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# Program

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**SATURDAY, AUGUST 7** — Arrive Polanica • 8:10 pm, “Prayer,” Conv. Choir, Daniel Kaleta, Poland

## **SUNDAY, AUGUST 8**

Chair: Edward Pietrzyk, Poland

- 9:15 Morning Devotions  
9:30 **Preparing for the Last Days**  
Timothy Alexander, USA  
10:20 Intermission  
11:00 **Sacrifices for Sins**  
Adolphe Debski, France  
11:50 Announcements  
12:00 Lunch

Chair: Ray Charlton, Australia

- 2:00 **Panel Discussion Bible Prophecy Today**  
David Rice, Len Griehs, Wade Austin, USA  
3:00 Intermission  
3:30 **The Grasshopper Complex**  
Art Jezuit, USA  
4:20 Intermission  
5:00 **Testimony Meeting**  
Mark Nemesh, USA  
6:00 Supper  
8:10 **Vesper Service**  
Piotr Mrzyglod, Poland  
9:00 End of Day

## **MONDAY, AUGUST 9**

Chair: Vasile Baciu, Moldova

- 9:15 Morning Devotions  
9:30 **The Trials of the New Creature**  
Costea Iachim, Moldova  
10:20 Intermission  
11:00 **The Rich Man and Lazarus**  
Frank Boychuk, Canada  
11:50 Announcements  
12:00 Lunch

Chair: Jean Siwek, France

- 2:00 **Brethren in France**  
Roman Mlotkiewicz, France  
3:00 Intermission  
3:30 **Truth and Lies**  
Andrzej Dabek, Poland  
4:20 Intermission  
5:00 **Testimony Meeting**  
Liviu Chiorean, Romania  
6:00 Supper  
8:10 **Vesper Service**  
Andriy Lajbida, Ukraine  
9:00 End of Day

## **TUESDAY, AUGUST 10**

Chair: Tom Machacek, USA

- 9:15 Morning Devotions  
9:30 **Amazing Grace**  
Robert Gorecki, USA  
10:20 Intermission  
11:00 **Continue in My Word**  
Moses Obire, Nigeria  
11:50 Announcements  
12:00 Lunch

Chair: Stefan Tarcea, Romania

- 2:00 **Symposium: Are You the Man of God?**  
Ioan Pop, Ioan Galis, Romania  
3:00 Intermission  
3:30 **The Power of The Example**  
Luca Sorinel, Romania  
4:20 Intermission  
5:00 **Testimony Meeting**  
Daniel Kaleta, Germany  
6:00 Supper  
8:10 **Vesper Service**  
Daniel Wozniak, France  
9:00 End of Day

**(Please, no flash pictures or applause during any session)**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11**

Chair: Werner Vetter, Germany

- 9:15 Morning Devotions
- 9:30 **A Man Used by God**  
Krzysztof Makarzec,  
Poland
- 10:20 Intermission
- 11:00 **The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven**  
Hans Ranik, Germany
- 11:50 Announcements
- 12:00 Lunch

*Afternoon reserved  
for fellowship*

- 6:00 Supper
- 8:00 **North American Business Meeting**  
Polanica Hotel  
Conference Room

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 12**

Chair: Eugen Dowhan, Ukraine

- 9:15 Morning Devotions
- 9:30 **He Who Has Ears Let Him Hear**  
Tadeusz Zurek, Australia
- 10:20 Intermission
- 11:00 **The Thoughts of the Faithful**  
Gheorghe Ilea, Romania
- 11:50 Announcements
- 12:00 Lunch

Chair: Leszek Szarkowicz, Poland

- 2:00 **Songs of Praise During the Gospel Age**  
Regis Liberda, Jean Siwek,  
France
- 3:00 Intermission
- 3:30 **Interview Testimonies**  
Waldemar Szymanski,  
Poland
- 4:30 Intermission
- 5:10 **What Manner of Persons Ought We to Be**  
Fred Binns, England
- 6:00 Supper
- 8:10 **Vesper Service**  
Timothy Krupa, USA
- 9:00 End of Day

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 13**

Chair: Marius Kwarciak, France

- 9:15 Morning Devotions
- 9:30 **Divine Grace**  
Bernard Boulier,  
France
- 10:20 Intermission
- 11:00 **Audio-Visual The Borders of Israel**  
Daniel Chachlica, Poland
- 11:50 Announcements
- 12:00 Lunch

Chair: Eugen. Szarkowicz, Poland

- 2:00 **Symposium: Family in the Light of God's Word**  
Jozef Sygnowski,  
Jan Kopak, Poland
- 3:00 Intermission
- 3:30 **The Sin Offering**  
Wladyslaw Symczuk,  
Ukraine
- 4:20 Intermission
- 5:00 **Testimony Meeting**  
Jerome Gruhn, France
- 6:00 Supper
- 8:00 **And the Lord Harkened and Heard It**  
Jean Wozniak, France
- 9:30 End of Convention

**Daily Young Adult Studies (ages 15 to 25) in Polanica Hotel Conference Room, 9:15-10:30 am.**  
Wade Austin • David Rice • Len Griehs • Marius Kwarciak • Daniel Kaleta • Michael Nekora

# Attendees

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## AUSTRALIA (28)

Charlton Raymond  
Charlton Susan  
Ciechanowska-Hankus Halina  
Greenhalgh Henry  
Greenhalgh Margaret  
Greenhalgh Darryn  
Grudzien Maria  
Hankus Alfred  
Kolacz Ireneusz  
Kolacz Dorota  
Kolacz Philip (14)  
Kolacz Miriam (12)  
Kozub Cezar  
Kozub Joanna  
Kozub Dominic (5)  
Kozub Damian (1)  
Merski Przemyslaw  
Merski Helena  
Mistarz Aleksander  
Siedleczka Józef  
Siedleczka Dorota  
Walczak David  
Walczak Mirka  
Walczak Rebecca  
Walczak Samuel  
Zurek Tadeusz  
Zurek Anna  
Zurek Yvonne

## AUSTRIA (4)

Petelinschek Arno  
Petelinschek Anni  
Postulach Aurelia  
Weiglhofer Erich

## CANADA (13)

Boychuk Frank  
Boychuk Ann  
Kuc Agnes  
Kuryga Daniel

Kuryga Eva  
Michalyca Ann  
Michalyca Lorie  
Sawicki Amie  
Stocki Myles  
Szarkowicz Estera  
Szarkowicz Sarah (15)  
Szarkowicz Ashley (12)  
Szarkowicz Chantel (3)

## ENGLAND (2)

Binns Fred  
Binns Ivy

## FRANCE (48)

Boulier Bernard  
Boulier Michèle  
Brychcy Paul  
Brychcy Edwige  
Brychcy Noémie  
Brychcy Julie  
Brychcy Jérémie  
Bywalec Jonathan  
Bywalec Dorothée  
Dabek Stanislaw  
Dalmata Zenon  
Dalmata Josepha  
Dalmata Eric  
Dalmata Robert  
Dalmata Emmanuel (13)  
Debski Adolphe  
Gruhn Jérôme  
Gruhn Geneviève  
Karalus Cécile  
Kowalczyk Henri  
Kowalczyk Kazia  
Kwarciak Marius  
Kwarciak Yolande  
Kwarciak Gilbert  
Kwarciak Olivier  
Kwarciak Marta  
Liberda Régis

Liberda Christine  
Liberda Peggy  
Malyga Jacques  
Malyga Halina  
Malyga Angélique  
Mlotkiewicz Romain  
Mlotkiewicz Wladislawa  
Mlynek Josepha  
Siwek Jean  
Siwek Françoise  
Siwek Jean-Francois  
Skarbek David  
Skarbek Marie-Madeleine  
Skarbek Claire  
Sutryk Stanislas  
Sutryk David  
Wozniak Daniel  
Wozniak Jean  
Wozniak Christine  
Wozniak Michel  
Wozniak Gabriela  
Wozniak Sébastien  
Wozniak Eva  
Woznica Stéphanie

## GERMANY (43)

Bartel Gertrud  
Beer Annemarie  
Czelczynska Lidia  
Czura Dagmara  
Glanz Peter  
Glanz Elizabeth  
Huttny Kathrin  
Kaleta Daniel  
Kaleta Barbara  
Kaleta Jakub (13)  
Kaleta Nathan (8)  
Kaleta Tamara (7)  
Kotoulas Johannes  
Kotoulas Uschi  
Kotoulas Dorchen  
Kulanica Wlodek

Lipka Hubert  
Lipka Ruth  
Olejarz Wanda  
Pates Ioannis  
Pates Michael  
Pates Spyros  
Pates Dorothea  
Pawlik Franz  
Pawlik Helene  
Ranik Hans  
Ranik Ruth  
Ruthmann Lutz  
Ruthmann Eleni  
Selent Lydia  
Selent Sarah  
Selent Daniel (16)  
Selent Anja (15)  
Szegidewicz Bohdan  
Szegidewicz Violette  
Szegidewicz Liliana  
Thieme Stefan  
Vetter Werner  
Vetter Edith  
Vogt Dorothea  
Warmus Halina  
Zadora Andreas  
Zadora Patrizia

## ISRAEL (2)

Ylon Jakub  
Zylberklang Chaim

## ITALY (4)

Pop Emil  
Pop Floarea  
Pop Emilian (14)  
Pop Elisabeta (9)

## LITHUANIA (8)

Pakrijauskas Vldas  
Pakrijauskas Aldona  
Pakrijauskas Almane

|                       |                        |                        |                            |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Pakrijauskas Vyduanas | Prepelita Violeta (12) | Haczykowska Alina      | Krajcer Estera (16)        |
| Sirmulis Virginijus   | Rosca Nina             | Honkisz Józef          | Krajcer Marta (14)         |
| Sirmulis Aldona       | Rusnac Olga            | Honkisz Marta          | Kubic Estera               |
| Sirmulis Lukas (2)    |                        | Idas Marta             | Kubic Malgorzata           |
| Stravinskiene Emilija | <b>NETHERLANDS (2)</b> | Imiolczyk Rufin        | Kubic Helena               |
| <b>MOLDOVA (48)</b>   | Klinkert Ad            | Imiolczyk Eugenia      | Kuc Halina                 |
| Baciu Vasile          | Klinkert Olga          | Jablonski Tadeusz      | Kuc Jan                    |
| Beregoi Maria         | <b>NIGERIA (1)</b>     | Jakubowski Marek       | Kuc Wladyslawa             |
| Bivol Ion             | Obire Moses            | Jonczy Lidia           | Kulczycka Zofia            |
| Bivol Elena           |                        | Juraszek Czeslawa      | Kuznik Józef               |
| Boaca Maria           | <b>POLAND (281)</b>    | Jurus Zdzislaw         | Kwiecinski Bartłomiej      |
| Boaca Serghei (17)    | Adler Roman            | Jurus Anna             | Lecko Boleslaw             |
| Bodarev Andrei        | Adler Irena            | Kaminski Henryk        | Lekstan Józefa             |
| Bodarev Valeria       | Adler Estera (17)      | Kaminski Maria         | Lenort Renata              |
| Breguta Silvia        | Bartnik-Kulpecka Julia | Kaminski Marek         | Lenort Bozena              |
| Casap Lilia           | Biela Wladyslaw        | Kaminski Anna          | Lesnikowska Helena         |
| Caus Matvei           | Borsuk Joanna          | Karwowska Albina       | Lipianin Pawel             |
| Caus Silvia           | Buczko Eugeniusz       | Kasprzyk Wladyslawa    | Lipianin Ada               |
| Caus Pavel            | Buczko Magdalena       | Kawala Stefania        | Lipianin Aleksandra (9)    |
| Caus Tatiana (12)     | Buzon Tadeusz          | Knapczynski Jan        | Lipianin Jakub (5)         |
| Caus Mariana (3)      | Buzon Dorota           | Knapczynski Janina     | Lipka Krzysztof            |
| Ceban Valentin        | Buzon Karolina (7)     | Knitter Marek          | Lipka Maria                |
| Ceban Elizaveta       | Buzon Kasia (7)        | Knitter Elzbieta       | Litkowicz Piotr            |
| Ceban Pavel           | Bywalec Dariusz        | Knitter Mateusz        | Litkowicz Barbara          |
| Ceban Vera            | Bywalec Aleksandra     | Knitter Estera         | Litkowicz Anna (9)         |
| Ceban Liuba           | Bywalec Józef          | Knop Jan               | Litkowicz Natalia (7)      |
| Craciun Angela        | Bywalec Zofia          | Knop Ruta              | Litwinski Józef            |
| Curtean Corina        | Bywalec Marzena        | Knop Katarzyna         | Litwinski Marta            |
| Gronic Marina         | Chachlica Daniel       | Knop Filip (16)        | Litwinski Jacek            |
| Gutu Igor             | Chachlica Agata        | Knop Julia (15)        | Lopacinska Irena           |
| Gutu Vasile           | Chrobak Katarzyna      | Kolak Anna             | Lopacinska Agnieszka       |
| Hamza Viorel          | Cyrus Estera           | Kolak Lukasz           | Lopacinska Malgorzata (13) |
| Iachim Constantin     | Czuba Daniela          | Komanowska Zofia       | Lopacinski Wojciech        |
| Iachim Ana            | Dabek Czeslawa         | Komanowska Michal (17) | Lopacinski Pawel           |
| Iachim Diana          | Dabek Magdalena        | Komanowska Estera (12) | Magiera Bogdan             |
| Iachim Emelia         | Dabek Filip (3)        | Kopak Jan              | Magiera Elzbieta           |
| Moisa Ion             | Drozdziel Zofia        | Kopak Lidia            | Magiera Krzysztof          |
| Munteanu Tamara       | Fijalkowski Krzysztof  | Kopak Magdalena (6)    | Magiera Esther             |
| Neagu Daniela (16)    | Fil David              | Kopak Natalia          | Magiera Malgorzata         |
| Neagu Ion             | Filipek Lucjan         | Kopak Ala (3)          | Majdak Bronislaw           |
| Neagu Maria           | Filipek Malgorzata     | Kosecka Bozea          | Makarzec Krzysztof         |
| Neagu Natalia         | Filipek Kamil (6)      | Kotarba Stanislaw      | Markarzec Anna             |
| Neagu Lilia (12)      | Florczak Slawomir      | Koterba Janina         | Markarzec Daniel           |
| Neagu Natalia         | Florczak Martyna       | Kozak Adam             | Markarzec Marta (16)       |
| Neagu Rebecca (5)     | Florczak Lukasz        | Kozub-Pilch Zofia      | Malinowski Bogumil         |
| Oleinic Dima          | Gajer Jan              | Krajcer Michal         | Malinowski Kazimiera       |
| Osipov Roland         | Garbacz Barbara        | Krajcer Krystyna       | Malinowski Pawel           |
| Pantea Gheorghe       | Gaska Bronislaw        | Krajcer Pawel          | Malkowski Pawel            |
| Pantea Nadejda        | Gaska Zdzislawa        | Krajcer Teresa         | Malkowski Danuta           |
| Pantea Tamara         | Godlewski Krzysztof    | Krajcer Piotr          | Malkowski Mateusz          |
| Pantea Vasile         |                        | Krajcer Beata          | Malkowski Lukasz           |

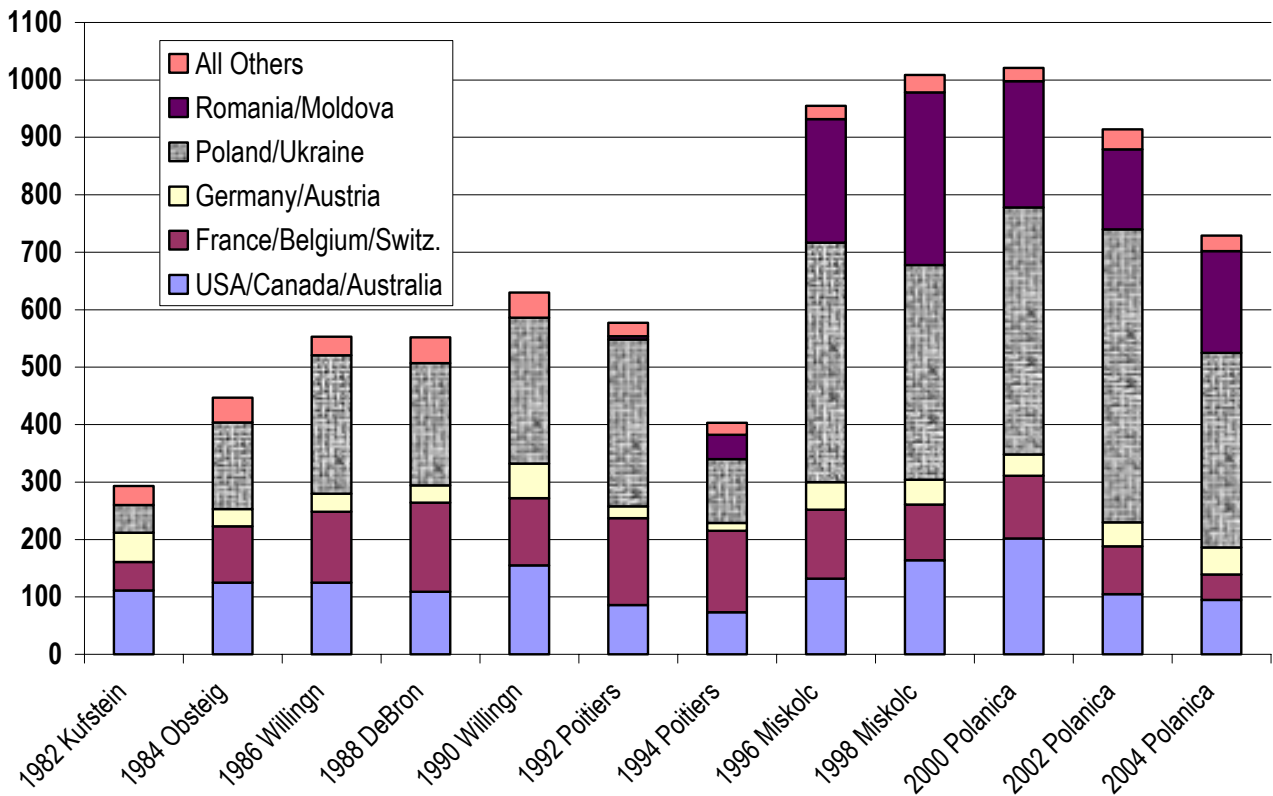
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|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Malkowski Tymoteusz (5) | Rokosz Waclaw             | Szewczyk Justyna       | Birtas Lidia          |
| Marek Grzegorz          | Rymanowski Henryk         | Szewczyk Mirosława     | Boboi Cecilia         |
| Marek Urszula           | Rymanowski Maria          | Szopa Stefania         | Bodea Penina          |
| Marek Marta(16)         | Rymanowski Krzysztof      | Szopa Bożena           | Bordea Iosif          |
| Marek Dorota (13)       | Rypien Mirosław           | Szopa Agnieszka        | Brie Nastasia         |
| Maruta Elżbieta         | Rypien Helena             | Szymanski Waldemar     | Bumb Viorica          |
| Miksa Jan               | Sablik Leokadia           | Szymanski Lidia        | Buta Pelagia          |
| Miksa Krystyna          | Sadowy Edward             | Szymanski Michal (17)  | Calota Nicoleta       |
| Miksa Michal            | Sadowy Elżbieta           | Then Janusz            | Cap Aurel             |
| Miksa Monika            | Sadowy Mateusz (12)       | Then Ewa               | Cap Florica           |
| Miksa Daniel (10)       | Schab Olga                | Thol Józef             | Cap Daniel            |
| Miksa Maria             | Skadlubowicz Dagmara      | Thol Henryka           | Cap Ruben             |
| Modrzewski Mirosław     | Skoczylas Marian          | Tudryn Ignacy          | Cap Geanina           |
| Modrzewski Anna         | Skowron Genowefa          | Tudryn Maria           | Chiorean Benjamin     |
| Mruk Antoni             | Slawinski Stanislaw       | Tudryn Natanel         | Chiorean Ana          |
| Mruk Wodzislaw          | Slawinski Malgor-Zata     | Tudryn Tomasz          | Chiorean Mihai        |
| Mrzyglod Jan            | Slawinski Julia (4)       | Tudryn Stanislaw       | Chiorean Mihaela (17) |
| Mrzyglod Krystyna       | Slawinski Noemi (3)       | Wacior Czeslaw         | Chiorean Laura (16)   |
| Muszalska Estera        | Slodczyk Aleksandra       | Wacior Irena           | Chiorean Liviu        |
| Nowakowska Alicja       | Slodczyk Katarzyna        | Wacior Marianna        | Chiorean Maria        |
| Odrzywolska Bronislawa  | Sobczyk Liwiusz           | Wacior Zofia           | Chiorean Maria        |
| Olejarz Franciszek      | Sobczyk-Kaduk Zofia       | Walawander Maria       | Chiorean Saveta       |
| Olejarz Wanda           | Sokolowska Teresa         | Wilczek Agnieszka      | Coldea Teodor         |
| Olejarz Jaroslaw        | Sordyl Michal             | Wilczek Jan            | Coldea Viorel         |
| Olejarz Dorota          | Sordyl Alfreda            | Wilczek Maria          | Cozma Magdalena       |
| Organek Eugeniusz       | Startek Krystyna          | Wilkosz Aneta          | Crisan Viorica        |
| Organek Pawel           | Stiller Krystyna          | Zaboj Agnieszka        | Cuciurean Gavriła     |
| Organek Marta           | Suchanek Urszula          | Zajda Ireneusz         | Cuciurean Maria       |
| Organek Malgorzata      | Swiderek Agnieszka        | Zduniak Anna           | Cuciurean Mihai (12)  |
| Organek David           | Szafraniec Celina         | Zduniak Ewa            | Detesan Maria         |
| Organek Estera          | Szarkowicz Edward         | Zduniak Irena          | Drulea Ileana         |
| Pabian Maria            | Szarkowicz Klaudia        | Zelent Stanislaw       | Dumitru Viorica       |
| Palczak Floriana        | Szarkowicz Mateusz        | Zelent Grazyna         | Farcas Lazar          |
| Parnak Agnieszka        | Szarkowicz Lukasz (13)    | Zelent Wojciech        | Ferenczi Miklos       |
| Parnak Daniel           | Szarkowicz Eugeniusz      | Zelent Malgorzata      | Florea Alexandru      |
| Parnak Anna             | Szarkowicz Helena         | Zubala Zenon           | Florea Penina         |
| Pawlik Daniela          | Szarkowicz Genowefa       | Zubala Anna            | Florea Stephania (12) |
| Pecherek Zofia          | Szarkowicz Henryk         | Zubala Adam (9)        | Florea Lenuta         |
| Pelikan Jan             | Szarkowicz Kazimiera      | Zubala Mikolaj (2)     | Fodor Ana             |
| Pelikan Kazimiera       | Szarkowicz Dorota         | <b>ROMANIA (130)</b>   | Galis Ioan            |
| Pieczykolan Elżbieta    | Szarkowicz Noemi          | Achim Lidia            | Grigor Ioan           |
| Pierz Czeslaw           | Szarkowicz Leszek         | Achim Daniel           | Grigor Camelia        |
| Pierz Otylia            | Szarkowicz Dorota         | Achim Daniela (17)     | Gurita Floare         |
| Pietrzyk Danuta         | Szarkowicz Kamil (14)     | Alexe Carmen           | Gyorgy Lajos          |
| Pietrzyk Ryszard        | Szarkowicz Agnieszka (10) | Balanean Deonisie      | Gyorgy Viorica        |
| Podyma Marzena          | Szarkowicz Tomasz         | Balanean Elisabeta     | Gyorgy Andreea        |
| Podyma Wanda            | Szczepanik Jolanta        | Banc Margareta         | Hirsan Ioan           |
| Pudo Ruta               | Szczepanik-Mruk           | Barbos Denuvia Valeria | Hosu Ioan             |
| Pudo Zofia              | Wieslawa                  | Barlea Maria           | Hosu Magdalena        |
| Raczek Alojzy           | Szewczyk Feliks           | Berinde Ana            | Huluban Raul (17)     |
| Ratkowska Krystyna      | Szewczyk Emilia           |                        | Hurduban Rozalia      |

