10:34-38, which conflicts with the interpretation given foregoing. He there appeals to Psa. 82:6 of our

Psalm in his argument with the Jews, when they charged him with blasphemy "because he being a man, made himself God" (John 10:33). The point of his argument seems clear: "If earthly judges are Scripturally termed 'gods' -- and in Psalm 82:6 they are -- how can you justly charge me with blasphemy for saying that I am God's son? Moreover, this title of 'gods' was given to those *to whom* the word of God *came* (consecrating them to their office, and requiring them to conform their judicial decisions to that word). In my case, I am not one *to whom* that word *came*, but the one *who was himself* consecrated and *sent*."

In the interpretation of the Psalm presented foregoing, its *primary* reference has been shown to be to the unjust judges of Israel who lived in the days of the Psalmist Asaph; men who, though placed by God in exalted stations would, nevertheless, die as other mortals, and who would first suffer ignominious ruin for their unrighteous course.

But this primary reference by no means exhausts the teaching of the Psalm. It *is* a fact, which no scholar would dispute, that many of the Old Testament Scriptures are Messianic in character. This is particularly true of the Psalms. Examples may be seen in whole Psalms such as Psalms 2, 16, 22, 45, 46, 72, and 110; also in selected passages from other Psalms such as Psalm 31:5 (Luke 23:26); Psalm 34:20 (John 19:36); and Psalm 41:9 (John 13:18). Such a Messianic application is hinted at by Rotherham in his comment on Psa. 82:8 of our Psalm. I quote:

"We seem to be carried forward on the wave of a Messianic flood as we read in the concluding couplet: As if to say, *Oh arise, Elohim, oh judge the earth* -- thyself, in a clearer and nearer Divine Manifestation than at present; no longer permitting Justice to be perverted as now; and do this the rather that *all nations* are thine by right; thine by the claim of thy birth as earth's King, into the full possession of which wilt thou be pleased soon to enter."

And here we are brought back - rather we are brought forward - to Brother Russell's illuminating exposition, as condensed in the footnote to S.S. Vol. V, page E69. I quote it here in full, except for the reference to Psa. 82:6-7:

"This entire Psalm (82) seems to refer to our Lord Jesus as the divinely appointed Deliverer and Judge of Christendom, now, in the time of his *parousia* To him we apply the words, 'God [*elohim*, Christ appointed by the Father to judge the world now] standeth in the assemblage of the mighty [amongst the financial, political, and ecclesiastical princes]; he judgeth among [these] *gods* [*elohim* - mighty ones].' He is represented first as reproving these princes and calling for equity, but 'They heed not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness [respecting what will be the result of their policy]: all the foundations of the earth [the social world] are out of the course'; is his decision: it is useless to attempt to patch present institutions; they must all be 'dissolved,' that the new heavens and new earth-the new social world-may come instead. Then . . . -- when all the 'elect' Church by dying shall have passed beyond the veil - then Christ will be called upon, 'Arise, O God [*elohim*], judge the earth for thou hast inherited all nations.' It will be to establish his Kingdom that he will let loose the judgments which in 'a great time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation,' shall abase the proud and exalt the humble and usher in the 'times of restitution' long promised by all the holy prophets. - Acts 3:19-23."

One question remains: "Would the word translated 'God' in Psa. 82:8 be better translated 'gods'?"

The answer to this question may be traced in S.S. Vol. V, pages E66-E69. There Brother Russell discusses the word *elohim* at some length. On page 66 he correctly states that "like our English word 'sheep' *elohim* is used either in the singular or plural as occasion may require."



What does the occasion require in Psalm 82:8? I reply: The noun *elohim* must here be translated in the singular (God) for the reason that it is the subject of three verbs, "arise," "judge" and "inherit," *all of which are in the singular*. The fact that the verb forms are in the singular rules out as ungrammatical any interpretation which gives *elohim* in this verse the plural meaning which it does in fact have in verses 1 and 6.

To utilize Brother Russell's "sheep" illustration: If told that the sheep *was being sheared*, we would understand that the reference was to only one animal; whereas, if told that the sheep *were being sheared*, we would understand that the reference was to more than one animal.

Since writing the foregoing, one additional related question has reached me, as follows:

*Question:*

In recent years conflicting views have been expressed as to whether the last members of the Church are to die, or whether their change is to occur in some other way. As you doubtless know, in S.S. Vol. III (pages C238, C239). Psalm 82:6, 7 is adduced as a "proof text" that the last members are not to be exempt from experiencing death, but must all "die like men." What is your thought?

*Answer:*

It is my conviction that the last members of the Church are to die, but I do not think Psalm 82:6, 7 so teaches.

In the preceding paragraphs I have endeavored to show that, in the view of expositors generally, including Rotherham, the "gods" of verses 6 and 7 are the same unjust judges as are first brought to our attention in verses 1 and 2. If, as I believe, this view be correct, there can be no reference in verses 6 and 7 to the Church, for *unjust* judges, in the very nature of the case, could not be used to represent any of the members of the Body of the Christ, all of whom are just -- their faith being reckoned to them for righteousness.

The manner in which the change of the last members of the Church is to be effected is, of course, an intensely interesting question--more interesting today than ever. But it is a question which, in my judgment, lies outside the scope of Psalm 82 and is, therefore, one to be decided, if it is to be decided in this life at all, not by reference to Psalm 82, but to other Scriptures; e.g.: 1 Cor. 15:51-59; Rev. 2:10; 14:3.

- P. L. Read

## Entered Into Rest

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