|                      |                       |                         |                           |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Huzau Ioan           | Sovre Nicolae         | Dowhan Zoriana          | Davis Timothy (7)         |
| Ielciu Mariana       | Sovre Camelia         | Dzunka Mykola           | Earl Jeffrey              |
| Ilea Gheorghe        | Sovre Ioana (17)      | Dzunka Roman(8)         | Earl Margaret             |
| Imreh Maria          | Stan Maria            | Jewczyk Halina          | Earl Jonathan (12)        |
| Ionita Florica       | Stefan Marius         | Jewczyk Nadija (9)      | Earl Emily (4)            |
| Ionus Florin         | Stefan Maria          | Kapyna Stephanija       | Earl Karen                |
| Ionus Paraschiva     | Teanc Emilia          | Krajecka Switlana       | Farrell Jeannine          |
| Ivanciuc Mihai       | Tiplea Maria          | Krajeckij Mychajlo      | Galaguz Julia             |
| Jurju Ioan           | Tosa Semida           | Krajeckij Myroslawa     | Getchel Brendan           |
| Kadar Francisc       | Trestian Octavian     | Krajeckij Wolodymyr (9) | Getchel Karen             |
| Kadar Melinda        | Trif Aurelian         | Krawec Iwan             | Gorecki Robert            |
| Luca Sorinel         | Truta Dorin Ioan      | Lajbida Andriy          | Gorecki Deanna            |
| Luca Angelica        | Truta Maria           | Lajbida Marija (9)      | Griehs Len                |
| Magyari Alexandru    | Turenschi Georgeta    | Lendel Josyp            | Griehs Gretchen           |
| Magyari Erzsebet     | Vary Rebeka           | Lendel Mychajlo         | Griehs Rachel             |
| Magyari Gyongyver    | Voinea Lucia Cristina | Lopaczuk Hanna          | Hagensick Cher-El         |
| Marodi Silvia        | Zoicas Maria          | Manzula Christina       | Hayes Irene               |
| Moldovan Ana         | Zoicas Persida        | Muzyka Marija           | Hull Esther               |
| Muresan Cornel       |                       | Nazaruk Nela            | Jezuit Art                |
| Muresan Ecaterina    | <b>SIBERIA (6)</b>    | Nazaruk Iryna (17)      | Jezuit Barbara            |
| Nanestean Maria      | Ivanova Stephanida    | Noha Anna               | Johnson Gary              |
| Nanestean Persida    | Koboseva Valia        | Ostaszewskij Mykola     | Karavets Stefan           |
| Neagomir Ioan        | Litvinova Zenia       | Pasirskij Zygmund       | Karavets Lia              |
| Neagomir Daniel      | Shijaeva Julia        | Pasirskij Marta         | Kindig Peg                |
| Onisa Gheorghe       | Usachenko Tamara      | Polijowska Ludmila      | Kindig Shelly             |
| Onisa Maria          | Zueva Natasha         | Pryszlak Marja          | Kindig Lydia (15)         |
| Paul Vasile          |                       | Senkiw Wiktor           | Kleppe Nancy              |
| Pescar Aurelia       | <b>SLOVENIA (2)</b>   | Senkiw Nazar (12)       | Knapczynski Kris          |
| Peszkar Nicoleta     | Curic Matjaz          | Symczuk Wladyslaw       | Knapczynski Marta         |
| Peszkar Florin (11)  | Kren Jure             | Symczuk Marija          | Knapczynski Emilia (10)   |
| Pop Ana              |                       | Szkilna Marija          | Knapczynski Sebastian (7) |
| Pop Ioan             | <b>UKRAINE (59)</b>   | Szlachetko Julia        | Koreny Becky              |
| Pop Semida           | Bojczuk Roman         | Szlachetko Oleg         | Koterba Michael           |
| Pop Natalia (14)     | Borowec Bogdam        | Tymczyszyn Igor         | Krupa Timothy             |
| Pop Viorel           | Borowec Oleksandra    | Udod Petro              | Krupa Dawn                |
| Pop Doina            | Borowec Olga          | Ulycznyj Jaroslaw       | Machacek Tom              |
| Pop Denisa (14)      | Borowec Wasyl         | Wityk Oksana            | Machecek Nancy            |
| Pop Segiu (8)        | Borowyk Halina        | Wowk Bogdan             | Nekora Michael            |
| Rachis Dina          | Borowyk Nadija (9)    | Wowk Nazar              | Nekora Nannette           |
| Rosca Viorica        | Chomyk Lubow          | Zabuj Marjan            | Nemesh Mark               |
| Rus Emil             | Chylczuk Mykola       |                         | Nemesh Henriette          |
| Rus Mihai            | Cyganec Marija        | <b>USA (58)</b>         | Rice David                |
| Rusu Natalia         | Czuchilewycz Igor     | Austin Wade             | Siwek Darius              |
| Sasaran Stefan       | Dmytryk Mykola        | Austin Lois             | Siwek Malgorzata          |
| Savan Alexandra (17) | Dmytryk Halina        | Benson Paul             | Tosa Claudia              |
| Serban Maria         | Dmytryk Solomija (8)  | Beyer Bill              | Wardak Marcin             |
| Simion Viorel        | Dmytryk Zoriana (5)   | Crisan Mircea           | Zak Robin                 |
| Simion Maria         | Dmytryk Natalija      | Crisan Emily            |                           |
| Simion Persida       | Dowhan Ewgen          | Davis Mark              | <b>TOTAL: 740</b>         |
| Sisestean Daniela    | Dowhan Ewgenija       | Davis Alicja            |                           |
| Somociuc Floare      | Dowhan Julia          | Davis James (8)         |                           |



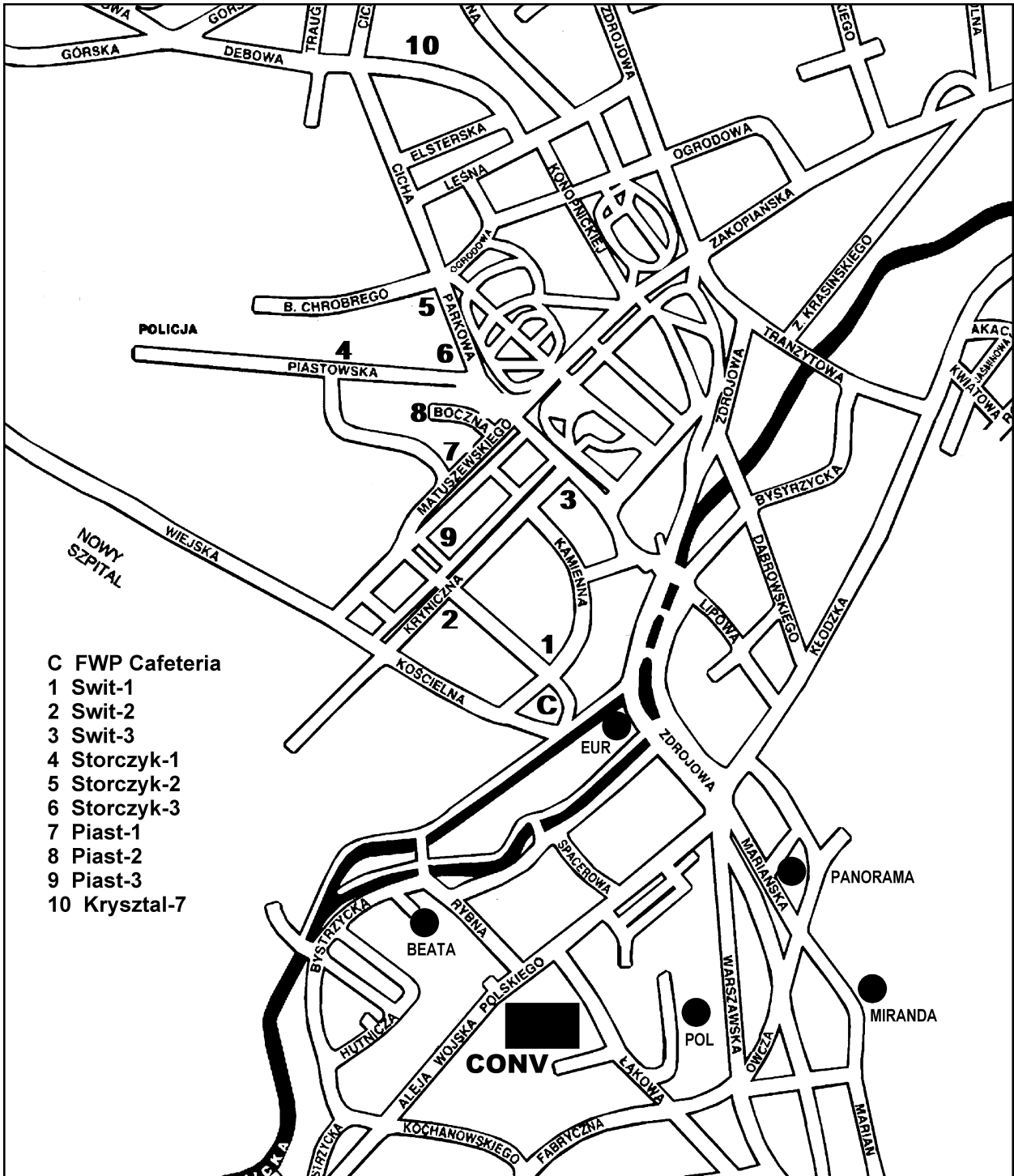
# Attendance Chart

## International Convention Attendance





# Map of Polanica





## *Presentation One*

# Preparing for the Last Days (James 5)

Brother Timothy Alexander (USA)

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*The* Book of James is a beautiful exposition on the art of applying the principles of true Christianity into our daily lives. James' basic message to us is that, even if we understand the truth perfectly, our faith is still useless unless it changes our lives.

### **Trials, Patience, and Wisdom**

In Chapter 1, James begins by encouraging us to respond to trials and temptation with joy, realizing that trials provide the opportunity to develop and test our faith and our Christian maturity.

In verse 4 he says: "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James is here saying: "If you let this process of patiently submitting to trial go on until that endurance is fully developed, then you will find that you have become men of mature character, men of integrity, with no weak spots."

In verse 5, James continues: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James is saying: "If in the process of becoming men of integrity, any of you does not know how to meet a particular problem you are faced with, you have only to ask God, who will help you generously without making you feel guilty that you needed His help."

### **Christian Maturity**

James is here encouraging each of us to carefully apply the maturing influence of the Holy Spirit to our own individual lives in order to develop our own Christian characters as fully as possible; but he is also encouraging each of us to adjust ourselves to the brethren around us so that we may become more functional, more contributive, and more supportive members of the Body of Christ.

In verse 9, James is saying: "The brother who is poor may rejoice because God has raised him to true riches, and the brother who is rich may rejoice because God has shown him his own spiritual poverty." The experiences that the Lord provides chisel each of us into becoming a more valuable member of the community of brethren. Each of us needs chiseling in different areas in order to grow into the image of the perfect man.

So if we look carefully, we can see that one of the primary purposes for our own growth in character is so we can more effectively support our brethren, so we can be a better brother to them. We see an example of this in Chapter 2, verse 1: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord of glory*, with respect of persons." James is talking about spiritual arrogance, the feeling that, for some reason, we are better than another brother. Here he is saying: "Don't impose non-scriptural standards on your brethren and then begin to look down on them for not meeting those standards, which you have artificially created."

This is a very important admonition. We as human beings have a great tendency to feel better about ourselves by looking down on others, by identifying something in our brethren that bothers us and then focusing on it, making that an issue between us, and congratulating ourselves because we feel that we excel in that area.

In Chapter 3, verse 13, James says that, if we fall into this trap, it is an evidence that we lack true wisdom. He says: "Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." He is saying, "If there is a wise and understanding man among you, then let his life be a shining example of the humility that is the natural result of true wisdom."

Those are beautiful admonitions, and they have been important lessons for the New Creation all down through the Gospel Age. But we will find that these lessons from James and specifically the lessons in Chapter 5 are even more important for us, the feet members of the Body of Christ, now during these last days.

### Time Periods Revealed

In Chapter 5 of James, the first 6 verses, James identifies the time period during which the rest of Chapter 5 will specifically apply. And that time period is what he calls in verse 3, “The Last Days,” the period we all are now witnessing in the world around us.

In these first 6 verses of Chapter 5, James pronounces a condemnation upon a group of people he calls “the rich.” If we read his description of the trouble that will come upon “the rich,” we can see that he is describing how the world of mankind prepares for the last days, for Armageddon. This is a *very* timely message because it is exactly what we see around us in the world today.

Let’s look at the first 6 verses in James, Chapter 5. (1) “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.”

(2) “Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.”

(3) “Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.”

(4) “Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth. And the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.”

Our first question of course is, who are “the rich”? Does it mean all people with money? No. From the context of these scriptures, we will see that “the rich” here primarily means wealthy individuals and wealthy corporations who have achieved their wealth by fraudulent means.

Many of the world’s corporate giants all throughout history have achieved financial success by defrauding those who have worked for them. There are many examples of this principle in the world around us. Those of us in the United States have seen many large corporations through skill and deception taking advantage of those who work for them.

And what is promised to those “rich”? In verse 2, James says that their gold and silver will be cankered, (corroded away). The word “cankered” comes

from the Greek word S2728, *katiao*, which means “to rust down” to dissolve down to nothing. And that’s what we have seen recently. The value of corporate and personal assets has substantially decreased and, in some cases, dissolved away to almost nothing.

Verse 3 is saying: The dissolving away of their wealth is a witness against them. It became evidence of their guilt, deception and fraud.

Verse 4 says: “The hire of the laborers” [those who have worked for you] (their just wages that you cheated them out of), the injustice of that situation cries out to God. And that injustice becomes one of the elements that brings about the day of vengeance.

We mention these points for two reasons:

The first reason we mention them is to identify the time period that the Apostle James is talking about. We have seen in the world around us the reality of what James prophesied. In the year 2002, bankruptcy had reached an all time high in the United States, an all time high in the history of the world. We certainly see evidence of silver and gold corroding. And we know that the breakdown of the economic order is just one of the elements of earthly society that needs to be removed in order for the Kingdom of our Lord to be established on this earth.

What a privilege it is to know that the trouble we see around us is really the promise of the time when the world will be judged in righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea!

### “The Just One”

Here is an interesting point: In verse 6 of James 5, we read: “Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.” At the time this was written, the rich elements of society would have been the Jews, and Jesus was the just one they killed. Most of the translations of this verse support the idea that this verse means: “You killed Jesus, and He did not resist you.”

But in the Rotherham translation, there is a slightly different thought. Rotherham says: “Ye sentenced — ye murdered the Righteous one! Is he not arraying himself against you?” And this seems to fit the tenor of the context. Verse 3 says: “Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.”

In verse 6 James is saying “You killed the Lord, and is He not the one who is now opposing you?” And verse 9 says: “The judge is standing at the door” (NAS).

That is a sobering thought. James is saying: “You rich elements of society have been oppressing the poor all throughout history. You even killed the

righteous One, Jesus. But now, in the end of the age, when the power of the rich to oppress is being taken away, isn't it that very same Righteous One who is now opposing you and taking away your power to oppress?" And the answer obviously is yes, it is the returned Lord Jesus who has taken charge of the events of earth in order to destroy the power of evil and establish His kingdom in righteousness and truth.

So the first reason we mention the events in verses 1-6 is to establish the time period James is talking about.

### **Man's Preparation for the "Last Days"**

The second reason we mention it is to discover how the world of mankind prepares for the last days. In the 1980s and 1990s, the world economy grew with what many analysts described as "unprecedented growth," and there was a tremendous amount of attention focused on personal wealth and financial security. This is exactly what James said in verse 3. "Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." In the world's mind, the best way to prepare for the last days is by accumulating wealth in order to obtain financial security. That is what everybody in the world is after.

The point that James is teaching in verses 1-6 is this: "The world prepares for the last days by putting their confidence in wealth; but I want you, the feet members of the New Creation, to prepare for the last days in a different way." And that is what the rest of the chapter of James 5 is about.

### **New Creation Preparation**

In the next 14 verses, James lists 7 areas that we as members of the Body of Christ should pursue in order to prepare for the last days. These are beautiful admonitions. They are admonitions that are very easy to read over without noticing, and they are admonitions that might surprise you, ones we wouldn't have thought to include. But they are admonitions from the Lord, especially tailored for the brethren at the end of the age, you and me.

### **First Admonition**

James' first admonition is found in verses 7 and 8. Verse 7: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming [Greek, presence] of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman [a farmer] waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." The farmer makes a large investment at the beginning of the season, plowing, planting, feeding and cultivating his crop; and God is doing the same thing in the Gospel Age.

All through the Gospel Age, God has invested in his people, feeding them, allowing them to grow, and waiting patiently until the last member of the House of Sons is complete.

Verse 8 says: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming [Greek, presence] of the Lord draweth nigh." James is saying: "Take the example of the farmer's patience, God's patience in the Gospel Age, and pattern your own patience after that." God is patiently waiting for your brethren to fully develop, and you and I can patiently wait also.

James uses the phrase "stablish your hearts." The Greek word here is Strong's No. 4741, *sterizo*, and it means to turn resolutely in a certain direction. When the Apostle Peter was in the Garden of Gethsemane, he boldly attempted to protect Jesus against several well-armed soldiers; but that great river of courage that welled up within Peter, soon had diminished down to a mere trickle when confronted at the fire by a defenseless young girl. He was afraid to even admit that he was with Jesus. In that experience, Peter would deny Jesus three times, and Peter's heart was crushed by guilt.

But Jesus' provision for Peter was beautiful. As they were all leaving the upper room, Jesus told Peter that Peter's denials were coming, and Jesus said that He had already prayed for Peter.

Luke 22:31-32: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." This is exactly the situation that the New Creation is in right now. Verse 32: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

The word "strengthen" here in Luke 22 is the same word as "stablish your hearts" in James 5:8. The Lesson here is, take your own persecutions and hard experiences in stride. Don't allow them to derail you, and use the experience you have gained from going through trial yourself to help strengthen the brethren around you go through theirs. Turn yourself resolutely in the proper direction and encourage those around you to do the same.

So the first admonition is don't become anxious. Don't become fearful for the events you see around you in the world. And don't become angry or impatient when the progress you see in your brethren is slower than you might like to see. The Lord God is waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, the New Creation. You can also patiently wait for the completion of the New Creation. Patiently endure the persecution you experience. The development of that fruit is precious to God, so let it also be precious to you. That is the first admonition tailored specifically by James for the "Last Days."

## Second Admonition

James' second admonition is in verse 9. "Grudge not one against another, Brethren, lest ye be condemned. Behold, the Judge standeth before the door."

James is saying: "Don't allow the wrongs that have been done to you by your brethren (because there definitely will be some) to preoccupy you, to derail you, to keep you from attending to your consecration, to keep you from serving the Lord."

The Greek word for "grudge" is *stenazo*, which means to be in straits, to sigh, to murmur. To sigh is to say, "Oh, no, not this again!" To murmur is to quietly complain about a brother and talk about him behind his back. If it's an issue that's important enough to address, then address it with him straightforwardly and privately. If it's not important enough to do that, then just let it go. Don't go around murmuring about it.

But above all, don't let it preoccupy you. Don't let it handicap you. Realize that the one who will resolve those issues between you and your brethren is "standing right at the door," our returned Lord. Now, he is even closer than "at the door."

So Admonition Number 2 is, let unresolvable contentions go. Work around them. Don't become bitter about them.

## Third Admonition

Admonition Number 3 is found in verses 10 and 11: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

"Take the prophets for an example." What does that really mean? Peter, in 2 Peter 3:2, said that he wrote his epistle to stir up his readers' remembrance so "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets [the Old Testament] and [you may be mindful] of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, [the New Testament]." Peter says his goal is to keep his readers familiar with the Old and New Testaments so that they would have the proper attitude during the time of the presence of the Lord.

That's exactly what James is saying in verses 10 and 11: "Become intimately familiar with the scriptures so that your attitude during the time of the presence of our Lord will be correct." And what is it that should characterize our attitude during that time? He tells us.

Notice the word "patience" occurs in verses 7, 8, 10 and 11. In verse 11, "Patience" comes from the Greek word 5281 which is *hupomone*. It means "Hopeful endurance, cheerful endurance, constancy or waiting." In verses 7, 8 and 10, "patience" comes from the Greek word 3115, *makrothumia*, which means "forbearance, fortitude, inner strength."

So in verse 10, James is saying, Look at the lives of my faithful men of old, as recorded in the scriptures, and draw from them an inner strength.

In 1 Timothy 4:15, the Apostle Paul is saying the same thing: "Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." And in Romans 15:4, Paul says: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

So Admonition Number 3 is, become intimately familiar with the scriptures and draw inner strength from them.

## Fourth Admonition

Admonition Number 4 is found in verse 12. "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath. But let your yea be yea; and your nay be nay; lest ye fall into condemnation."

In the United States, when a person is called into a court of law as a witness, they are asked to take an oath and swear that they will tell only the truth. Some Christian people say that they will not swear to tell the truth, but they will affirm or guarantee that they will tell the truth. They use this scripture to support this idea.

And our question is, is this really what this scripture means, or is there more? If that is really all this scripture means, then why is it in this context and why does James begin verse 12 by saying: "But above all, brethren ..."?

We think that "Don't take an oath in court" is a very mechanical interpretation, and that this scripture means much more than that. There are many scriptures that talk about what effect speaking the truth should have in our lives. Zechariah 8:16, 17 says: "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor, execute judgment of truth and peace in your gates. And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor, and love no false oath, for all these are things that I hate."

So what is James saying in verse 12? Most of what he has said so far in Chapter 5 has to do with our own personal integrity and how that affects our relationship with our brethren around us. This verse is the same.



Sadly enough, especially during these “last days,” there is so much opportunity and temptation among brethren for dissimulation, politicking, posturing, even maneuvering or scheming. These are characteristics of the world and, sadly, they can creep into the fellowship.

James is here saying: “Above all, Brethren, have a reputation for open truthfulness. Let truthfulness and open sincerity be a characteristic part of your life, so all will know that you speak the truth at all times, and oaths will not be necessary to alert your brethren that you are now telling the truth.

So Admonition Number 4: Be consistently open and sincere with your Brethren. Have a reputation for open truthfulness and sincerity.

### **Fifth Admonition**

Admonition Number 5 is found in verse 13. “Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.”

The word “afflicted” comes from the Greek word 2553, *kakopatheo*, which means to undergo hardship. The Diaglott translation says: “If any one among you suffers evil, let him pray. If any one is cheerful, let him sing praises.”

James is here saying: “Don’t be discontented, angry or frustrated by the circumstances you find yourself in. If you have hard experiences, be grateful for your lot and stay close to the Lord in prayer. If you have light experiences, be thankful for them and stay close to the Lord in praise.”

The Apostle Paul repeats this same admonition in Philippians 4:11-13 “... I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

So Admonition Number 5 is, adapt yourself to the experiences in which you find yourself, and be content, remembering the Lord has allowed them. When you have trials, stay close to the Lord in prayer; when you have blessings, stay close to the Lord in praise.

### **Sixth Admonition**

Admonition Number 6 is found in verses 14 and 15. “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up. And if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”

The word “sick” in verse 14 comes from the Greek word *astheneo*, which means to be weak, just general weakness. The word “sick” in verse 15 comes from the Greek word *kamno*, which means to become weary as a result of toil. Both words seem to indicate a spiritual weakness, either as a result of sin and the resulting alienation from God, or as a result of just becoming tired of the struggle and pulling back from efforts to serve.

This is a condition that brethren have to contend with in this day and age. In Hebrews 12:3, the Apostle Paul admonished us to safeguard against this tendency by paying close attention to the example Jesus provided. Verse 3 from the Diaglott says: “For consider Him attentively who has endured such opposition from sinners, so that you may not be wearied, being discouraged in your souls.”

That is action that we can take when we see ourselves slipping into a state of spiritual weakness. We can carefully examine the scriptures and appreciate Jesus’ experiences. We can derive inspiration from His example. We can admire His perfect obedience and cherish the fact that he is now our own personal advocate. And we can make the fact of His sympathetic High Priesthood a daily reality in our lives through our personal prayer.

But James here in verses 14-15 is telling us that there is another action that we can take, and that is: “Take advantage of one of the blessings of fellowship. Seek out the brethren whose spiritual lives you respect, and ask them for their prayers and support. Be ready to give up any sin that may be attached to the spiritual weakness you are experiencing, and fully expect the blessing of the Holy Spirit in your life.”

One way that you can expect the blessing of the Holy Spirit in your life is by carefully and prayerfully attempting to regain your spiritual strength. Make it a goal that you systematically pursue. Work with brethren whose lives you can see are blessed by a measure of the Holy Spirit. Work alongside them and emulate their attitude toward devotion.

Another way you can expect the blessing of the Holy Spirit in your life is to ask God for it. When we ask God for a greater measure of His spirit, we must be ready to humbly acknowledge the need in our lives, acknowledge any sin in our lives and humbly attempt to resolve it.

Luke 11:13 tells us this: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

Look at the 1st chapter of Isaiah. Isaiah describes the rejection by God of natural Israel in the harvest

of the Jewish Age, but it also describes the rejection by God of nominal spiritual Israel in the harvest of the Gospel Age. During the present day, these verses become a condemnation of nominal Christendom.

Verse 6 says: "From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." And that's what we are seeing today as the sins of the past are coming to the surface among many religious institutions.

In contrast to that condition, James is giving us Admonition Number 6. How important is it for each of us to allow the Holy Spirit to work in our own lives and for each of us to appreciate the resource we have in our brethren, especially our more mature brethren, those who have struggled along the narrow way and in whose lives we can see evidence of the operation of God's spirit. Look for it there and try to effect the same results in your own life.

### **Seventh Admonition**

Admonition Number 7 is found in verse 16. "Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Does this scripture mean that we should go around telling our brethren about all the sins that we have committed? No. Then what does it mean?

It means: Hold each other accountable. Be willing to hold your brethren accountable and be willing to allow your brethren to hold you accountable.

Matthew 18:15-17 is a very well-known scripture. It is Jesus' instructions on how to hold each other accountable, instructions on how brethren should interact with each other within a mutually accountable environment, the ecclesia.

Be genuinely concerned about the lives of your brethren. When issues arise, be disciplined enough to address them in the appropriate manner. And above all, be willing to let your brethren hold you accountable for your actions, your behavior, your words.

In politics, in organized religion and in other areas of society, we see many examples of those who try to hold others accountable. And most of the time, these efforts are rather unsuccessful. It seems as though no one is willing to admit to anything unless they are forced. There is a general attitude of strife and distrust.

And what is this attitude driven by? It is driven by personal pride, selfishness and the fear of losing our reputation. We would expect this attitude in the

world. Sadly, though, we sometimes find this attitude among the brethren, too.

### **The Importance of Matthew 18**

The Body of Christ is complete by the contribution of each member. But the Body can only function properly when each member demonstrates personal humility. When personal humility is not demonstrated by each member, unity is destroyed and the Body becomes dysfunctional in some regard. When the procedure outlined by our Lord in Matthew 18 is not successful among brethren, it is usually because of personal pride on the part of one or both parties.

And this is the issue being addressed by James in chapter 5, verse 16. Be willing to own up to your failures and weaknesses, and work with your brethren. Allow yourself to be held accountable by your brethren. Realize that you are a part of a local community of the Body of Christ.

Jude 21-23 addresses this same issue.

(21) "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

(22) "And of some, have compassion, making a difference."

(23) "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

Jude is saying: When considering brethren who need to be approached about their conduct, make a distinction. Some need to be approached very tenderly, compassionately, with a sympathetic nudge in the right direction. Others need a more forceful approach before they will see their error. And always remember, that the goal is to "Gain thy brother." This is a very sobering admonition, because positive results are very hard to achieve.

### **Pull Them Out of the Fire**

There is another lesson though on this point. Let's focus on the phrase in Jude 23: "pulling them out of the fire." The brother who had sinned to some degree and needed his brethren's help to be converted from the error of his way is referred to in Jude 23 as being "pulled out of the fire." Zechariah 3:1-4 suggests that God, through the merit of the Lord Jesus, does that same sort of thing for each of us. And he uses the same type of language.

Zechariah was a young prophet in Israel during the time of the rebuilding of the Temple by Zerubbabel. The Israelites were beset by numerous troubles and difficulties in their task, and Zechariah's job was to use the word of God to encourage and stimulate

the Israelites to continue and complete their task, completing the temple.

Reprint 2521 says of the prophecies contained in the book of Zechariah: "It is not until we realize that these prophecies, although having some force and application to the times in which they were written, have a special force and application to us as the antitypical Israel and to the building of the antitypical temple, that we get the true force, value and beauty of these prophecies." Ultimately, these prophecies are talking to us about the completion of the Temple of the Living God, the New Creation.

Look at Zechariah 3:1. Joshua here represents Jesus and ultimately the whole Christ, head and body.

(1) "And he [the Angel] showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him."

(2) "And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan, even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee"

Here, God, who does the selecting of the New Creation, is saying to Satan: "Don't resist (accuse) the New Creation, because I am choosing them." And then, continuing in Zechariah 3:2, he ties this into our study in James: "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" From God's perspective, we have all been "plucked out of the fire."

In verse 3, Joshua's head represents Jesus. Joshua's body, the part covered with garments, represents his body, the church.

(3) "Now, Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel."

(4) "And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him, he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment."

### **Robe of Righteousness**

This scripture is a beautiful description of the blessing of the Robe of Christ's Righteousness, but it also gives us a hint of the disposition we should have when approaching our brethren with a comment on their behavior. It is important to remember that we all have been plucked from the fire and covered with the new garments of righteousness.

Verses 17 and 18 of James 5 emphasize the value of prayer on our behalf, giving the example of Elijah who prayed for a drought and then prayed to relieve the drought. Of course this example from Elijah's life was a powerful example of how prayer can work in our lives, but I wonder why this specific example

was used by James here. Could it be he's making an analogy to a very long, spiritually dry condition in our lives? If so, he's suggesting that, even in very spiritually dry conditions, we, like Elijah, have the power to change that through prayer.

Verses 19 and 20 emphasize the importance of helping our brethren and, indeed, having our brethren help us make choices which will keep us from being led away by the world, the flesh and the adversary, stressing what a privilege it is to help our brethren to keep in the narrow way.

This is the same privilege Jesus offered to Peter in the Garden just hours before Peter's most trying experience, where Jesus said: "Peter, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

So James has intimated that, in the Last Days, the world will have financial trouble and the Lord's people will have relationships trouble. Through these scriptures, however, the Lord offers us seven admonitions specifically designed to help us prepare for these Last Days and avoid the spirit of the world in our hearts. Instead of putting our confidence in wealth, as the world does, let us put our confidence in these:

### **Concluding Thoughts**

1. Don't become anxious, angry or fearful. If God can wait for the precious fruit of the earth, so can we, both in ourselves and in our brethren.

2. Let unresolvable contentions go. Work around them. Don't become bitter about them.

3. Become intimately familiar with the scriptures and draw your inner strength from them.

4. Be consistently open and sincere with your brethren. Say what you mean and mean what you say.

5. Adapt yourselves to the experiences in which you find yourself and be content with what the Lord allows.

6. Allow the healing power of the Holy Spirit to work individually in your own life and collectively among the Body of Christ.

7. Be mutually accountable to each other. Lovingly hold others accountable and allow them to hold you accountable.

The last days are being accomplished around us. Let us take these admonitions from our brother James and let them strengthen our resolve and soften our hearts. And then, instead of what he says to the worldly man in verse one, he will then say to us: "Go to now, you Sons of God, sing and rejoice for the blessings that have come upon you."



## *Presentation Two*

# Sacrifices for Sins

Brother Adolphe Debski (France)

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*Dear* Brethren, dear Friends of the Truth, dear Youth, may grace and peace be multiplied unto you! Our subject is “Sacrifices for Sins.”

Let us briefly consider the different stages of our Lord’s life in connection with the sacrifices for sins. Our starting point is the baptism of the Lord. At his baptism, Jesus gave up his own will to accomplish the will of God. God’s will was that Jesus would offer himself as a sacrifice for sins, as a ransom for all.

And this is what our Lord Jesus did. He presented himself as an offering to God. Then, during 3½ years, Jesus accomplished everything that was prophesied about him in the word of God, until the time when he declared on the cross: “It is finished! And he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit” (John 19:30, NAS).

His offering, which began at Jordan, was completed at Calvary. It is the same for the ransom. At Jordan, our Lord Jesus presented himself to be a ransom for all, and at Calvary, the gift of his earthly life and all his earthly rights was fully accomplished. In other words, the ransom was then deposited, and became available.

Let us note the differences between the ransom and the sacrifices for sins.

Jesus was the only one able to provide the ransom price, because he was a perfect man, holy and without sin, the exact equivalent of Adam before his transgression. Only the sacrificial death of Jesus could be the price for the redemption of Adam and all mankind. This redemption price was, and still is, all that was necessary and sufficient. Nothing more to this price needs to be added.

Regarding the sacrifices for sins, on the other hand, it seems that God adds special trials of faith and obedience in order to develop our character and our faithfulness to God that can withstand anything, and this in order to be esteemed worthy of the promised glory. These sufferings have been foretold for the Lord Jesus, who learned obedience by the things which he suffered (Hebrew 5:8). And those suffer-

ings have been foretold for the Church, according to Colossians 1:24 and 1 Peter 1:11.

According to *Tabernacle Shadows*, those sacrifices for sins show how the ransom is applied: first for the church, then for the world.

### **Why First Applied for the Church?**

It is to allow the Church members to be called and proven in order to be a part of the Little Flock, of the Church class, and to be joined to the Lord Jesus, to cooperate with him and under his guidance in the ages to come, as a Bride stays with her bridegroom and works continually with him.

Let us consider the redemption and the development of the Church class. Forty days after his resurrection, the Lord Jesus ascended to heaven and presented himself before God, for us (Hebrew 9:24), and indeed, he did what Aaron used to do as a figure every year, when he entered the Most Holy, on the Day of Atonement. There, he sprinkled the Mercy Seat that covered the ark of the covenant; once with the blood of the bullock, for his sins and those of his household.

In the same way, the Lord Jesus, figuratively speaking, sprinkled the Mercy Seat of Divine Justice with his own blood for the members of his body, the Church class, as well as the members of the household of faith, which is the Great Company. Consequently, purification was done for the sins of the Church of the firstborn (Hebrews 1:3); this group was freed from Adamic condemnation and those of the nation of Israel who had passed from Moses to Christ, were freed, in addition, from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13). So, there was no longer any condemnation for those who were in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Likewise, the Church was redeemed by the ransom price, paid for her (1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18).

Then was accomplished the words of Revelation 14:3-4, “... and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were

redeemed from the earth ... These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”

These 144,000 have been redeemed from men. This confirms the fact that all men have not yet been redeemed. They have been redeemed as firstfruits, which means that the other fruits, the other people, the world, will be redeemed afterwards, and will indeed be redeemed during the second appearance of our Lord Jesus before God.

While the Church class as a whole was redeemed when our Lord Jesus appeared before God, nevertheless, for each individual Church class member, this redemption becomes effective at the moment of consecration, whether it was at the beginning, during, or at the end of the Gospel Age. This explanation is based upon the last thought of the Wise and Faithful Servant, who explained that the Ransom was deposited or given at the time of the Cross, but not paid then. This explanation appears in the foreword of Volume 5 and in some Reprint articles published by that Servant during the last years of his life. The merit of the blood of Christ was first applied to the Church class.

### **Properties of His Flesh**

We still need to say a few words about the properties of his flesh. The Lord's flesh represents Jesus as a perfect human being. Jesus did not lose his right to life as a perfect human being, because he did not sin. On the contrary, he has accomplished the sacrifice of his perfect humanity. The world of mankind will benefit from it in the future, but the Church class is benefiting from it now. The merit of the Lord, included in his flesh, contributes now to the justification of the Church class.

Let us note that the combination of the properties of the blood of Christ with those of his flesh is what allows us to reach a full justification, the “justification to life” mentioned in Romans 5:18. Indeed, the blood provides the redemption, frees from the Adamic condemnation and purifies from sins, but the flesh allows the return to human perfection. Now, this “justification to life” is obtained by faith and allows us to reach the heavenly life through consecration.

Mankind's justification, on the contrary, in the future, will be the equivalent of an actual return to human perfection, that will require perfect obedience to God's Law and will make possible everlasting life on earth. This justification is a work done by the risen Lord, as a high priest (Hebrews 5:5, 6).

The Apostle declares that Jesus, our Lord, “... was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25). Our justification

is by faith during the Gospel Age. For the world of mankind, it will be during the Kingdom, through works. This scripture shows the importance of the resurrection of Christ in the redemption work. If it is important that Jesus had to die, his resurrection was necessary to accomplish all the work required by his death and can be summarized in one word: Justification.

The members of the Church class, regarding their human nature, are represented in the Tabernacle by a goat given by the people and called “the Lord's goat.” But God had foreseen that some of those members would not deserve the glory and honor that was offered to them. They will lose the privilege to participate in the offering for sin, in the sufferings of Christ. They will lose the place that was promised to them and if they have not committed sins leading to Second Death, they will be given a lesser reward on a spiritual plane. These ones are the members of the Great Company; their human nature is represented by the second goat, the scape goat, provided also by the people.

We must note that God does not arbitrarily determine who will belong to the class of the Lord's goat and who will be of the scape goat class. It is to show this fact that the goats were chosen by the casting of lots (Leviticus 16:8). Let us also notice that since both goats were provided by the people, the bullock, on the contrary, was brought by Aaron himself. It was “his bullock” according to Leviticus 16:6. It is shown to us that the origin of the perfect man, Jesus, represented by this bullock, had to be different from the origin of the Little Flock and the Great Company. The origin of the Lord Jesus was heavenly. On the contrary, the called ones are from the world, the sinful Adamic race, represented by the “Sons of Israel.”

The expression “his bullock” means that it was Aaron's sacrifice. Let us notice how this expression, applied to Aaron, fits Jesus. The sacrifice accomplished by the Lord was “his” in the fullest sense. It was “his,” not only because he had provided the sacrifice, but it was “his” especially because he had given his own human life.

There exists another difference between the bullock and the two goats. Those two goats were placed before God, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, as it is written in Leviticus 16:7, and lots were cast upon them. Each of them had to go through a personal treatment. The goat was placed before God. Is there a reason for this? It seems that there is one.

The Hebrew word translated as “placed” is *amad* (Strong's Concordance #5975) and in other places has been translated as: to stand, to establish, to

raise, to resuscitate. The Dictionary of the Old Testament, H.W.F. Genesisius, on page 637, gives the following explanation for the word *amad*: to make stand, to raise, to establish in duty, to make hold firmly, to elevate. Those different words, applied to fallen human beings, deprived of the grace of God and communion with him, correspond perfectly to justification. Each called one, each sinner coming from the Adamic race, needs to be lifted up before God.

But Jesus was perfect. He did not need to be justified, because he was just. He did not need to be lifted up before God. Therefore, it was proper that the bullock, representing his sacrifice, was not placed before God. And it was not. Also, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, the ceremony for purification of someone who was a leper took place, according to God's instructions (Leviticus 14:1-32, especially verses 3 and 11).

We understand why the two goats were placed at this same location, since they were representing called ones, coming from a world contaminated with the leprosy of sin and needing healing and purification. But we understand why the bullock wasn't placed there also, because he was representing the one who was innocent and separate from sinners.

### **The Lord's Goat**

Let us consider the offering for sins of the Lord's goat. According to Leviticus 16:15, after Aaron made the purification of his sins and those of his household, he offered the Lord's goat as a sacrifice for the sins of the people.

In the same way, Jesus, on the Day of Pentecost, first accomplished the purification of "his" sins, that is the sins of the members of "his body," the Little Flock, but not for his own sins, because he had none. He accomplished a purification of the sins of his "household," which is, here, the members of the Great Company. Then, he took care of the sacrifice of the members of his body, the church class, and he made the offering to the Heavenly Father of all the members of this little flock, who have been called during the Gospel Age.

Regarding Jesus, he offered himself to God when he consecrated at Jordan, and the holy Spirit that he received, was an evidence that God had accepted this offering. But the completion of this offering took 3½ years, and ended on the cross.

It is the same for the Church class, but the duration is much longer. The sending of the holy Spirit to the early Church on the Day of Pentecost is proof that God had accepted Jesus' offering, but the completion of the offering for sins takes place during the

Gospel Age, and will end when the last member of the Church class goes beyond the veil.

This offering of the body of Christ was shown in the sacrifice of the Lord's goat, accomplished by Aaron, the high priest, on the Day of Atonement. However, let us note that this goat could also represent the sacrifice of each consecrated one, individually, during the Gospel Age. It could also represent the sacrifice of the last member of the Church class. In fact, when the last member of the Little Flock will have finished their earthly course, then the sacrifice of the antitypical Lord's goat will be complete.

### **Realization of this Offering**

Let us talk now about the realization of this offering. If the offering of the Church class was presented by our Lord Jesus to the Heavenly Father on the Day of Pentecost, its realization started also on the Day of Pentecost, when the Apostles and all the disciples gathered in Jerusalem received the holy Spirit. Each consecrated one, accepted by God, is also begotten by the holy Spirit in order to develop spiritually, and to eventually be born of the Spirit.

This begetting is done on the basis of consecration, decided freely by the one who comes closer to God. Once this decision is made, Jesus as a high priest takes charge of this consecrated one, because it is our Lord Jesus, the high priest, who accomplishes the sacrifice. The merit of Jesus is applied to each consecrated one, thus making the sacrifice of the consecrated pleasing and acceptable to God.

The consecrated one is then justified in justification of life and then he is "straightened up," "lifted up" before God. The high priest, Jesus, then presents him to God. And God, accepting this justified sacrifice, begets him with the holy Spirit. The acceptance of the sacrifice by God and the begetting of the holy Spirit are shown in the slaying of the Lord's goat. This acceptance and this begetting follow immediately the justification of life, which happened immediately after the decision of consecration of the person, and became possible because of the application of the merit of Jesus' sacrifice to the consecrated.

The consecrated, having received justification of life, obtained the imputation of their right to a perfect human life on earth, but they renounce this right for a heavenly life with Christ. Consequently, the consecrated becomes a New Creature in Christ, exhorted by the holy Scriptures to strive to make their calling and election sure. Until the end of their course, the New Creature needs the merit of Christ, which is his blood and flesh, to maintain their justification. It is good to note, dear brethren, that this

explanation is based upon the last thoughts expressed by the wise and faithful Servant.

### **The Scapegoat**

Regarding the scapegoat, it is written: "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:21, 22).

We learn from these two verses that the iniquities, the transgressions, the sins of the children of Israel, were laid upon the goat's head, to be taken away into the wilderness. A question arises: What were those sins, if atonement had already been made for the sins of the people through the Lord's goat?

The sins were wilful sins, committed against light and knowledge, against the Law. Those sins were not expiated by the sacrifice of the Lord's goat, neither by the sacrifice of the bullock, because both the bullock and the Lord's goat were offered for the expiation of sins committed in ignorance.

It is clearly stated in Hebrews 9:7 that the sins covered by the sacrifices for sins, given on the day of atonement, were covering unwilling sins. However, not all Bible translations render correctly what we find in the Greek text of the New Testament.

We read, starting with verse 6 in Hebrews the 9th chapter [note: Diaglott rendering substituted for "la Bible du Semeur" by the translator], "Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests performing services enter the first tabernacle, at all times: but into the second the high priest alone, once annually, not without blood, which he offers on behalf of himself, and the sins of ignorance of the people."

It clearly appears that the sins placed upon the head of the scapegoat could only be wilful sins. The scapegoat pictures the Great Company, a class which has existed since the beginning of the Gospel Age, but seems to grow in size during the Harvest time in which we live. The sufferings of the members of the Great Company will atone for sins committed in full knowledge by the world.

Here is the explanation we find about this in the Expanded Biblical Comments, on page 52, regarding Leviticus 16:10 "... Make an atonement — The scapegoat class will have a secondary part in the expiation of sin by having their sufferings applied as atonement for certain wilful sins of the world — not Adamic sin." It is good to keep in mind this impor-

tant point. Nevertheless, it seems that some serious sins, mentioned in the Bible, will require punishments, as we will mention later.

We need also to remember that the sacrifice of the Lord does not atone for wilful sins, but for Adamic sins and unwilful sins. This rule is applied now to the Church. The unwilful sins of the Church members will be forgiven through repentance, with the help of the cleansing blood of the Lord. However, partially wilful sins will require both repentance and also corrections from God.

### **The Lord's Goat and the Scapegoat**

Let us see what are the main differences between the Lord's goat and the scapegoat. The Lord's goat had the same treatment as the bullock: as a sacrifice for sins. It was slain, the blood sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat, the fat burned upon the brazen altar, and the skin, flesh, and dung burnt outside the camp.

The scapegoat was charged with the iniquities of the children of Israel, but was not put to death, and the blood was not taken into the Most Holy. This shows that the scapegoat was not a sacrifice for sins. Instead, the scapegoat was taken into the wilderness, and left there. The members of the Great Company also do not have part in the offering for sins. They are delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord (1 Corinthians 5:5, 1 Timothy 1:20).

Their sufferings are not willing, but forced; which is why they don't deserve the reward promised to the faithful members of the Little Flock, which is immortality, the divine nature, a place on the throne with our Lord Jesus.

The members of the Great Company will constitute the heavenly temple itself (1 Corinthians 3:16). The Great Company in this temple will assist Christ and his Church in the work of the kingdom, like the Levites served the priests in the Jewish Age. Nevertheless, even if their sufferings were unwilling, they will have some value in God's eyes, since He will use them to compensate for the wilful sins of humanity. This is, undoubtedly, the merit of Christ that, imputed to these members, give to their sufferings this compensating value. Their destiny is a heavenly reward.

However, there is a role that the Great Company will play. According to the holy Scriptures, after the Church is complete and gathered next to Jesus, the members of the Great Company still living will have a mission to accomplish, to proclaim the message: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7).



How will they know that the time has come for this proclamation? There is a picture in the Old Testament that may guide us. It is the separation of Elijah from Elisha, and the departure of Elijah. A chariot of fire led by horses separated both men, and Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind. This is the separation of the Little Flock from the Great Company.

The chariot and the horses of fire indicate the severe trials, emphasized by the whirlwind. Elisha saw Elijah enter this fire and be taken up in the whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11-12). This helps us to understand that the members of the Great Company living in the final period of the Harvest will witness those last trials coming upon the Little Flock, and the Great Company will understand from this, or in some other way, that the Little Flock will have been completed. This will encourage the last members of the Great Company to publish the message regarding the marriage of the Lamb, which we just quoted.

This Great Company, with the other members developed during the Gospel Age, will participate later in the marriage supper, when they will have finished their earthly course, through trials symbolized by the crossing of the Jordan by Elisha, on the way back (Revelation 19:9, 2 Kings 2:14).

### **Second Sprinkling**

We arrive at the second sprinkling of the blood of Christ on the Mercy Seat of Divine Justice. After the Church members and the Great Company will have passed beyond the vial, and the unfaithful ones destroyed by Second Death, the merit of Christ that was imputed to them will be freed, and the Lord will again have all his merit at his disposal.

He will appear a second time before God and will accomplish a second application of his blood, but this time it will be for the sins of the whole world, for the transgressions of men done in ignorance. This will correspond to the second sprinkling done by Aaron in the Most Holy, using the blood of the Lord's goat. In reality, it will be the blood of the Lord imputed to the Church, and used by them during the Gospel Age. The blood "passes" through the Church, "the body of Christ." It is the blood of the Lord first, because it is the blood imputed by him to the Church, and gives all its value to the offering of the Church.

Without Jesus' blood, the sacrifice of the Church would have no value in God's eyes and could not constitute an offering for sin. Then, it is also the blood of Jesus because the Lord is the Head of "the body of Christ," of the Church, and what belongs to "the body" belongs to the "Head." Since "the body" belongs to "the Head."

The blood of the Lord, being the redemption price, its application for the benefit of the world, will

correspond to the payment of the Ransom in favor of humanity. The world will then be ransomed, legally, and will be transferred to Jesus. This transfer is important. It will allow the Lord to stand between God and men, and to start his mediatorial work.

Humanity will then be freed from Adamic condemnation; the purification of the sins committed in ignorance will be dealt with. Regarding the wilful sins of man, they will be compensated for by the sufferings of the Great Company, but also, in some cases, by special punishments foretold in the accounts of Divine Justice.

### **Divine Justice**

Let us see what constitutes the accountability of Divine Justice. They are mentioned on page 5874 of the Reprints (paragraph 2), in the article entitled "The Ransom and the Sin Offering," published in 1916. "Before the new dispensation can rightly be ushered in with all its blessings, the world's accounts must be fully squared ... Then the accounts of justice having been squared in that great time of trouble, the blessings of Messiah's Kingdom will immediately begin."

We have an indication of what these accounts will be, through the words Jesus said to the Jews in Matthew 23:34-36. "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."

And indeed, on this generation at the time of the Lord fell a great trouble, linked to the wrath of God, recorded in 1 Thessalonians 2:6. This great trouble happened in AD 70, ending the Jewish Age. The Jewish nation perished almost entirely. The blood of the just ones mentioned by the Lord, fell then indeed on the generation at his time. On this generation fell also the blood of the Lord himself, in accordance with the words of the Jews: "Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25). This blood fell upon their children in the following centuries. It was a settlement of Divine Justice for serious acts done centuries before.

The Gospel Age will end also in the phase of the great trouble announced by Jesus in Matthew 24:21, and we can already see the development of this trouble in the world. The blood of the "saints" will then be avenged, according to Revelation 6:10 and

19:2. Plagues will be poured on “Babylon the Great,” because of her sins (Revelation 18:4-6). The world will be punished for its evil (Isaiah 13:11). But those accounts once settled, and the Great Tribulation passed, the Kingdom of Christ will be manifested to the whole world and a new era will start. This will be the era of peace and happiness and of the return of mankind to their Creator.

There is a picture that illustrates well this beginning in the world, of blessing all the families of the earth. This picture is the sealing of the Law Covenant, which occurred after the exodus from Egypt, at Sinai, between God and the children of Israel. Here is what we find in Hebrews chapter 9 verses 19 and 20: “For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you’ ” (NAS).

In the antitype, when the New Covenant will have been inaugurated by the Kingdom of the Messiah, the blood of Christ, represented in the blood of Jesus and also the blood of the sacrifices of his associates, the members of the Church, will serve first to the sprinkling of the Divine Law; satisfaction will have been done to this Law. This will be equivalent to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ on the Mercy Seat of Divine Justice. The New Covenant will then be sealed.

This will be the foundation that will allow the transfer of all humanity by the Father, to the Kingdom of the Messiah, like we previously mentioned. Then will follow the work of the sprinkling of the people by the means of the blood, the work of purification of mankind, giving to men the advantages assured by the redeeming blood.

Then also, all mankind, awakened from the sleep of death, will be invited to eat the Bread of Heaven, the flesh of Jesus (John 6:51). But the privilege that they won’t have then will be the communion with the blood and the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16). This communion is the privilege to participate in the sufferings of Christ, into his baptism into death, which will allow the participation in the promised spiritual favors; this privilege will not be extended to mankind in the Millennial Kingdom. Nevertheless, mankind will then have the opportunity to benefit from the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, to reach eternal life on earth.

This is a big picture of the Plan of God, considered in the aspect of the sacrifices for sins. It talks to us in the way that God chose for his only begotten Son, whom he loved, and for the Bride He found good to give to his Son.

It is a way of suffering, to reach eternal glory; it is a way of humility, to reach the supreme reward. May these thoughts motivate us to have more reverence for our Heavenly Father, and encourage and strengthen us to persevere in the Master’s footsteps. Amen!

## Presentation Three

# Bible Prophecy Today

Brothers Len Griehs, Wade Austin, David Rice (USA)

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[Bro. Len Griehs] *Good* afternoon, brethren. Do you see God's hand at work in our world today? Israel is changing. Religion is changing. Countries are changing. There is war and rumors of war. How should Bible Students view this change?

### Gathering the Nations

Zephaniah 3:8 says, "Wait for Me, declares the LORD ... My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal" (NAS).

### Political

God is gathering nations through breaking down the traditional nation-states. This began when the League of Nations was formed in 1919. It grew to 90 members before collapsing in World War II. The United Nations was formed in 1945 with 50 countries and today has 191 member states, with the stated purpose "to maintain international security."

We should observe as Bible Students that this type of organization may be a precursor of an order to promote the "general good" of all nations and peoples. Today no country can operate according to its own purpose and will. Organizations such as the U.N. stand ready to interfere if it believes the "general good" is threatened.

### Economic

God is also gathering nations through globalization of commercial interests. This movement is part of the fulfillment of Revelation 16:12 which I believe refers to the economic systems of Babylon. "The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east" (NAS).

The Euphrates River was one of the most important rivers in the world. It formed a boundary for Mesopotamia, the "land between the rivers" (Tigris

and Euphrates). The Euphrates flows 1800 miles from the Armenian mountains to the Persian Gulf, and provided much of the water that supported development of ancient Mesopotamian culture.

The Tigris-Euphrates valley gave birth to civilization — Assyria, Babylon, and Sumer. For centuries the river formed the eastern limit of Roman control. During the peak of the Eastern Roman Empire, art and literature centers flourished along the Euphrates. In prophecy the Euphrates may refer to the commercial life of Babylon. During the sixth plague, God's wrath is poured upon these commercial interests. As the world supports a single economic system, massive financial disaster becomes possible. While organizations such as the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have been important to this development, none has been as momentous as the emergence of the European Union.

### European Union

Developing from 11 countries to today's 15 with 292 million inhabitants, the European Union is paramount to world economics. The EU gross domestic product is over \$6 trillion dollars and controls 19 percent of world exports — about 5 percentage points more than the US. Brethren, the formation of the European Union is a most important event in gathering the nations to Armageddon.

The dream to unite Europe began in the days of Charlemagne (Charles the Great). Born in 742 in Northern Europe, "By the sword and the cross" he restored order to post-Medieval Western Europe. When he was 26, Charlemagne and his brother Carloman inherited the kingdom of the Franks. Carloman died three years later and Charlemagne became sole ruler of the kingdom. Europe was in turmoil. The Franks were rejecting education and religion. The Saxons in the north were pagans. The Roman Catholic church was attempting to seize land from the Lombard kingdom in Italy.

Charlemagne began what would be a 30-year military campaign to strengthen and unify the land. By 800 AD, he was undisputed ruler of Western Europe — what is now France, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, parts of Italy, Germany, Austria and Spain. He restored much of the old Roman Empire and began the development of modern Europe.

I suggest that The European Union is the final result of Charlemagne's effort and now plays the important role which Brother Russell suggested in Volume 4 was then the Common Market. It can be the way of gathering Christendom to Armageddon. As predicted of Nebuchadnezzar's image, "In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom ... some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle ... but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery" (Daniel 2:41-43). At least 25 other regional groups of "brittle" countries are forming to compete with Europe and further establish a one world order in the commercial market.

### **Building to a Crisis**

Wars between nations are less important than trade between nations. People will sacrifice ideals, social principles and religion in exchange for prosperity. This will be broken by the full brunt of this sixth plague — worldwide depression. Economic unity allows the outflow of confidence in one country to trigger outflow of investment from another. In 1997 the monetary unit of Thailand, the baht, was devalued and initiated a crisis that impacted Russia, Mexico, Canada and Venezuela. Mexico never fully recovered. With Japan, the United States and the European Union accounting for two-thirds of global output, simultaneous difficulties in these three economies could prove fatal.

### **Volume Four Predictions**

In the 1916 foreword to Volume 4, Bro. Russell made ten observations about what could happen in the post-World War 1 world. These ten points are perhaps more relevant today than in 1916.

- (1) As the blessings of world economic prosperity increase, discontent also increases.
- (2) Wealth will continue to compound at an unprecedented rate.
- (3) Improved labor conditions will bring about further discontent.
- (4) With added knowledge, discontent and fear continue to increase.
- (5) Nations battle each other for equal prosperity.

(6) The conflict between capital and labor does not end.

(7) Debts will be difficult to pay for many countries.

(8) More countries will go into bankruptcy (health care, pensions, currency devaluation).

(9) There will be a worldwide revolution of the discontented.

(10) The nominal church systems will rise to prominence with the civil power to restore order.

Brethren, we should not fear. Isaiah says, "He will judge between the nations ... nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war" (Isaiah 2:4). "He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth" (Psalms 46:9). God's purpose is clearly stated in Zephaniah 3:9, "For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, That all of them may call on the name of the LORD, To serve Him shoulder to shoulder." God will cleanse this world and bring blessings to every individual in every nation. Amen.

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[Bro. Wade Austin] There are many prophecies related to the "end times." Let us briefly consider three prophecies in preparation for more detailed discussion by the panel.

### **The Four Winds**

First, in Revelation 7:1-3 four angels are instructed to "hold back the four winds ... until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." This clearly suggests that the four winds will not blow until the bride is complete. Revelation 7:14 shows the Great Company, by contrast, go through "the great tribulation" [the Greek includes the definite article], which implies they go through at least the first part of the tribulation of the four winds. Surely there will be individuals in the Great Company who lived and died since the beginning of the Gospel Age to the time of "the tribulation" after the Church is complete. "The tribulation" seems to refer to the special difficulty upon the final members of the Great Company once the bride is complete. Finally, Ezekiel 37:9 says Israel receives the life of faith from the four winds. If these are the same four winds described in Revelation then Israel will "live" at the very end of the harvest (after the church is complete) in a way that it has not hitherto lived.

### **Wind, Earthquake, Fire**

Second, in 1 Kings 19:11 we read of the Lord passing by Elijah on the mountain and a subsequent series of symbolic events. The first was a mighty wind, symbolic of the winds of war that began in 1914. A case could be made that history since has

been but spasms of one great war that began then. The second was an earthquake. This symbolizes the shaking of nations and securing independence for the colonies from the great powers, that began after World War 2. This process climaxed in the release of east European nations from the Soviet Union. The third was a “fire,” symbolic of terrorism which the world now experiences, and the eventual anarchy that will prevail until the “still small voice” of the kingdom will be heard.

### **Armageddon**

Third, in Revelation 16:14 and 16 we read that the kings of the world are “gathered together” for battle in a place called Armageddon. Joel 3:12 says the nations are gathered to “the valley of Jehoshaphat [Israel]: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.” Joel 3:16 says “Jehovah shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but Jehovah will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.”

This will be the time of Joel 2:20, “I will remove far off from you the northern army,” and the time of Ezekiel 38:18, “It shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith Jehovah, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel.” The result is described in verse 23, “Thus will I magnify myself ... and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Jehovah.”

Of the outcome of the final battle, to which the nations are now being gathered, the scriptures leave no doubt. Israel will turn to God in faith and he will fight for them. The nations will then recognize that the God of Israel is the one and only true God in preparation for the blessing of all the families of the earth under the reign of Christ and his completed bride. But first the inhabitants of the earth will experience “fire” of far greater intensity than anything heretofore experienced. This fire will “melt the elements with fervent heat” (2 Peter 3:10) and the “earth” [civil governments] and the “heavens” [religious institutions] will be burned up [destroyed]. Most of mankind has no concept of the awful “fire” of worldwide anarchy that yet awaits the peoples of the earth.

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[**Bro. David Rice**] We will add something about Israel. Israel’s attempt for peace through the Oslo accords, and now (July 2003) through the “Road Map,” have not worked. There are more suicide bombings, more deaths, more Arab incitement, and

even the “hudna” is not holding. Nevertheless, Israel proceeds with new concessions as tokens of “good faith” without reciprocation. The release of hundreds of Arab prisoners from Israeli jails has not brought calm or eased tensions. Instead, it prompts Arab demands for the release of hardened terrorists. Meanwhile a nightly barrage of grenades from Gaza continues.

We are still in the time when “Joseph,” Christ, though unknown to his natural brethren, is testing and preparing the hearts of the Jewish people. When Jesus was on earth and sought only the good of his people, they persecuted, tormented and finally “killed the prince of life” (Acts 3:15). They committed a gross injustice. Now Israel, who wants nothing more than peace with their neighbors, are unjustly tormented and pressed by others to make concession after concession. They are learning, by experience, something about gross injustice.

### **Peace, When?**

When will peace with the Arabs come? Two passages of scripture suggest it will not come until the morning of the Kingdom. (1) Genesis 32 describes Jacob’s return to the land of promise after many years away — representing Israel’s return today, after many years. Jacob feared Esau, who was approaching with 400 armed men. The night before their meeting, “Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day ... and he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And Jacob said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me” (Genesis 32:24-27). The blessing Jacob sought was peace with his brother. He secured that blessing from the angel at the breaking of the day, after a night long struggle. Israel today is still wrestling in the night for this blessing, which will not be granted until the breaking of the day.

(2) 2 Kings chapter 3 records one of 14 episodes during the ministry of Elisha which take us into the Kingdom prophetically. In this chapter Moab, a picture of the Arabs, was in rebellion against Israel. At this time Israel was in two parts — the northern kingdom under faithless Jehoram and the southern kingdom under faithful Jehoshaphat. These represent the two parts of Israel today, the unbelieving Jews and the believing Jews. Both of them are together as one people with the same problem — confrontation with the Arabs. Verse 9 shows Israel allied itself with Edom, just as Israel today is allied with the Christian West, represented by Edom. The armies of Israel journeyed southward through Edom for seven days, just as Israel has journeyed through Christendom during the seven parts of the Gospel Age. By then Israel was low on water, near exhaustion, and ready to perish.

At this point Elisha appeared. This was highly unexpected, because Elisha would have been far from his home area. But he provided exactly the help Israel needed, just as the Ancient Worthies will appear to render exactly the help Israel needs in their time of crisis. Elisha had only scorn for faithless Jehoram, but agreed to assist out of respect for faithful Jehoshaphat.

He advised the Israelites to dig many ditches, in order to receive a great blessing of water to fill them. They did, and “it came to pass in the morning, when the meal offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water” (verse 20). They were refreshed, invigorated, and achieved a stunning victory over Moab. This morning represents the morning of the Kingdom, when the ransom of our Lord is applied, represented by the meal offering, and a great victory is achieved over the enemies of Israel. The water which came “by the way of Edom” to refresh Israel represents the Gospel truths which have flowed through the land of Edom, Christendom. The episode results in the death of the firstborn of the King of Moab, showing that the rebellious power of the Arab world will not continue — just as the death of the firstborn of Egypt showed the powers of this world will not inherit the rule of the kingdom to come. These passages both suggest that peace with the Arabs is not achieved until the morning of the Kingdom.

### **Psalms 83**

In Psalm 83 we have a picture of the whole Arab conflict with Israel, beginning at least from Israel’s statehood in 1948 through to the Kingdom. The Arab wish has always been, “Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance” (verse 4). But they will fail. They will be made like “the Midianites” who battled Gideon, like “Sisera and Jabin” who battled Barak, like “Oreb and Zeeb ... Zebah and Zalmunna,” leaders of Midian. These were all combatants in episodes which represent the battle of Armageddon. This suggests the Arab threat continues until it is resolved during Armageddon. Ezekiel 38 and 39 list

the non-Arab enemies of Israel, so that combining this passage with Psalm 83 we see the entire coalition of states against Israel in the final drama.

### **Released from Demons**

One final episode. In Mark 5 is the account of Jesus restoring to peace and sound judgment a man tormented of demons. It follows the story in chapter four of Jesus quelling a storm on Galilee, commanding the sea “Peace, be still, and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm” (Mark 4:39), just as Jesus will do when the peaceable kingdom breaks upon the world. So the healing of the demon possessed man in Mark 5 may also apply at the beginning of the Kingdom.

Jesus passed over the Sea of Galilee into the land of the Gadarenes — part of Israel east of Galilee where the tribe of Gad had an inheritance. A man met him coming out of the tombs, as Israel has been coming out their national tombs. None had been able to tame or break him, despite the restraints and fetters often applied to him. But when he saw Jesus — as Israel will see Jesus in their desperate last hours — he fell at his feet. Jesus released him from a legion of tormenting demons, and he was restored to peace and dignity.

The demons were given leave to enter a herd of 2000 swine nearby, representing the uncleanness of Israel during the age past. These unclean beasts were promptly destroyed, plunging headlong off a cliff into the sea, and thus the land purged. As Jesus prepared to leave in a ship the man asked to join him, but Jesus politely refused. “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and has had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel” (Mark 5:19, 20). So Israel, when they are recovered, will spread the word of their gracious Messiah through Decapolis, ten cities of the Gentiles, representing all nations, and all the world will marvel.

[Live Panel Discussion to follow these prepared remarks]

## *Presentation Four*

# The Grasshopper Complex

Brother Art Jezuit (USA)

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*In* our present day, personality disorders have become a fact of life. Everyone, Christian or non-Christian alike seems to have one complex or another. Some of us are introverts, some extroverts, others suffer from paranoia or schizophrenia. There is one complex however that is most prevalent of all and that is The Grasshopper Complex. There is no other disorder that can so paralyze our spiritual walk with the Lord.

Twelve spies had gone into the Land of Canaan to determine the military strategy needed to conquer the Promised Land. Ten were intimidated by the project, believing that the inhabitants were too well fortified to be uprooted. More specifically the majority said, Numbers 13:31-32, “We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.”

They gave a bad report causing thousands who heard their story to tremble in fear. Two of the men, Joshua and Caleb, quieted the people and begged to differ with their peers. They said further in Numbers 13:30 “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.” But the report of the majority prevailed — notice in Numbers 14:1-4.

The 10 spies convincingly exaggerated the difficulty of obeying God. “The land through which we have gone in spying it out is a land that devours its inhabitants and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size, Also we saw the Nephilim and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight and so we were in their sight.” Numbers 13:32-33.

### **Giants Versus Grasshoppers**

Notice the 10 spies saw the Canaanites as giants and themselves as grasshoppers. How easily a giant can crush a grasshopper. There are several powerful reasons why the whole nation of Israel adopted the grasshopper complex.

**1st.** The Canaanites were much better armed militarily, while the Israelites had but a few staves. The Pagans were supposed to conquer, they had

horses and chariots and had mastered the use of iron. Canaanite armies were well trained, for centuries they had fought amongst each other and had mastered the art of cruelty. Their strong organization and superior weapons made them fearsome.

**2nd.** The Canaanites lived in walled cities while the Israelites lived in tents. In war there is a vast difference between defending a fortification and conquering it from the enemy. Only a few soldiers are needed to defend a walled city, but it takes a hundred times that number to actually capture it.

Quite literally, the Israelites had no place to hide, no fox holes, no fortification, they were hard pressed to think of a single advantage they would have in an all out war.

**3rd.** The Canaanites were bigger physically. Why they were taller we don’t know, but they had in fact developed into a physically superior race and this was terrifying to the Israelites. Looking at it from one way it made sense for the people to choose the majority report, everything was stacked against them. Why risk almost certain death when you have the option of staying in the wilderness to be fed by God. The factor that could have significantly changed the equation was that God was on the side of the Israelites.

Much more than that, the Almighty had given a specific promise, that if they would believe Him for victory, they would achieve it. Simple faith in God would shift the military balance of power, for who can stand against the armies of the Almighty.

The 10 spies caught a bad case of the grasshopper complex and the virus spread to the whole multitude. Moses wanted a simple report of the good land that was to be conquered — what he got was the fruit of fear, the destructive influence of a bad example.

### **The Grasshopper Complex**

What are some characteristics of the grasshopper complex?

- A. A doubting heart
- B. A distorted self image
- C. A double mind
- D. A desire for security
- E. The despising of weakness

Let us touch on these characteristics.

### **A Doubting Heart**

The vocal majority of the Israelite spies could think only of the many reasons why they would lose the battle. They could think of no reasons why they might win. Though God gave them a promise, it seemed unrealistic, so they did not believe it. Numbers 13:31 “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us.” Why all the negativism?

They probably thought that God had failed them in the past. They remembered the bitter waters of Marah more clearly than the sweet waters that eventually flowed from the oasis. They recalled that God had let them go thirsty until Moses was asked to smite the rock in Horeb. Then there was the war with Amalek, and later the terrifying days in which 3000 Israelites were killed by the Levites because of the golden calf.

How could they trust a God who had dealt with them so severely? To trust an invisible God, to fight a very visible army was almost asking too much.

We might be tempted to excuse their unbelief, but God was not so sympathetic. He took their decision as a personal referendum to his credibility.

Though he forgave their sin in response to Moses’ prayer, he was quite angry. “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against me, I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel which they are making against me. Your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from 20 years old and upward who have grumbled against me” (Numbers 14:27-29).

God attributed their fear of failure to their hard hearts. He was angry with that whole generation and swore they would not enter the land.

A doubting heart is not just a minor fault that can be overlooked as a failing. God calls it an evil heart of unbelief, and traces it to wilful rebellion.

### **A Distorted Self Image**

Numbers 13:33, “There we also saw the Nephilim ... and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight and so were we in their sight.”

We note that these spies saw themselves as grasshoppers and they immediately assumed that the Canaanites saw them as grasshoppers also.

Many times, our self perception is the foundation on which we build our goals, whether good or evil. Looking at it in one way, the spies self evaluation appeared humble, “we are but grasshoppers” — but in fact, this was nothing but a confession of their own unbelief, it was really an insult to Jehovah. Why should anyone who trusts the Almighty see himself as a grasshopper?

Interestingly enough, the spies were wrong when they said that the Canaanites saw them as grasshoppers, in reality the Canaanites were terrified. Some 38 years later when the Israelites finally do make serious plans to enter the land, another generation of spies go to Jericho and make contact with Rahab the harlot. Knowing the sentiments of the town toward the Israelites — Joshua 2:9, she reports: “I know the Lord has given you the land and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you.”

Far from seeing the Israelites as grasshoppers, the Canaanites saw them as giants, they were terrified, wondering why it took the Israelites so long to claim their inheritance.

Rahab understood the issues even better than the Israelites, for she went on to say that Jericho heard of the miracles God had done. — Joshua 2:11: “And when we heard it our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”

She knew who God was, even if God’s own people had their doubts. The grasshopper complex causes us to feel inferior to situations and even people that we, under God, are well able to confront.

Like looking into a bent mirror, we distort ourselves, our enemies, our challenges and even our God.

### **A Double Mind**

Those who see themselves as grasshoppers constantly shift their focus. At times they do think about the promises of God, but such moments give way to the supposed benefits of unbelief. They keep one eye on the world and one shifting eye on God.

When the people heard the report of the 10 spies they fell into an emotional swamp. They cried all night and grumbled against Moses and Aaron saying: “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would that we had died in this wilderness” (Numbers 14:2).



The next step was to appoint a captain who would lead them back into Egypt. When Joshua and Caleb tried to persuade the people to drop those plans and get on with believing the Almighty for victory, the congregation responded by saying that these 2 optimists should be stoned.

Had these people forgotten so soon of their captivity in Egypt? They could not seem to remember the slavery, the beatings and the untimely death of friends and family, rather they spoke of the security Egypt had offered them.

With one foot in the desert and one foot back in Egypt, they had no feet left to take them to the Promised Land. The Israelites were brought out of Egypt so they might be brought into Canaan. Now they stood poised between two events, fearful to move ahead and yet unable to go back.

The Greeks had a race at their athletic events in which a man would stand with one foot on one horse and his other foot on a second horse. The man was able to ride in this fashion as long as the horses stayed together, but when they began to separate, he had a quick decision to make.

Double mindedness is a leading cause of the grasshopper complex. The eye that shifts its focus between God and the world lacks the stability to grow and make confident progress toward maturity in Christ.

### **A Desire for Security**

Another motivation of the Israelite multitude was fear, the fear that they would fail in warfare.

They believed contrary to the Lord's promises, that they would all be killed. Anything is better than death. The argument to stay in the desert seemed to be the best choice, if they didn't fight they couldn't lose.

We are often critical of Peter, who began to sink when walking on the water to go to Jesus. He is chided for taking his eyes off the Master, but we should commend him for at least being willing to risk leaving the boat and to walk on the water. Though he wavered in the process, he took the risk of trusting Christ for a miracle. The others were in no danger of drowning, they played it safe and stayed in the boat.

Some avoid failing only because they take no risk at all, to them security is such a high priority that they would prefer to do nothing, rather than try something that might not succeed.

### **The Despising of Weakness**

Perhaps the Israelites thought that they should wait until they were as strong as the Canaanites before going to war, but God did not want them to be

strong. He was willing for them to remain weak, to demonstrate to them his greatness. Strategy and strength would have its place, but faith in Him and His promises was much more important.

We often speak of "God given strength," but we must also become acquainted with God's permission of weakness. When the Lord wanted to use the Apostle Paul in a greater way, he permitted a thorn in the flesh to limit him. When Paul prayed that it might be taken away, he was told that the grace of God would be sufficient for him.

Paul replied in 2 Corinthians 12:10, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak then am I strong."

Nothing could have worked as well as this, in putting his trust in the Lord — weakness when he wanted to be strong. We must not despise weakness, for it really is a permission of the Lord, in its place we put the precious promises which turn our attention to the support of His everlasting arms.

Is it any wonder that Moses later told the people that those who were afraid of battle should stay home? Moses calmed the people, reminding them that because the Lord was with them, they were not to panic.

Deuteronomy 20:4, "For the LORD your God, is the one who goes with you, to fight against your enemies to save you." Then in verse 8 the officers say: "Who is the man who is afraid and fainthearted, let him depart and return to his house that he may not make his brothers hearts melt like his heart."

Better it is to stay home than to spread fear among those who trust God in winning a victory. Fear is contagious. There is a remedy for this grasshopper complex, it is to unite with those who trust in the Lord using what little resources each has and claim the territory, the promises of God. Is it possible for us to fail while relying upon God?

We left the Israelites at the door of the promised land, afraid to go in. They already concluded that it would be better to return to Egypt than to face the challenge of conquering Canaan. They wept as they heard Moses deliver this judgment from God.

Numbers 14:28-29, "As I live says the Lord, just as you have spoken in my hearing, so I will surely do to you; your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from 20 years old and upward who have grumbled against me."

It was a long night, the people mourned greatly, the thought of not seeing the land they had dreamed about was a crushing blow. Another 40 years added

to their wanderings, they were doomed to die in the desert.

At this time some of the Israelites rethought their original decision and concluded to conquer the land after all. They realized how wrong they had been, they would show their bravery, God would be with them just as promised. This was not to be.

We read “In the morning however, they rose up early and went up to the ridge of the hill country saying — Here we are, we have indeed sinned, but we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised” (Numbers 14:40).

Despite a stern warning from Moses that they should not undertake this brave military venture, they pushed ahead with their new plans, better late than never.

Now at last they would be able to make up for their misdeeds. Despite their bravery and apparent faith, we read the sad report, verse 45, “Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you and crushed you from Seir to Hormah.”

“Then you returned and wept before the Lord, but the Lord did not listen to your voice, nor give ear to you” (Deuteronomy 1:44-45).

Here we have obviously the sin of presumption. Like the Israelites, we have a tendency to rush into situations, thinking we know in advance exactly what the Lord wants us to do. We may even pray asking Him to bless our plans, we claim a passage of scripture and expect our efforts to be blessed, only to be beaten and trampled by the enemy.

What happened? Where did we go wrong?

There are several kinds of presumption.

One is when we deliberately defy the Lord and His Word. Numbers 15:30 reads, “But the soul that doeth presumptuously, whether he be born in the land or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from among the people.” This is sinning with full knowledge, resulting in disaster.

Another kind of presumption is careless application of the promise and will of God, partially wilful. We can easily do what seems good to us without watching or taking the matter to the Lord in prayer or looking into His word.

It is possible to use these promises without considering the interpretations and conditions that are attached to them. That’s what happened to the Israelites. They thought they had a promise well in hand, but God did not honor it. They thought he went back on his word.

What went wrong? Wrong interpretation. The Lord gave a promise to Moses. Numbers 13:2, “Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel.”

The Lord did not tell them exactly when he would give the land to the sons of Israel, the implication was that it could happen as soon as the spies brought back a favorable report but when the Israelites accepted the majority report, circumstances changed.

What a difference a day can make. God had given them a new command, that is to live in the desert for another 40 years, this was a new era with a new agenda.

God’s promise would still be fulfilled, but at a different time with a different generation. Certain of God’s promises apply to different time periods.

At times our interpretations go beyond the promises given in Scripture. Rule #1 in applying the promises of God that are intended for the time period and to us. Requests that go beyond what the Lord has said may not be answered.

Our faith may not seem to work because of our attitude. When we read Numbers 14:40 do we see Israel living in full submission to God. According to Numbers 14:40, they did admit their sin, just in passing they mentioned it. “We have sinned” but — It was a rather casual remark about their sin showing that they were unwilling to accept the discipline God had prescribed for them.

They thought that the consequences of their disobedience should be behind them. They presumed that God’s blessing would go with them even though they had not submitted to his authority.

Think how often we pray to the Lord for the sole purpose of avoiding personal discomfort. The Israelites should have been willing to accept God’s judgment on them no matter how disappointing and harsh. We see the results.

### **Listen to the Right Voice — Joshua Chapter 1**

In an army the single most important lesson you learn is to listen to and obey the commander.

It’s not important for you to understand the whys and wherefores, the key is to obey his explicit commands.

The communications system is crucial the moment a war begins. Proper two way communications inspires courage, gives guidance and unifies the attack.

If troops are cut off from contact with headquarters they become isolated and confused. The enemy

either tries to intercept the messages or feed some wrong signals to the troops. The result is that they hear nothing or are misled.

Brethren, some of the Lord's people today are trying to fight battles with their communications equipment in disrepair. They are not in daily contact with their God, therefore suffering from discouragement and spiritual fatigue, they are attempting to fight on their own without direction, perhaps following the advise of an enemy, hearing the wrong signals.

God knew that if Joshua and his troops were to conquer a series of Pagan fortifications they would have to keep in constant contact with headquarters. Never plan an attack without checking with the commander in chief.

### **Joshua's Job Description was Quite Clear**

Joshua 1:2, "Moses my servant is dead, now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I have given to them, to the sons of Israel."

Joshua had to motivate the people to action. The nation had lived in relative peace for 40 years, there were no serious enemies in the desert, God had provided for all their needs by sending Manna every morning, they had become accustomed to a comfortable life style.

Now what the Israelites needed was courage, assurance that they were not in this alone. The Almighty had said he would take up their cause and fight for them. They were afraid. There is nothing wrong with fear as long as it is directed in the right direction. Unfortunately our fears are often misdirected. We fear change, we fear confrontation, we fear our past, we fear the future. How different life would be if we feared God, fearing compromise with sin and selfishness.

The key is found in God's command to Joshua. Joshua 1:7, "Only be strong and very courageous, be careful to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you, do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go."

What else did he instruct him? Verse 8, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but ye shall meditate on it day and night that ye may be careful to do according to all that is written in it, for then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success."

What was Joshua to do with this word of God?

**1st.** He would speak it

**2nd.** He would meditate on it

**3rd.** He would be obedient to it and would become prosperous and successful in his tactical maneuvers and capture the land for his people.

How important it is that we listen to the right voice. The more we look to the Lord, the smaller our obstacles become, the longer we look at our obstacles the smaller God becomes.

### **A Winning Strategy — Joshua Chapter 2**

Many times the thought comes to mind, how can you hope to win spiritual battles in a culture that is increasingly drifting into Pagan values?

The moral state of our world has never been worse, but historically the Land of Canaan during Joshua's time, about 1400 BC, would run a close second.

Here was a culture in a miserable state of affairs. Archeology has shown that the Canaanites participated in child sacrifice, homosexuality, idolatry, witchcraft, etc.

Joshua was commanded to conquer the land. Everywhere the Israelites would walk eventually became theirs. The walk was not a leisurely stroll, they had to fight for every square inch.

Here is a striking example of the blend between God's promises and Israel's responsibility. God said that the land was theirs, but they would have to carefully plan a strategy to crush the enemy.

His command in Joshua 2:1, "Go view the land, especially Jericho." The Lord was with him, but it was important that he know his enemy. Today our enemy is the world, the flesh, and Satan; and as the Israelites spied out Jericho, we must spy out our enemies so that we are not ignorant of his schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11).

God used Rahab in overcoming the fear that paralyzed Israel 38 years earlier. From this one woman the spies received all the information they needed to report back to their commander.

The 2 spies understood that even enemies who know they will be defeated do all the damage they can to intimidate their opponents. This is the tactic used by our adversaries.

Here are 2 interesting points: The Canaanites knew who the rightful owners of the land were and they knew God's power. Joshua 2:9-10, "I know that God has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you." The Canaanites knew they were living on land that was not theirs, and they were well aware of God's power.

Our adversary is well aware that his days are numbered, and he tries to inflict as many doubts, and intimidations as he possibly can.

It is very important that we identify the obstacles that exist in our endeavors to do the will of our Heavenly Father. Joshua 3 tells us it was the Jordan River which flowed between the Israelites and the promised land that was their first obstacle, they couldn't begin to fight until they first crossed this hurdle.

Once they decided there was no turning back, behind was the vast wastelands of the wilderness, the unending sand and barrenness. They had endured the 40 years of God's discipline, now it was time to move ahead. Accept the challenge and they would enjoy the benefits of the land, cucumbers, melons, grains and corn as well as wells of water, fish from the Sea of Galilee. What a bounty after the steady diet of manna in the hot desert.

It's been said that a journey of a 1000 miles begins with a single step and that first step is the most fearful, especially if it means stepping into a deep river whose swift current could sweep you away in an instant.

What did Joshua ask the Israelites to do just before making this move?

### **Joshua 3:1-3 — Prepare your hearts — focus your eyes.**

“Then Joshua rose early in the morning and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan and they lodged there before they crossed over. It came to pass after three days that the officers went through the hosts, and they commanded the people saying, when ye see the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God and the priests, the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it.”

These were specific instructions:

- The heart must be fully consecrated to the Lord.
- Keep your eyes focused on the Lord, pictured by his presence in the Ark of the Testimony.
- No Israelite was expected to forge his own path, they were to go only where God himself was leading them — no pioneering here.

Hebrews 12:2 sums it up well where we “fix our eyes on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”

At times we don't surrender completely to the Lord, thinking he might make impossible demands, but whatever the Lord commands, He gives the grace to accomplish it. The impossible becomes

possible, when we choose to obey regardless of our fears.

Isaiah 43:1-2, “O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

Do you have rivers you think are uncrossable?  
Any mountain you can't tunnel through?  
God specializes in things thought impossible.  
He'll do what no other friend can do.

### **Living with a Bad Decision — Joshua Chapter 9**

We have all made decisions we have regretted. Bad decisions are not uncommon, some are serious, others are not, but we have all made them.

Let's see how even Joshua made bad decisions. Shortly after he marched into Canaan he had many victories to his credit even when various tribes banded together to fight him, they fell before his military expertise. Being thankful to the Lord for his faithfulness to him, Joshua continued victorious.

The inhabitants of one Pagan town decided to come up with a creative strategy to save their lives. They chose to trick Joshua into believing they had come from a far country and then proceeded to make a peace treaty with him.

Evidently these shrewd people knew that God forbade the Israelites to make a treaty with the people of Canaan (Exodus 23:31-33). So if they could trick Joshua into believing that they had come from another country, he might fall for the bait. Once the treaty was made, they would be spared.

These people of Gibeon took worn sacks and old wine skins on their donkeys and put patched sandals on their feet. They put moldy bread in their sacks and wore threadbare clothing, all this made it appear that they had come from a great distance, when in fact they had just come from Gibeon — 8 miles away.

When they came to Joshua they said, Joshua 9:6, “We have come from a far country, now therefore make a covenant with us.”

They deceived Joshua by lying about their origin. According to Joshua 9:14-15, Joshua took the moldy bread in his own hands, he saw the old wineskins and the worn sandals. Then it says “The men of Israel took some of their provisions and did not ask for the council of the LORD.”

And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live and the leaders

of the congregation swore an oath to them. Why did Joshua fall into the trap of the enemy?

First, he acted on superficial evidence, what appeared to be obvious was actually complex. Seldom is a situation what it appears to be.

Only our Lord, who can see beyond the disguises, is qualified to give us guidance in the decisions of life.

Joshua did not ask God because his own decision looked so correct, also the matter seemed rather trivial.

How often we make mistakes because we do what appears to be wise and obvious to us, or perhaps because we are afraid the Lord will say no to something we really want.

Joshua found out three days later that these Gibeonites were just a few miles away. Verse 16. He deeply regretted his vow of peace, but there was nothing he could do. The promise was binding, you live with the consequences.

Joshua regretted many times that he had been tricked into making this treaty. The people of Gibeon were a constant thorn.

God's grace however, worked through this bad decision to bring about good. Joshua 9:23, "Now therefore you are cursed, and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."

We should never underestimate God's ability to take a wrong decision and turn it into a blessing. He can take grief and turn it into joy and put gladness in our daily grind.

Joshua learned, as all of us must, that the Lord is greater than our mistakes, and he can make all things work out for our spiritual good.

### **Power of Prayer — Joshua Chapter 10**

We have all been trampled by the enemy, abused by circumstances and wearied with our obligations.

Joshua experienced a dramatic answer to prayer, the Lord performed a miracle to help him win the war. Joshua 10:14, "The Lord fought for Israel." He directly intervened to help the Israelites win the battle.

The Lord fights for us also, if he were not constantly looking after us in the conflicts of life, we would have been back in the world long ago. Sin would have eroded every vestige of our character and we would be enslaved to the passions that would eventually swallow us.

Joshua's story illustrates well the great lengths the Lord goes to, to live up to his promises. Joshua took advantage of all the specific promises of God by

living them by faith. Hebrews 4:2 speaks of those who heard the word of God but did not profit by it. Why? "Because it was not united by faith in those who heard."

Many years back, Crowfoot, the great chief of an Indian tribe in Southern Alberta Canada, gave the Canadian Pacific Railroad permission to cross Indian territory. For this he was given a lifetime railroad pass on the Canadian Pacific Railroad. He gratefully accepted it, put it in a leather case and carried it around his neck for the rest of his life. There is no record anywhere that he ever used this privilege.

We likewise can be surrounded by the precious promises of God and yet be powerless. They stay leather bound as it were, never really, truly, made our own.

### **Overcoming Obstacles — Joshua Chapter 14**

Many good Christians could have become more productive Christians if they did not stop too soon. Caleb was a man willing to be counted, he could not be stopped. He had a dozen reasons why he could have chosen an early retirement, but at the age of 85 he was very active, claiming territory for God. Caleb was not content to relax when there was a promise to fulfill.

The Lord told him not only to enter the promised land, but that he would be personally involved in claiming territory for himself and his descendants.

God kept him physically healthy with good eyesight, so that he could see God's word fulfilled.

Joshua 14:11-12, "I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me, as my strength was then, so my strength is now."

Age is not a barrier in doing the will of God. The Lord keeps his people alive as long as they need to be in order to fulfill that which he has planned for them.

Think back to Caleb's experience, he was not only outvoted by his 10 peers, but he was ridiculed by the multitude. He and Joshua stood alone in speaking out for God's faithfulness. What did they get for their courage and faith?

Numbers 14:10, "But all the congregation said to stone them with stones." The people would have killed them, were it not for Moses intervention. It is important that we make sure that our goals are worthy and sound before pursuing them. Many times we see cowardice in the lives of others, it is not easily detected in ourselves and we all have a certain amount.

I ran across this — one day Soviet Premier Khrushchev was speaking before the Supreme Soviet

Delegation. He was severely criticizing the late Joseph Stalin. During his speech, someone sent up a note saying “What were you doing when Stalin committed all those atrocities?” “Who sent this note” Khrushchev shouted, not a person stirred. Still no one stirred as the seconds ticked away. “Alright, I’ll tell you what I was doing” Khrushchev began, “I was doing what the writer of this note is doing — nothing — I was afraid to be counted.”

If you have chosen to pursue the Lord’s will with all your heart, realize you may be misunderstood. Expect little support from others, some will stand with you, but as Caleb learned, the ratio is about 2 to 10.

What were the other barriers Caleb had to cross to see his desires fulfilled? Besides his age and so called friends — Time.

A total of 40 years elapsed from the day God gave Caleb the promise until he was able to take his mountain. 40 years is a long time, think of what he saw and experienced in that period. He watched a whole generation die in the desert, family, friends, even his 10 fellow spies. Those were not easy years, for Caleb suffered along with the entire nation.

Surely he learned how to patiently wait upon the Lord.

In summary, there are many practical lessons we as spiritual Israelites can learn from these chapters in Joshua. In order to claim the promises of God and enjoy seeing these come to pass in our lives, we must dispel the notion that these come about without effort and sacrifice.

There is no such thing as unopposed spiritual progress. It consists of conflict — patience — cooperation — submission — faithful obedience — watchfulness.

Someone has accurately observed that the path of least resistance is what makes people and rivers crooked. We will either grow in our love for Christ or fall back into the desert with its aimlessness and false promises of refreshment.

The difference between a grasshopper and a giant is only one of perspective. When we depend upon the Lord, grasshoppers become giants and giant enemies become as grasshoppers.

We must keep our focus upon the Lord not on ourselves.



**CHARACTERISTICS**

- A Doubting Heart
- B Distorted Self Image
- C Double Mindedness
- D Desire Security
- E Despise Weakness

**LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF JOSHUA**

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) Faith that Works          | Num. 14:39-45, Deut. 1:41, 46 |
| (2) Listen to the Right Voice | Joshua 1                      |
| (3) Winning Strategy          | Joshua 2                      |
| (4) Take First Step           | Joshua 3                      |
| (5) Cost of Hidden Sin        | Joshua 7                      |
| (6) Know Your Enemy           | Joshua 8                      |
| (7) Living with Bad Decisions | Joshua 9                      |
| (8) Prayer a Necessity        | Joshua 10                     |
| (9) Overcoming Obstacles      | Joshua 14                     |
| (10) Promises Do Work         | Joshua 21                     |

**SOLUTIONS**

- A-1 Conflict
- A-2 Patience
- A-3 Submission
- A-4 Faithful Obedience
- A-5 Watchfulness

## *Presentation Five*

# The Trials of the New Creature

Brother Costea Iachim (Moldova)

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*Beloved* brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus! We thank the Heavenly Father for the beautiful opportunity to meet for such wonderful brotherly fellowship, so we could praise and honor together the name of God and of our Redeemer, as well as learn important lessons for the present trying times.

Dear brethren, as we know that the New Creatures are now being tested and that the ultimate test is the love between the brethren and for the brethren, the attitude of our heart one toward the other is very important (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Thus, all of us who started to walk on this way of sacrifice must experience difficulties and trials, and since we want to walk in the footsteps of Christ, we will suffer like him, as he resisted temptations from the world and from the adversary throughout his entire life up to Calvary. We see that he overcame and subjected everything because he trusted in the Father's help and in the sure reward to be on the same plane with his Father.

Our hope and desired destination is for the same plane of divinity, yet in order to deserve that honor and glory, we need to be polished and prove our worth.

### **Drinking the Cup**

Our Lord showed us many examples regarding our cleansing and testing, one of them being the drinking of the cup at the last supper, when He said: "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it" (Mathew 26:27).

Therefore, the lesson for us is to not be surprised if there will be opposition towards the Truth and persecutions against the carriers of light who walk in Jesus' footsteps. However, this shouldn't make us hate our opponents, nor those who persecuted our Lord even to His death (Mathew 5:11,12). We must rather remember the words of the apostle: "... I wot

that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts 3:17). O, yes! The ignorance, the blindness of heart and mind are the foundation of all the sufferings of Christ — Head and Body. And the Father allows things to be this way until the members of the Body will have filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ (Colossians 1:24).

At the same time with the completion of the number of members in the Body of Christ, the elect, and with the completion of the trials of faithfulness until death, the end of this Gospel age will come, the changing of the resurrection of the Church to be with the Lord and in His likeness. Then, as our Teacher declared, those who now partake of his broken body and are being broken with him in the service of Truth, those who now share in his cup of suffering and self denial, will soon drink together with him the new wine of joy in the Kingdom, on the other side of the veil (Matthew 26:29).

### **Two Concepts**

The fruit of the vine, the literal cup represents two concepts. The cup of wine is obtained at the expense of the life of the grapes. The grapes lose their individuality. The juice is pressed out and thus the fruit of the wine is prepared for its use. The cup of wine — the juice of the grapes — represents not only the crushing of the grapes, but also the refreshment that it generates when we drink of this literal cup.

For us, it symbolizes the afflictions and the death of our Redeemer and our participation with Him in these afflictions. The cup represents the persecutions, trials, and difficulties that come from the exterior, from without. Thus, we must allow the crushing of our old nature. In relation to these cups, the cup of suffering and the cup of joy, our Lord compares two Great Days — the Day of Suffering and the Day of Glory. Today we are still in the Day of Suffering, of

trial, when we must drink of this cup of suffering, and after this there will be the cup of joy in the Millennium Age.

Of the Lord it is written that "... of the people there was none with me" (Isaiah 63:3). No one was able to suffer with Him in the hour of trial. It is different for us. We have the other members of the body who have a similar baptism into death, who are similarly engaged to be "broken" as members of the one bread, and are accepted and anointed with the same holy Spirit. We can come to Him in prayer and we are heard through our advocate, who pleads for us.

### **Developing Character**

By the trials that are allowed upon us, we must develop our character and good qualities. This will be a lifetime work. It is very proper that Jehovah will ask those who will be found worthy of this high position to not only appreciate His kindness and His glorious character, but also to choose to serve Him, instead of serving sin and iniquity, and to prove their complete loyalty toward the principles of righteousness and toward His will to the extent of having a joyful disposition to suffer for those principles.

A temporary endurance of one or two or three short trials will not prove that a person has a character based on righteousness; thus it will be necessary to have a patient, joyful endurance even unto death, in order to prove such a character. We must pass the final test of patient endurance before we are accepted among the elect.

The apostle Paul reminds the following to Timothy, when he wrote to him: "thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience" (2 Timothy 3:10). We need this important grace more and more as we run in our race to approach the end of the way. Our legs get tired; the trials and tests multiply; thus, we need to "gird up the loins of our mind" and look to our great model for the necessary inspiration and strength, and to fortify ourselves for the last sprint (1 Peter 1:13).

Our capacity and strength to endure with patience should increase as we progress in the narrow way. We should "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Ephesians 6:10). Yet we cannot develop this essential quality without trials — experiences directed to cultivate joyful endurance. Let us not consider it a strange thing if we are called to pass through long trials that will require us to grow stronger if we are to endure them.

But we must repeat that our virtue doesn't consist in only enduring them; for the world also has

much to endure, so it is important how we endure these trials. We must be kind and submissive in our hearts — in full harmony with the Lord's procedures for growth. Sometimes, this can be difficult; but His grace will be sufficient if we continually ask for it.

"And having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13). We can see here another reason for the Lord's arrangement that we should have our trials, just as our Teacher had His — in difficult circumstances — so we should not only have the necessary qualities of a Christian character, but to have them rooted, founded, fixated, established. Similarly, James points out to us the importance of this quality. He says "that the trying of your faith worketh patience," meaning that if our faith will resist the trial, it will work in our character this patient endurance.

On the other hand, if we do not reach this level of development, it means that our faith did not resist the trial satisfactorily and that we are not fit for the kingdom.

### **Enduring with Patience**

Not only do we need to progress towards obtaining faith, strength, self discipline, kindness and love, but after we achieve all these, we must also endure with patience. We must "run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

The Lord promised the church of Philadelphia that in the light of their faithfulness and the fact that they "kept the word of My patience," they will be kept from the "hour of trial" that was to come upon the entire world some time later (Revelation 3:10, RSV). The church of Laodicea — the church of our present day — is not kept from entering the "hour of trial," yet we can be certain that we will be protected while we are in this hour, if we are faithful and sincere.

Although we are not spared of this hour of trial, we have a blessing that compensates which results from living during our Lord's parousia. We have his instructions, his distribution of spiritual meat, the "meat in due season," in a manner and degree that was not enjoyed by his saints before. Thus, as we would expect, this great favor is compensated by the subtle and severe tests of this unusual "hour of trial."

The Apostle warns us about the "hour of trial" that is now upon us. There will be many attacks and tests, and some of them will be so subtle and deceiving, that all those who are not well rooted and founded in the Truth, shall be taken away by the false proofs of those who are presently allowed to be used by Satan as his agents in the testing of all who live on the face of the earth.



James tells us that the temptations may also capture the followers of Christ, who will fall into them as in a trap. Just as in the army the traps are set by the enemy, even so the great Adversary sets for us traps and snares. He tries to mislead our minds from the concepts of Truth and righteousness. We have to very carefully avoid the snares set by him. Even so, we can fall in one of his snares in spite of our efforts.

### **Temptations**

James tells us that we need to rejoice when we are amidst various temptations — not that we should rejoice when we fall into sin while being tempted, but to rejoice when we are unexpectedly pushed into temptation.

The temptation is not sin. If we can keep in mind that every temptation, every trial, every persecution, every hardship in life that comes upon us, upon those who have made a covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is allowed to prove and test our love and whether or not our characters are solid, founded in righteousness and built on love, then all these trials will be seen in a new light and will help us to fight the good fight and to be overcomers.

When we find ourselves in a temptation or trial, let us say: if by these temptations or trials the Lord is trying my love and devotion towards Him, then however small or significant something would be, I will use it with diligence as a good opportunity to demonstrate to my Lord the fullness of my love and devotion towards Him. I must fight the good fight against this “something” — the world, the flesh, or the Adversary — without regard to who brings the snare.

Even the battles that resulted in partial victories might be to our advantage. Even in the areas where we have been absolutely defeated, the result might be a strengthening of the character, a better understanding of our resolution to — again — be more zealous, with humility of heart when approaching the Lord in prayer. These failures may become “stepping stones” by which we lift ourselves toward God and toward heaven.

It is only through many tribulations that we will enter the kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, if the Lord’s people find themselves amidst trials and tribulations, rather than being sorrowful, they should rejoice saying: these are the proofs that the Lord prepares me for a place in the kingdom. They must give us courage to fight the good fight against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. The flesh may hurt, but the new mind, the new will has this joy; and the new creature rejoices, knowing that all these trials are not permitted to hurt, but are allowed for our good (1 Peter 4:13).

The Heavenly Father sends us an escape with every trial. Therefore, when we find ourselves amidst trials we must say: the Heavenly Father allows this trial, and the Lord Jesus will help me, and thus I will rejoice in the fact that the Lord will not allow the trial to defeat me because he promised that all things work toward my good. Some of the greatest lessons on carefulness, resulted from our own carelessness.

The Lord wants those who will endure the great torturing battle, those who will patiently endure, even if the trial is long and the hardships become more and more severe, because they are intended to develop our patience. We build a character for eternity; thus patience can only be developed through repeated hardships and trials — through our renewed resolutions to become more and more strong and firm in the building of our character in the likeness of the Heavenly Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Various Trials**

If we classify the trials that come upon us, we notice that we first have trials from the brethren, then from our flesh, the old creature, and then from the world and from Satan. With all these we have to fight every day of our life. Like in the case of our Teacher, the strongest opposition generally comes from our brethren, although many of them are brethren in name only.

We cannot say that our flesh will always be under full submission, but the “will” must be present and exercise, with Divine help, as much control over the flesh as possible. Our Lord looks for people with a strong will, with a strong character, and thus we find after joining his family that some things we thought were good, were absolutely wrong and needed to be corrected. To the extent that we controlled our mind in the past and controlled our desires and impulses, to the same extent we will progress — slower or faster — in the new way.

We fight against the flesh and our bodies, in trials that are very often the result of our natural desires and weaknesses, which are often stimulated from the outside by our companions and associates in life. All around us there are evil examples and influences which are attractively disguised. Which are derived primarily from Satan, who introduced all the sin in this world. And as he deceived our first parents, even so he works now — as much as possible — with his demons on our weaknesses.

It is true that the entire world faces the opposition of the Adversary, yet he is particularly active against those who are committed in the Lord’s service. Satan seems to bring special temptations for

them and it is not surprising that they are the specific target of his fury and wickedness.

This doesn't spare us of our personal responsibility though, as none of these temptations has the power to break our will. Our responsibility may vary depending on our characters' strength or weakness.

Thus, we should not judge anything before its time because ones' degree of victory is a matter that only God can fully judge.

### **Temptations Not from God**

As the Lord's people, we must realize the temptation doesn't come from God and that by resisting the temptation we will be on God's side. James 1:13, 14 tells us that God does not tempt anyone, and if we would think otherwise no one could resist that which He brings upon us and thus we would be defeated.

Since we know therefore that our temptations are not from God but merely permitted, or allowed, we know that He will help us and will not allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear and that for every temptation he also provides a way to escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

With help from above, we must strive more and more to overcome and resist temptations, whether they are from within, or from the Adversary, or from others' weaknesses which may lead us to sin and things which are against the will of God. Let us trust that God will protect us according to His promise, because we need protection and help. With this thought in mind, we can be strong.

In 2 Corinthians 4:8, 9 the Apostle Paul talks primarily about himself and his companions, but also about all those who work with faithfulness in the Teacher's service: "we are troubled on every side." We see that many are sorrowed by these trials in life. But we also see here an example and a lesson in the fact that while Saint Paul and those who were with him had their difficulties and hardships, persecutions and trials, they also had the knowledge of the Truth and of our Lord's strengthening grace, and thus they were not sorrowful by their afflictions but rather trusting in the precious promises of the Lord.

We should also not allow life's afflictions to sorrow us, as they sorrow others. We have something that others don't have, and this is the Lord's assurance that everything in our lives will bring blessings upon us if we are faithful. This gives us the opportunity to rejoice in our tribulation.

There are other tribulations, from the world, that come upon the Lord's people when the truth is presented. The world is more or less in opposition to those that are involved in the public proclamation of the truth and those who are associated with them.

There is a battle that goes on between right and wrong, between light and darkness. The world, being fond of its darkness, feels enmity and hate towards the light; people are often ready to cause special afflictions upon those who represent the Lord in some particular manner.

This thought is also expressed in Paul's epistle to Hebrews (Hebrews 10:32-34).

### **Serving with Faithfulness**

If those who are not very involved in the service do with faithfulness everything that their hands find to do, the Lord will appreciate their service just as much as of those who are able to do more, thanks to greater potential, physical strength or number of opportunities — each doing to the extent of their opportunity in the Lord's work (1 Corinthians 4:12, 13).

Thus, by seeing and knowing, we can rejoice in any experience of this kind. Every trial and every hardship will prove to be blessings, primarily because we will have the opportunity to show our Lord that we endure and do not compromise his cause or our position as his servants.

We also rejoice knowing that in these type of trials, our characters will progress towards crystallization if we overcome, and that the Lord will not allow us to fall into a temptation that doesn't bring a blessing, as long as we are faithful.

Let us stay with the words of James: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2). "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6, 7). "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" — if we use them correctly and we are trained by them (2 Corinthians 4:17). So let us rejoice even in our tribulations, because we know that tribulation worketh patience, and patience brings the overcoming in the experience and this overcoming brings hope (Romans 5:3, 4).

May these thoughts help each one of us in our daily fight and let us turn to the Father more often for grace and strength, and He will help us to overcome any obstacle that we will face. May the Lord

help us to remain faithful to Him, no matter what  
will come upon us. Amen.

“How light our trials then will seem!  
How short our pilgrim way!  
The life of earth a fitful dream,  
Dispelled by dawning day!

“Yet peace, my heart!  
And hush, my tongue!  
Be calm my troubled breast!  
Each passing hour prepares thee more  
For everlasting rest.”  
(Hymns of Dawn #7, A Little While)



## *Presentation Six*

# Rich Man and Lazarus

Brother Frank Boychuk (Canada)

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*The* subject “Rich Man and Lazarus” is a very interesting and important subject. It is found in Luke 16:19-31. According to Dark Age theology, this parable is supposed to teach that all good people who believe in Christ go to heaven when they die, and all evil persons who do not accept Christ in this life go to a place of eternal torture at death. But this is not the way Bible Students such as you and I understand this parable.

There are some nominal Christians who claim that this is not a parable. But we do not agree with that line of thought. If you make a careful scrutiny of the parable, nothing at all is said about good people or evil people; nor is anything said about heaven. All that is said about the supposedly virtuous man of the parable is that he was poor and was covered with sores, and he ate crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table and that dogs licked his sores. Of the rich man, it is related merely that he fared sumptuously, wore good clothing, and permitted the poor man to lie at his gate. We would like to read this account from Luke 16:19-31.

Our Lord Jesus said: (19) “There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: (20) And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, (21) And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. (22) And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; (23) And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. (25) But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivdest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. (26) And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed:

so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that [would come] from thence. (27) Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: (28) For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. (29) Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. (30) And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. (31) And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

### **Rich Man and Lazarus — A Parable**

From reading this account, it would be absurd to take it as a literal statement. It has to be treated as a parable. A parable is a word picture and as a parable it is easy of interpretation. In a parable the thing said is never the thing meant. It has a symbolic meaning. Jesus taught the people in parables because it wasn’t time for everyone to understand God’s Divine Plan of the Ages.

In Matthew 13:10-13 we read: “And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.”

From this we can see why Jesus did not want everyone to understand the mystery of God’s plan during the Gospel Age. Because just “a little flock” was being selected during the Gospel Age to become the bride of Christ. These are the ones given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Not until the elect shall be glorified and the millennial kingdom fully established, will the mystery be made

fully know to the world and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. It will be during the mediatorial reign of Christ and his bride that everyone will have the opportunity to know God's plan. For in Habakkuk 2:14 we read: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

With these thoughts before us, we can readily see that in the parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus" our Lord did not mean that all rich men and all rich women are to spend eternity in misery because of faring sumptuously every day and wearing purple and fine linen. Also, our Lord did not mean that in order to go to heaven we must be beggars, covered with sores, and have them licked by dogs, and eat crumbs from the rich man's table. Something else has to do with future rewards and punishments, and surely it could not be based on whether one was rich or poor. When rightly understood this parable contains a beautiful lesson in complete harmony with the entire word of God.

### Interpreting the Parable

The rich man in the parable represents a class. It seems reasonable to conclude that the rich man of the parable is intended to represent the Jewish Nation, and Abraham represents God. This is not an uncommon symbolism, because even today we have names of people that represent nations, like "Uncle Sam" represents the United States or "John Bull" represents the British Nation. Verse 29 of the parable reminds us that the Jewish Nation have Moses and the prophets. Moses was the mediator of the Old Law Covenant which was made with Israel.

The rich man particularly represented by the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, is pictured as saying that they had Abraham as their father. These were the two tribes who mainly were permitted to return to Palestine (as then known) when they were captives in Babylon for 70 years after 606 BC, when the land was to remain desolate for 70 years because the Jews never observed the typical jubilees properly — even though they observed 19 jubilees. 70 years of desolation of the land were fulfilled until the reign of the Kingdom of Persia. As Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 25:12: "And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity."

So the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin were permitted to return to Palestine in 536 BC during the first year of the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia. We read in Ezra 1:5: "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised,

to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem."

So under the leadership of Zerubbabel the first wave left in 536 BC for Jerusalem. The second wave left under the leadership of Ezra in 467 BC and the third wave left in 454 BC under the leadership of Nehemiah to build the wall of Jerusalem. It is at this time that the seventy weeks of favor began to count which came to an end in 36 AD.

Thus this one rich man represented the two tribes. The other ten tribes, of which the majority did not have the opportunity of coming in direct contact with the teachings of the Messiah during his first advent, would be properly represented by the five brethren — a ratio of one to two.

The rich man was clothed in purple and fine linen. Purple represents royalty and fine linen represents righteousness. We know that the Jewish nation was a royal nation in God's sight, chosen by him as the channel through which his promised blessings were to flow out to all other nations. This royal standing was received through the natural seed of Abraham. The linen illustrates the typical righteousness that came to the Jews as a result of their endeavor to keep the Mosaic Law, and also through the typical sacrifices of the tabernacle services. The Jewish Nation fared sumptuously every day by virtue of all the rich promises made to them. As long as they were obedient, they were to be blessed richly. For in Amos 3:2 we read: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

To them were committed the oracles of God (the Law and Prophecy). The promises to Abraham and David and their organization as a typical Kingdom of God invested that people with royalty, as represented by the rich man's purple. The typical sacrifices of the law constituted them, in a typical sense, a holy (righteous) nation represented by the rich man's "fine linen" — symbolic of righteousness as told to us in Revelation 19:8, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

God was dealing with the Jewish nation in a typical way. And you will notice that nothing is said in the parable about the rich man being wicked.

So if the rich man represents the Jewish Nation, what does Lazarus, who is the beggar represent? Lazarus also represents a class. He represents the Gentiles and outcasts of Israel during our Lord's first advent. They did not have the promises of God that were given to Israel. All the promises had been made to the Jews and through the Jews. Any Gentile up to that time who desired the blessings of the true

God was required to become a Jew by being made a proselyte. To the Jews, the Gentiles were “dogs” unworthy of any special consideration. You will recall the account of the Syrophenician woman. She desired crumbs from the rich man’s table. The account is given for us in Mark 7:25-28.

“For a certain woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: Yet the dogs under the table eat of the children’s crumbs. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.”

I am sure that you will have observed that the children referred to here is the Jewish Nation. The dogs referred to here are the Gentiles. The woman, being a Gentile, was desiring a crumb of favor from Jesus. Because of her faith she received the crumb of favor as recorded in verse 29.

The parable goes on to say that the “Rich Man” died. The status of both Jews and Gentiles was greatly changed shortly after our Lord’s crucifixion and resurrection. There came a time when the Jewish nation died to their favor. Our Lord Jesus came to them at his first advent; and they rejected him. For we read in John 1:11-12: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not, But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name.”

Because the majority of the Jews rejected our Lord, and as a nation they rejected him after coming to them as a nation their, “house was left unto them desolate.” They lost their place of chief favor before the Lord, and as a nation they died or went into oblivion. We are informed about this in Matthew 23:37, 38, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

### **Death of a Nation**

Thus we can see that the Jewish nation died nationally, but as a people they continued to live, and from that day the flames of persecution have engulfed them almost constantly. They were scattered and oppressed in many parts of the world and have experienced much trouble. But just as historically recorded, deliverance came to Israel as a result of divine intervention on their behalf in the past; so

now the prophecies indicate divine intervention is to be the final solution of the Jewish problem.

Looking in more detail as to what has occurred in respect to God’s dealings with the nation of Israel, you will notice that on the Divine Plan chart, Israel’s history covers two periods of time — each of equal length. The first period, called the Jewish Age, began 232 years after the Covenant was made with Abraham, which was at the death of Jacob. It was in Genesis 32:28 that Jacob was told: “Thy Name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”

So it was before his death in 1813 BC, Jacob was commanding all his sons and he told them in Genesis 49:28: “All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them and blessed them everyone according to his blessing he blessed them.”

Starting at Jacob’s death in 1813 BC they were considered as a nation, and the people of Israel enjoyed God’s favor, although mixed with punishment. For 1845 years, until 33 AD, when Jesus proclaimed: “your house is left unto you desolate,” God blessed them when they served him faithfully. When they sinned and turned toward evil, He punished them. When they repented, He once more freely received them. But Jeremiah warned of a time when they would be punished without national favor. In Jeremiah 16:13 we read, “Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not show you favor.” And in Jeremiah 16:18 Jeremiah said, “And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double” (mishneh — repetition, duplicate or second portion).

This is also in fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy, that God would impose a corresponding period of disfavor upon them. We read in Zechariah 9:12: “Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee.”

### **Israel’s Double**

The double means duplicate — a duplicate of 1845 years of disfavor, as opposed to 1845 years of favor. The 1845 years of favor, as we already noted, began with the death of Jacob in 1813 BC and ended in 33 AD with the death of Jesus. The disfavor began there, when the Lord said, “Your house is left unto you desolate,” and lasted for 1845 years to 1878 BC. Since then it was time to speak comfortably to Israel, according to the scriptures. The first indication of returned favor to Israel took place as early as 1878. In Isaiah 40:1, 2 we read: “Comfort ye, comfort

ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins."

It was in 1878 that the Jews founded the first new village in the land called Petah Tikva — meaning the Gate of Hope. Today it is a city of well over 100,000 people, located ten miles from Tel Aviv. It was through the efforts of Benjamin Disraeli, the first and only Jewish Prime Minister of England, who was elected as Prime Minister in the year 1874, the date of our Lord's return — his second presence. Benjamin Disraeli met with representatives of ten countries at the Berlin Congress of Nations, where England was given protectorate over Palestine. Before that they were under Turkish rule. Disraeli had approached the Congress with intentions of achieving that control over Palestine — fully expecting a mass immigration of Jews to reach one million strong, speaking one language, and animated by one spirit to achieve autonomy and independence.

This turn of events finally eased restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchase in Palestine. Here the reclamation of the land by Jewish immigrants began. This regathering, beginning in 1878, actually marked the first tangible sign of God's favor returning to the Jewish people — a positive sign that the times of restitution had already begun.

### **Valley of Dry Bones**

Not only did their double of favor and disfavor end in 1878, but the prophecy of Ezekiel 37 about the "valley of dry bones" apparently began to have its fulfillment. Here the dry and withered bones of Israel's hope began to stir. Sinews came on substance, and skin — giving them beauty. In progressive stages they are being prepared for the breathing of life into them, when Israel would live as a holy nation and be the people of God. Brother Russell said in Reprint 2506 that they would be "infused with the spirit of the Lord as the breath or energy of national life, begotten of faith in the promises and standing again as a nation." Israel is now a nation among the nations. This is a progressive stage which eventually will lead to full harmony with their God, when they all recognize the Messiah and blindness is removed fully.

The parable also states that Lazarus also died and went to Abraham's bosom. How do we understand that? Well, Lazarus as I have already mentioned represents the Gentiles. The Gentiles died to their disfavor so they were a favored class for 1845 years. Those who desired God's favor were carried to Abraham's bosom. Remember this is a parable, it is

not literal; you couldn't get one man into another man's bosom, let alone many men. Because the Jews rejected our Lord, favor was extended to the Gentiles and outcasts of Israel. So they were carried into Abraham's bosom symbolically. Abraham is represented as the father of the faithful. He receives all the children of faith, who are thus recognized as heirs of all the promises made unto Abraham. For the children of the promise are counted for the seed (children of Abraham). For we read in Galatians 3:29: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

### **The First Gentile Convert**

Therefore, Cornelius was the first Gentile convert in 36 AD and recipient of the Abrahamic promise as recorded in Genesis 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice," and in verse 17, we read, "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore."

So Abraham's seed is as the stars of heaven. But the seed is also to be as the sand upon the sea shore. In Galatians 3:16, we read: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Primarily then, the seed of Abraham is Christ. "And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

Those who come into Christ by full consecration thus become Abraham's seed, represented by the stars of heaven. In due time after the church is complete — as represented by the stars of heaven — anyone coming into Christ will be the earthly seed of Abraham, represented by the sand upon the seashore. Therefore, during the Gospel Age, both Jews and Gentiles who have fully believed have been carried symbolically to Abraham's bosom so to speak.

The parable also speaks of the great gulf between the rich man and Lazarus. How true this has been. There has been much prejudice between Judaism and Christianity. The "great gulf fixed" represents the wide difference between the Gospel Church and the Jews. Only a few Jews have come into Christ down through the Gospel Age. The gospel church enjoyed free grace, joy, comfort and peace, as true sons of God, and the Jew held on to the law. Though the parable mentions no bridging of this "great gulf," other portions of Scriptures indicate that it was to be "fixed" only throughout the Gospel Age, and that at its close the rich man, having received the measurement of punishment for his sins, will walk out of his fiery troubles over the bridge of God's promises yet unfulfilled to that nation.



A few of these scriptures are given to us by the Apostle Paul in Romans 11:19-33. As Brother Russell says in Reprint 2605, "In a word this parable seems to teach precisely what Paul explained in Romans 11:19-32. Because of unbelief the natural branches were broken off and the wild branches grafted into the Abrahamic root-promise. The parable leaves the Jews in their trouble and does not refer to their final restoration to favor — doubtless because it was not pertinent to the feature of the subject treated; but Paul assures us that when the fullness of the Gentiles — the full number from among the Gentiles necessary to make up the bride of Christ is come in, "they [natural Israel] shall obtain mercy through your [the church's] mercy."

He assures us that this is God's covenant with fleshly Israel who lost their higher, spiritual promises but are still the possessors of certain earthly promises, to become the chief nation of earth. In proof of this statement, the Apostle Paul quotes from the prophet Isaiah in Romans 11:26, "... the deliverer shall come out of Zion [the glorified church] and turn away ungodliness from Jacob" [the fleshly seed] and in verse 28: "As concerning the Gospel [high calling], they are enemies [cast off] for your sakes, but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes." (32) "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." (33) "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

Another similar promise is given in Hosea 6:1-3: "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

The days in this scripture are each 1000 years long, because it was during the two 1000 year days that the favor was lost by the nation of Israel, but it is during the third 1000 year day after our Lord's first advent that favor is restored to Israel — more especially since 1878 that favor began to be restored. We are now in the year 2004, 130 years into this third 1000 year day and 126 years since that favor began to be restored to Israel. Now Israel is a nation among the nations. And no power or force will drive that nation to oblivion.

### **Prophecy Fulfilled**

A remarkable fulfillment of prophecy is found in Zechariah 12:6, quoting the last part of that verse, we read "... and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem." Up until the vic-

tory of the 1967 six day war, the Jerusalem that belonged to Israel was the new part of the city. But true to this prophecy, the Lord did not intend to divide the city of Jerusalem, but his intention was that Jerusalem would again be "in her own place, even in Jerusalem." Here is an almost incredible fulfillment after the six-day war in 1967.

But there still is much conflict and trouble in the Middle East, with countries surrounding Israel determined to destroy that nation. What is the explanation for this? Well, Israel must still experience one more wave of trouble and this is referred to in the Scriptures as "Jacob's trouble," which means Israel's trouble, because Jacob was told by God that his name would be Israel. We find this account in Jeremiah 30:7-11: "Alas, for that day is great so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. (8) For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: (9) But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. (10) Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. (11) For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."

This tells us that God, through Christ, will intervene on their behalf and his name shall be made known in the eyes of many nations. As we read in Ezekiel 38:23: "Thus will I magnify myself and sanctify myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD."

This trouble will be necessary for Israel to recognize that God is dealing with them through Christ, at which time they will, as a nation, recognize the Messiah. The trouble will be stopped and a New Covenant will be inaugurated with Israel through the Ancient Worthies. God's law will be put in the minds of each individual of Israel and will eventually reach all the Gentiles. Those who respond will have God's law rewritten in their hearts. And furthermore, the Ancient Worthies or Princes as spoken of in Psalms 45, will see to it when resurrected upon the earth, that the laws of the Kingdom are enforced. All shall at that time know the Lord. If anyone refuses to obey under those favorable conditions, they will die the second death.

Those of the Lazarus class who during the Gospel Age have accepted Christ and been faithful unto death, will be Abraham's seed (body members of Christ) and will assist in the work of blessing all the families of the earth, so that the earthly seed, as

sand upon the seashore can also receive a blessing, if obedient to the laws of the righteous kingdom. What a great time of blessing that will be. May the Lord add his blessing.

## *Presentation Seven*

# Truth and Lies

Brother Andrzej Dabek (Poland)

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*Dear* Brethren, all of us realize that we live during a time of great danger and anxiety. Ever present lies are an every day occurrence. They are used by politicians, media, etc. This plague of lies has invaded our lives to the point that we get used to them and their presence in every day life is considered normal.

Lies associated with religion and many other aspects of life poison whole societies. All these, though having different roots and reasons, resemble each other as they seek their own interests. The bad man wants to be considered good, the stupid one wants to be considered wise, and the thief wants to pretend to be honest, the convict wants to be innocent, etc. We are unable to innumerate the advantages that could be achieved if the world would have dispensed with this uncleanness (lies). Many institutions, courts and governmental institutions would be unnecessary. Lies, on the other hand, are very expensive. Individuals lie to each other and whole societies and nations continue to deceive one another. Wherever we look we meet with lying and its consequences. Many deceive many and all lie about everything. Frightened and often scorched by the surrounding evil resulting from lying, we often turn in our thoughts and longings to the opposite — to the Truth.

### **The Truth**

The thinking man searches for truth regarding his beginning, considers the present evil order of things, and most of all tries to discern what awaits him in the future. Confused people with many mutually exclusive theories desire to search and to get to know the truth.

Is it possible for a man who is unaware of the Word of God, on the basis of his own knowledge and using only his mind, to recognize the truth regarding his beginning and the purpose of his life? Surely, he cannot. Let us make it into a hypothesis.

The truth totally corresponds to the facts. Facts are the truths received from a sure, absolute source. Somebody portrayed our whole life and its search for meaning as a struggle with death. He compared it to a funeral procession. Can a funeral procession turn into a procession of joy? Before we answer this question on the basis of the absolute source — the Holy Word — we will review the basic truths connected with the beginning of man and his purpose in life as well as his future.

### **Lies About Man's Beginning**

What is the truth regarding the beginning of man on earth? The Bible answers this question clearly: “God created man in the likeness of God” (Genesis 5:1). John, the Revelator adds that “He created him perfect,” thus the theory about evolution — searching the beginnings of man in monkeys — takes away from the dignity of man and is a lie.

The theory of reincarnation is a lie as well. The theory of reincarnation was known in Greek philosophy and stated that the spark of human, plant, or animal life after its death takes on another body depending on merits. Perhaps Jesus wanted to disprove this particular theory, so that his appearances after his resurrection were always as a man.

The theory of an immortal soul is also a tragic lie. Early, in the era of Paleolithic, man attempted to solve the mystery of death by faith in immortality. He would bury everyday objects with a dead body. The early stages of Buddhism taught different ways about the victory over death and evil through entering the state of nirvana — described as a state of immortality and great happiness. Many are familiar with the beliefs of Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans stating that death is not the end of life. In the canonical book of Islam, the Koran, death is treated as a critical moment for the human soul which exists even after human life is taken. The results of this lie can be observed daily.

We all come from Adam, we are part of a great family. No one presently living has ever seen a perfect human being. Hospitals are filled up with the sick and the suffering ones. Nursing homes are overflowing with old people, there is no room in prisons, and streets are crowded with people. All of the above are imperfect. Why is it? Was obedience to God's rules so difficult to achieve for the first human couple? The extremely suggestive lie of Satan, "ye shall not surely die" caused them to be expelled from Paradise — they started to feed themselves using imperfect nourishment and they were slowly dying. The consequences of this lie, so tragic and painful, have been felt by millions through the ages. God in his unfailing love softened this lot by sending his Son Jesus Christ.

### The Truth

Why did Jesus become a man? Why did the loving Father permit humiliation and suffering of his beloved Son? "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The powerful nature of this event is hard to comprehend. We could never have enough gratitude to the Lord God for this expression of love toward men. If we were only to assume that as a result of Jesus' activities death will be destroyed, the greatest enemy of man (the result of the sin of lying) — this would be the fulfillment of all efforts and dreams of thousands of people.

If additionally we look into the promised blessings of happiness, worry free life — harmonious and full of love for God — Can we really fully imagine that? Are we able to imagine even a greater blessing of belonging to the special class "the bride of Christ?"

Jesus, in front of Pilate answered his question: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18:37). Pilate, who did not understand the answer, posed another question, "What is truth?" Jesus, praying to the Heavenly Father said, "thy word is truth."

Using Jesus' statement, we will attempt to notice the association between facts regarding man's beginning, his purpose in life and his future. Although we do not claim the absolute interpretation of the Word of God, we all notice the beauty of the Divine Plan of the Ages. Hosea 2:18 says, "in that day I will make a covenant for them with beasts of the field, and with the fowls of the heaven, and ... of the ground."

We will probably differ in the interpretation of particulars of this prophecy. However, as the beauty of the rainbow depends on the harmonious connection of colors, the picture of the promised future inspires us with hope and joy. The Bible — the Word of God recorded by people whose minds were influenced by God — is the inexhaustible source of truth and answers for all searching questions and doubts. It depends on our searching and the strength of our desires to resolve the questions. The Creator reveals Truth in His Word, He tells us about events that happened in the past and things that will happen in the future.

For the ones who are searching and those who are in the Truth, His Word is the pointing rod which shows how to behave in order to find yourself in His Kingdom, how to live so that you can inherit life eternal.

Jesus, who is now calling and electing his Church, prepares us for the great work of restitution — times of renewal of all things. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). One of the prophets wrote in Psalms 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

We know that it is only through his death that Jesus could redeem mankind. Were he to remain in the state of death, the possibility of salvation and freeing people would be lost. He could not have said "you will know the truth and the truth will make you free" as well as "Because I live ye shall live also." He paid the price of his human life for a ransom for all mankind so that all people in due time can benefit from his ransom sacrifice. Jesus was raised from the dead and entered heaven. God raised him not as a man but as a spiritual being having the divine nature "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore" (Revelation 1:18).

Jesus' resurrection is a guarantee that all who died will be raised from death, "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23). "As in Adam all die so in Christ Jesus shall all be made alive" (verse 22). Resurrection implies awakening to life. For the faithful ones that occurs in the "twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52).

It is perfectly logical to deduce from the Holy Word that there are grades of salvation. It is up to the individual which place in the resurrection he/she will be assured. Jesus came to us, his brethren, with a joyful Gospel that "in my father's house there are many mansions," and just before his death he told

the disciples, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:3).

### **Longing of the Heart**

I think that every one of us has experienced the feeling of longing that cannot be measured by the visible world when our hearts and minds long for true joy and true peace that is unattainable on this earth. Even when we have an illusion of happiness, when we are with people that we love and who love us, or when we are surrounded by beauty, “we do not lack anything.”

If we deeply consider the above promise, then we understand what kind of mansion we are longing for. This longing was found in the heart of the young man who came to Jesus with a question: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 18:18, NAS) He had many possessions, he was young, healthy and probably well situated in society.

One can be rich and at the same time pious. One can have many earthly possessions and yet have a feeling of missing something, a feeling of poverty and longing for the heavenly kingdom. It did not occur to this young man that one can comply with all the commandments and yet lack some things that cannot pass through the “needle’s eye.” The young man was not so bad since the Lord loved him in spite of it. Whoever thinks that the Lord can love somebody for everything and not in spite of all things is in gross error. And although the young man left, saddened by the Lord’s remark, he could come back and get to know Jesus.

### **Truth Should Transform Us**

The knowledge of the truth should transform and keep on transforming our life. The Apostle Paul is a beautiful example of such change. He was a rich, well educated man, a citizen of Rome that wanted to live in accordance with the professed principles. His actions were the reflection of values that he kept precious to his heart, he actively and zealously persecuted those that favored the new doctrine, being merciless in their treatment. The same enthusiasm and determination he showed when he converted. He was ready to face any persecution and even death.

In his statement before king Agrippa, he is an example of rare heroism and courage. Festus called his confession maddening while Paul answered him, “I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness” (Acts 26:25).

The Truth should strengthen the positive features of our character, the Truth should develop in us fruits of the spirit and especially in the present time

of confusion and coldness — the spirit of sympathy and love toward neighbors. Let us not only differentiate between good and evil but also between justice and injustice, and as much as we can, live according to those professed principles. We do not expect admiration or understanding in the eyes of the world when we walk the way of righteousness and live in accordance with the believed principles.

### **Spiritual Standards**

“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). The world, ourselves, and the Lord have all different measuring standards. How long have we been longing for this occasion in Polanica? We have had plans and hopes connected to this event.

Can we define further what we hoped for thinking about “Polanica 2004?” Were we longing to meet our dear brethren, longing to talk sincerely to them, longing for peace and a calming influence that these days spent at Jesus’ feet will bring us?

We longed for a joy that would spread in our hearts as our goal is reached. Let’s not forget, however, that the primary goal of this get together is to glorify our God and his Son as well as the realization that we need to learn, recollect, and treasure something or change something in our lives — make a new resolution. We have made many arrangements in order to be present here and can stay in this pretty place for a few days. How much more careful should we be in making arrangements for our eternity!

Whoever feels longing for something better, higher and more perfect than what is in this world will surely recognize Jesus’ words about the kingdom and the father’s house as the most beautiful and precious in the Gospel of Salvation (Ephesians 1:13).

### **Establishment of the Kingdom**

Jesus said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). The kingdom will not be established until the Church is selected. “And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). Let us add that the preaching of the kingdom is not to convert the world but for a witness, and the end of the world is the end of present evil systems (Satan’s governments).

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look

up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:25-26, 28, 29). He told them a parable, “Behold the fig tree, and all the trees.” The revelation of times and seasons is very useful and encourages us.

We are living during the time of special blessings for the Church as well as the last dying moments, sufferings of the passing world, falling of nominal Christendom, where some are looking to religion to reestablish moral stability. This is only another of Satan’s propaganda. “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet” (Revelation 16:13).

It is only at the presence of the Lord that, “... all the men upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground” (Ezekiel 38:20). After that the final display of God’s wrath will occur: unmasking and falling of many centuries of the evil system.

“And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath” (Revelation 16:18-19).

It is only after these events, or during these events, that the voice of the Lord from Israel will reach all people. The visible sign will be resurrection of the prophets. The Lord will calm down the elements and restore the lost paradise, “what was lost.”

### **The Resurrection**

A beautiful picture of the resurrection of the Old Testament prophets we find in the miracle that Jesus performed resurrecting a young man from Nain (Luke 7:11-17). Soon after healing the centurion’s servant, Jesus proclaimed the truth about the heavenly kingdom. There were walking with him disciples and many people. When they reached a city gate (Nain), “there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her ... And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak.”

In the funeral procession there were many people, picturing the whole world of 6000 years, and the stopping of the funeral by the Lord pictures the stopping of the dying process.

Isaiah 2:2-3 says, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

Zion represents a spiritual phase of the kingdom, the glorified Church, head and body. From the earthly capital of the kingdom, from Jerusalem, the law of the Lord will come forth. “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth” (Psalms 45:16). “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zechariah 8:23).

The New Covenant will be established and maybe some of the Jews will still be going back to their homeland. The ten men asking for help might represent 10 representatives of the European nations. Anti-semitism, which is now increasing, will disappear and the whole mentality of people will change as they will desire the blessings from Israel.

Restitution — the earthly phase of the kingdom will convince many. However there will be those who will not accept the new order of things. Some will need a special encouragement in the form of difficulties pictured by a symbolical “iron rod.”

At this time “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord” — God’s authority will execute the arrangements and commandments of the new world. This process is pictured in the healing of Naaman by Elisha in the Old Testament. The leprous Naaman did not get healed instantly, but ultimately he carried out the assignment to immerse himself seven times in Jordan. His body became clean again, as the body of a baby.

The three examples of resurrection performed by Jesus: Jairus’ daughter, the son of a widow, and Lazarus could represent three types of resurrection: the Church, the Ancient Worthies and the whole world. The truths about death and resurrection as well as the resurrection and restitution of the whole world were prominent in the Apostles’ teachings after the descent of the holy Spirit (Acts 3:21). These truths contain the purpose and goal of human life.

Christ said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away” (Mark 13:31).

The Apostle Peter adds, “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13). We are waiting for the spiritual phase of the kingdom, the glorified Church, the power of the Kingdom as well as for a newly organized society in God’s kingdom, based on truth, love and justice. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven” (Psalms 85:10, 11).

### **Godly Endurance**

We have seen throughout mankind’s history wonderful individuals who, faced with life or death as a price for truth or lie, chose truth and death. Among us, there was no lack of brethren who, by choosing truth, paid the price of imprisonment, health or death. In their transcendence a great truth was expressed that man is of divine origin and thus he can be free even when faced with the threat of violence or death.

I would like to evoke an example of a man — a leader fighting for a unification of his country, who said the following to a crowd of young people: “Do you know what is my promise? ... Hunger, thirst, heat, bloody wounds and death in exchange for freedom. Who is with me?” A multitude of willing hands and enthusiastic hearts was his answer.

Beloved Brethren, we also answered a similar question, and nobody assured us that the way that we choose would be easy and straight. To the contrary, Jesus said: “whosoever will come after me, let

him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34).

Great purposes require great sacrifices, and let the realization of our noble goal, the most beautiful in the world, help us. Sufferings and experiences that touch us constitute the cross that we promised to carry to the very end.

Additionally, we are not alone in this way, we have brethren walking beside us in the same direction, as well as, the always present help from above. “All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies” (Psalms 25:10). With great love and silence we look toward Golgotha, where a great Teacher of Truth suffered and died. The Truth is great happiness.

The Apostle Paul reminded Timothy that “the church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). In times when lies and error dominates in the world, when sin reigns, the mission of the Church is to proclaim the truth.

It is on us, the pillars, where God’s truth rests. Let us comprehend the enormity of this statement and the great responsibility associated with it.

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and in truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). Amen.





# *Presentation Eight*

# Amazing Grace

Brother Robert Gorecki (USA)

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*My* Dear Brethren, Love and greetings are brought to you from my dear wife, Deanna, and all the brethren who work at the Dawn, the brethren of the New York Church and countless brethren throughout America.

## **An Overview of the Dawn**

Before we begin our lesson today titled Amazing Grace, I would like to take a few minutes to share some information with you concerning the operation of the Dawn. The Dawn is a small publishing plant located in New Jersey, for the past 60 years, about 15 miles from New York City. From that time on, the main focus of the Dawn has been to supply truth literature for ecclesias, personal studies and public witness work.

The six volumes of the *Studies in the Scriptures*, *Tabernacle Shadows*, *Photodrama* and numerous books, booklets and tracts on bible subjects are provided at cost or below cost. The Dawn sponsors more than 40 weekly radio programs in America and foreign lands, and several weekly cable television programs.

The Dawn publishes a monthly English magazine called "The Dawn." Over 10,000 copies are produced each month. In addition, eight foreign language Dawn Magazines are produced six times per year.

All volunteer workers at the Dawn find it a great privilege to be part of the harvest activity here at the end of the age. All of us at the Dawn are very thankful for the support services of many individual brethren and ecclesias throughout America and foreign lands which help produce publications and carry out the subscription and follow-up activity of the Dawn.

## **"Amazing Grace"**

About 300 years ago, a man named Captain John Newton was sailing his ship near Newfoundland and came upon a violent storm in which he almost lost his life. At that moment, he felt that God had saved him and his whole life changed! Captain John had

been, for many years, a slave trader selling black people who had been forced to leave Africa to become slaves in the United States. In time, he left his ship and became a preacher of the word of God in England. One day the Reverend John Newton thought back to his earlier days and began to write the words that would become the most popular recorded hymn in America today — hymn number 126A in our new English Hymn book — Amazing Grace. The words of the first verse are "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see."

The Reverend John Newton had learned one of God's great principles found in the scriptures, that God's grace — or unmerited favor, or undeserved favor — was not just for good people, but even for a wretch like Captain John.

As Bible Students, we realize that our understanding of God's word and his great plan of salvation, a kingdom that will bless all the families of earth differs greatly from the beliefs of the Reverend John, but his grasp of the principle of God's unmerited grace or favor is to be admired.

Our lesson today follows along the line of God's amazing grace even though we will not use very many scriptures which contain the word grace.

Have some of you, Brethren, ever wondered why good people you have met throughout your life believe in God, enjoy studying the scriptures and talking about them, and all those people you have witnessed to, your good friends, relatives, even some of your own children who have been exposed to the truth — many seem to fail to grasp the real beauty, depth and understanding of the plan of God?

After all our time and efforts to explain and share our knowledge and love for God's word, these dear ones are content with what they have heard and merely go on with their life.

Are we a little disappointed when this happens? When it's our family, our children? Do we feel that

we have failed? We think maybe if we just tried a little harder, or did a little more, if we just would have taken some extra time. Do thoughts like this go through your mind at a time like this?

Now we are going to explore the scriptures and see if we can find an answer to some of these questions!

### **Jacob and Esau**

Our first scripture is Romans 9:13, “as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

Paul, writing to the Hebrews, a little later, mentions Esau again in Hebrews 12:16-17: “Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

“God hated Esau.” Did God really hate Esau? If we look at another scripture where the same word “hate” is used, perhaps we can understand Romans 9:13. In Luke 14, the Lord talked about a certain man who made a great supper, and bade many (Luke 14:16) and many had excuses why they could not come. Then in verse 26, chapter 14, he says, “If any man come to me and hate [same Greek word] not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” Was Jesus saying to be his disciple, we must hate our parents, our children and our brothers and sisters? What about the words of our Lord found in John 13:34, 35: “love one another” and Matthew 5:44, “love your enemies.”

When we look closer at the word “hate,” we find it has the meaning of “love less.” Jesus was saying if we don’t have more or greater love for him, more than mother, father, wife, etc., we cannot be his disciple.

So Paul was writing to the Romans in 9:13 and saying God loved Jacob more, but Esau he loved less!

In Genesis 25, we find that Abraham had eight sons and in verse 5 it says, “Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.” Isaac was his second son. But what made Isaac special was that he was the son of promise, spoken by God.

As young children, we learned the story of the birth of these twin boys, Esau and Jacob, recorded in the 25th chapter of Genesis — how the second boy was born holding onto the heel of his brother. (The Hebrew name Jacob means “heel catcher.”)

Later in life, the older brother, Esau, was extremely hungry and agreed to sell his birthright for a

bowl of soup, some bread and a drink. Years pass on and as Father Isaac concludes that he is about to die, he asked Esau, one last time, to go hunting for his favorite meat so that he can enjoy it one last time before he dies. Isaac also mentions to his older son, Esau, that it’s time to pass on his birthright blessing to him before he dies.

Rebekah, his wife, overhears Isaac speaking to Esau and, as soon as he departs, she hurries and directs Jacob to prepare a meal that will taste like wild deer, and she instructs Jacob to cover his arms with animal skin, so he appears to have hairy arms like his brother Esau, and with Isaac’s failing health and poor eyesight, Jacob succeeds in fooling Isaac, even though Father Isaac questions him, “are you really Esau?” But Isaac gives Jacob the birthright blessing. Just as he finishes, Esau returns and discovers what Father Isaac has done. He finds that it is too late for Isaac to change the blessing that he gave to his younger brother. This is an unusual story ending with what appears to be deception by a mother and her son to gain the blessing of the birthright for her second son.

### **Yet God seems to bless their action.**

Closer examination of the events of the story reveals the following:

(1) Isaac marries Rebekah at 40 years of age and they remain childless for 20 years, after which Isaac turns to God for help and God responds by allowing Rebekah to become pregnant.

(2) Months later, Rebekah is about to deliver and has problems. She, too, turns to God for help and understanding and in Genesis 25:23, “the Lord said unto her, two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.” Do you think Rebekah told Isaac what the Lord said — that the first born son would serve the younger son? I do!

(3) Genesis 25:33 tells us that “Esau sold his birthright unto Jacob.” Yes, Esau agreed to trade his birthright blessing for some food!

(4) When Isaac was old and about to die, he is prepared to give the birthright blessing to his oldest son, his firstborn. How old was Isaac? 117 or even 137 years old, we are not sure. Jacob and Rebekah have waited 57 or even 77 years for God to arrange the birthright blessing for Jacob, but nothing happened. Now it was just hours away! Rebekah and Jacob are forced into action.

(5) Father Isaac’s words and actions following the passing on of the blessing were kind and loving to

Jacob. I believe Isaac realized what had to be done to carry out God's choice of who would receive the birthright. God made the choice between these two sons even before they were born!

### Paul Sheds Light on Jacob and Esau

The Apostle Paul tells us in the book of Romans, chapter 9 about the Jews — how they had all the promises, yet because of unbelief, the call would go to the Gentiles to be part of the family of God. Then he brings up our story of Jacob and Esau. Romans 9:11, “for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election [or selection] might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.” The Jews thought that the law and works could make them acceptable but Paul says it's to whosoever God calls! Paul tells us in the following verse 12, God said, “the elder shall serve the younger” and in verse 13, we read again, God said, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated [loved less].”

Then in verse 14 Paul says, “what shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.” Paul is asking the question is God unfair? Is he wrong in choosing Jacob over Esau?

To support this position, Paul proceeds to quote the words of God in Exodus 33:19. He says, in Romans 9, verse 15, “For he [that is God] saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

In Exodus 33:19-23, Moses is hid in a cleft of the rock as God passes and God speaks to Moses and says, “I will make my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”

God was telling Moses that it was his choice as to who he would show mercy to! The Hebrew word for gracious means “to bow or stoop in kindness to an inferior.” God is saying to Moses that he will stoop or bend down to who he chooses! And he will show mercy, that is love and compassion, to who he chooses.

Paul records his conclusion of God's words to Moses in verse 16, “so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” Paul is telling us that one may desire to know God, may search for God, may spend a life time looking for God, but if God chooses not to have mercy for such an individual, that person will not find God in their lifetime.

This conclusion may sound unfair. How can God pass by one who is earnestly seeking him? Paul

gives us his answer in verse 20: “O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?”

In verse 21, we read “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?” Paul is telling us that God has the power to make us what he chooses! He concludes this 9th chapter by telling us that the Gentiles were also being chosen by God to complete his church. Israel lost its exclusive call by being disobedient.

### Graces and Fruits of the Spirit

The Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1:5-8 has a list which has been titled “graces of the spirit.” These combined with the Apostle Paul's list of fruits of the spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23 brings to us a total of about 12 categories of human qualities.

I would like to ask you four questions for your consideration:

**1st Question:** how many of these qualities does one need to be called or what amount of each of these qualities does one need — like love, kindness, self control, faith, a good heart, etc.? A very little amount or a lot — just how much?

**2nd Question:** how does one get enough of these fruits and graces? Are we born with them? Is it self discipline, or parents, or our friends, or do we find instruction in the printed page?

**3rd Question:** how many of the six billion people living today possess this minimum quantity of fruits and graces? Or is it just Bible Students? Or is it thousands? Or millions? Or hundreds of millions?

**4th Question:** is God obligated to call all who possess this minimum quantity of fruits and graces?

Rather than being prequalified with a minimum portion of the fruits and graces needed to be called to the high calling, rather than being, as Paul says, one who desires or hopes or wishes or one who makes a great life-long effort to find God, God is telling us that he selects or calls those who he wants to be part of his heavenly family.

Paul tells us about some of those who God calls in his letter to the Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 6:10-11, “thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.”

The privilege of being called is only a small beginning, the first step, the beginning of one's desire to know God and the changing of one's life slowly into the pattern of God's dear son. Jesus said in Mat-

thew 22:14, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” Jesus also said that those who are called must desire to enter at the straight gate. Matthew 7:14, “strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” And the words of Revelation 17:14 tell us that there are three steps — called, chosen and faithful.

Others who are called are listed by Paul in Ephesians 2:1-7: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind: and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us. Even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ.” Verse 7, “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

In these scriptures, Paul says that in the ages to come, God will show the whole world his heavenly family that he selected. Not many wise, mighty or noble, but the little people of the earth, some of the lame, sick and afflicted and some thieves, murderers, drunkards, abusers and many others who followed Satan.

He will show the whole world how his great mercy worked in selecting and drawing these people from all walks of life to become part of his loving heavenly family.

What amazing grace God showed in calling you and me Brethren. When we look at others, we see so many who are more worthy, yet we are grateful that God has called even us!

### **God's Choice**

In conclusion, Brethren, the Apostle Paul tells us it is God's own choosing of who he calls and God tells Moses that he decides who he will show mercy to — that it is his choice! God calls who he desires and if he has called your friend, your relative, your son or daughter, or your wife or husband, rejoice and be thankful that you can walk together in the Lord, that you can share the same life of consecration, that you can help each other be faithful unto death. But if our efforts to encourage, and instruct and to be an example fail at this time to result in God extending his mercy to one of our loved ones — rejoice also that you have had, and continue to have, the opportunity to share the principles and promises of God, to share the hope of the coming kingdom and reinforce the comfort of knowing that God has a glorious plan and they along with the billions of Adam's race will all have a part in that kingdom here on the restored earth.

## Presentation Nine

# Continue in My Word

Brother Moses Obire (Nigeria)

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*Dearly* beloved brethren, I bring you love and greetings from your brethren in Nigeria in general and the Warri Class in particular. They all voted that I greet you with the text of Philippians 1:2, “Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our discourse is centered on what we *must do* as followers of Jesus Christ.

Jude wrote only one epistle to the church, in which he brought to their attention the prevailing condition of corrupt teachers and doctrinal heresies. He writes in verses 1 to 6:

“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”

Then he adds in verses 20 and 21, “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy Spirit, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

### Our Responsibility to God

To keep ourselves in the love of the heavenly father is the most essential work for you and I, who

have heard the divine call and accepted it. All that we have to do in this world can only be pleasing to the Father if and only we keep ourselves always in the love of the Father.

One way of doing this is the topic of our discourse, Continue in My Word.

John 8:31, 32: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Jesus in the above statement gives a fundamental instruction or condition to his followers: *then, now* and in the *future*.

*Now*, because it is the only way the followers will know the truth and be free from the blighting destructive influences of the wiles of Satan and the traditions and creeds of men for which Jesus has given a warning (see verse 32).

*Future*, because it is the only way or condition whereby one will have life (see verse 51 and Acts 3:23). Verse 51 says, “Verily, verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” Acts 3:23 says, “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet [Jesus] shall be destroyed from among the people.”

Why are the words of Jesus so important that they are the key to life?

The Bible answers in John 6:63, “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” The Apostle Peter calls them the “words of eternal life” (see verse 68). Then, again, Jesus himself says in John 14:23 and 24, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.”

So, we can see that the words of Jesus referred to in our key text are in reality the words of God, for as

he has just said, he only spoke those things which were given to him to speak by his heavenly Father.

This has been predicted in Deuteronomy 18:18, 19 thus: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee [Moses], and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

It was through Jesus Christ that the scriptures of the Old Testament (known as the Torah by the Jews) were revealed, and the Apostles of Jesus were the inspired instruments used by God to further unfold the divine plan and pass the message of the word of God on to the Church. In effect, therefore, we do well to take the Bible as a whole as the word of Jesus, given to the Church by inspiration.

We should especially appreciate the statement of the Lord which emphasizes the words: "Continuing in the Word." The Bible is the great foundation of the Truth Movement. We use the name Bible Students because we thoroughly believe that the Bible alone should be considered the solely inspired authority of our beliefs and practices.

The text suggests that we continue to recognize the authority and importance of the inspired word of God as its meaning was brought to light by the Lord Jesus Christ at his first advent — "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). And also at his second advent when "he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:37).

### Disciples Indeed

Jesus said that those who continue in His word would be his Disciples indeed. Everywhere we turn today in the world we see people professing to be disciples of Jesus Christ, for that is what the word Christian means. We see people called men and women of God. We see these people on television and at sports stadiums all over the world, dishing out traditions of men and human creeds.

Are these Jesus Christ's disciples really? "... this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men" (Isaiah 29:13). "... But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

It is in view of this state of affairs in the world, particularly during this end of the age, that the words

of the Lord should carry the necessary weight of meaning to the thinking mind.

To be someone's disciple one needs to have all the truth about the Master. So, what is the truth about Jesus Christ? Jesus in praying for his disciples said, "Sanctify them through thy truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

Something very important is revealed in this prayer. And *it is the sanctification of the disciples*. Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:3 said, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification ..." As we do know, sanctification is the setting apart in holiness for God's use, as shown in verse 4 "vessel in sanctification and honour."

There is no way of being a "*disciple indeed*," or being a *true disciple* of Jesus Christ, other than through the sanctifying power of the *Truth*, which is the Word of God. And *it is essential to continue in the Word* if its full powers of sanctification are to accomplish the *will* of God in the life of the professed disciple of Jesus Christ.

Failure to continue in the Word results in groping in the dark, and to easily stray away from the truth. This is alluded to in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Brethren, I dare say that this is very much evidenced in the conduct of some who were once walking, so we thought, with us in the *Truth Movement*. Today, they have no love for the truth, rather they desire the 'glamour' outside and gradually they are given permission to go after that which they seek through strong delusions, so much so that they now believe a lie. We have heard such accuse us of lacking love; lacking prayer power and some say that it is not only in the *Bible Students Movement* that one can make his calling and election sure or gain salvation. They have gone back to what they had been condemning as error in the past years. Such tell us, that Bible Students are too rigid in their interpretation of the Bible. But beloved brethren, do we really have our own interpretations, separate from the actual interpretations of the Bible? No!

### The Truth Sanctifies

In the words of Apostle Paul, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification

of the Spirit and belief of the *Truth*" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

The words of Apostle Paul here harmonize with those of Jesus' Prayer for the disciples in John 17:17. Belief of the *Truth* sanctifies and this leads to the impartation of the holy Spirit in the individual concerned. There is no other way to be sanctified; there is no other way to receive the holy Spirit of God. *Believe the words of Jesus Christ and Continue in them.* That is the only way. *There is only one truth* and it is the one Jesus brought to his disciples from the Father in Heaven (John 17:8-10, 14, 26).

Therefore, Brothers and Sisters in the lord, let us heed the words of the Apostle which reaffirm those of our Head, Jesus Christ, "therefore, brethren, stand fast [continuing in] and hold the traditions which ye have been taught" (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

Throughout the ages Satan has always tried to substitute the traditions of men for the glorious Truth of the Word of God. We have the case of the Israelites who took the Talmud to replace the Torah (see Reprint page 2200 where Brother Russell wrote, "The Talmud stands between the Jew and God's Word just as the Creeds and Decrees of Synods and Councils stand between Christians and the Word").

Soon after the Apostles died, the traditions of men again began to rise in importance among professed followers of Jesus. The Bible was not entirely set aside just like it was with Jews and the Torah, but it was kept hidden under the sackcloth of dead languages such as Latin for many centuries and only a few people called the Clergy were permitted to read it, let alone possess it. The teachings of the church (creeds and catechisms) were claimed to be of equal importance with the Bible. In fact, where there were differences in meaning, the Bible truth was set aside in favour of the traditions of the church (men). We often hear people in some "churches" say, not everything God wants Christians to know or do is written in the Bible, the church doctrines and ordinances make up for the missing truth.

What can we say to such contradiction to the word of God? 2 Timothy 3:15-17 says, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

We can see that gross error has overtaken Christendom because they did not retain the truth. Brother Russell in Reprint page 2200 advised that, "Nothing must be allowed to separate between us

and the inspired Word if we would walk in the light. Whatever 'helps' really point us to the Bible as the only authority, and assist us in rightly dividing it, are profitable to us as servants and guides; but that which attempts to be to us instead of God's Word is a dangerous foe."

Today many preachers have gone abroad with a variety of doctrines. Some we can obviously tell are mere words of men being used by the Devil to cause confusion. However, there are others who cunningly present their teachings, so that the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:24 comes to a reasoning mind.

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

We thank God that the Lord's statement above indicates that it is not possible to deceive the very elect. This is true when we recall the fact that the Lord God has told us "... in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall very word be established" (2 Corinthians 13:1). And 1 Thessalonians 5:21 tell us to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone into the world."

### **The "Very Elect" Not Deceived**

So, we see that the very elect cannot be deceived because they continue in the Word which is the Truth. If there is any strange matter, they subject it to the thorough scrutiny necessary under the screening mirror of the Word of God.

The Psalmist says, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance" (Psalm 89:15).

If we study the Word and know the joyful sound, we shall be "approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15) and shall never need to be ashamed. We shall not be looking for solutions to solve world and imaginary problems, as people who fail to continue in the Word of Jesus are doing.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Let us pause for a while to reflect upon the blessings we have received since receiving the Word of Truth and steadfastly continuing in it.

- We have been able to cast off the traditions of men and know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

- We know that we are living in the harvest time which is the end of the age and that Christ is present as the Lord of the harvest. We know that others not of our fold are still waiting for him to come!

- We know the mystery of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

- We know also that the Ransom is for All (1 Timothy 2:6, 1 Corinthians. 15:21, 22).

- We know Jesus’ explanation that those who know the Truth are made free by the Truth (John 8:32, 36). To the Jewish disciples of his day this meant freedom from the yoke of the Law Covenant and from the burdensome traditions of the elders. To us it is freedom from the bondage of sin and death. The truth does not give us perfection of the flesh, but it does give us assurance that our unwilling imperfections are covered by the robe of Christ’s righteousness; and that we are no longer under the condemnation of death. We are free from fear (Romans 8:15).

- Having been made free from the bondage of sin and death, we have voluntarily become bond slaves of Jesus Christ. We cannot use our freedom to please ourselves, but only to serve the Lord God.

- We know that we have dedicated ourselves to accept God’s direction in our lives, and He leads us in the way of sacrifice. We follow the “Lamb whosoever he goeth” (Revelation 14:4) and we sing along, as in Hymn 27 in the International Hymn book:

He leadeth me, O blessed thought! ...  
He leadeth me! He leadeth me!  
By his own hand he leadeth me.  
His faithful follower I would be,  
For by his hand he leadeth me!

- We know that just as the joy which was set before Jesus enabled him to endure the cross and to despise the shame (Hebrews 12:2) so, we too, are strengthened by the “Exceeding Great and Precious Promises by which we are made partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

- We know that the correct knowledge and understanding of this *Truth* — such a glorious prospect — causes all other things to fade into gross insignificance before us. He who has this feeling will say with the Apostle Paul, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Philippians 3:8-11).

Finally brethren, let us show genuine gratitude to our heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ for their wonderful love for us in giving us the *Truth*. We cannot do so in a better way than by diligently studying and continuing in the Word of the Father given to us through the Son. Then we must also heed the words of Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:17:

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”



## Presentation Ten

# Are You the Man of God?

Symposium • Brothers Ioan Pop, Ioan Galis (Romania)

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### Part 1 — Bro. Ioan Pop

*Beloved* assembly in the Lord, beloved brethren and friends, while expressing my thankfulness towards God for the possibility of being in this place, I would also like to bring you the greetings of love and joy in the Lord from my family, from the brethren in my ecclesia in Razoare and from many brethren in Romania.

“The Man of God” is the topic that I want to present today with the Father’s help, and it has its base text in 1 Kings 13, where some special events are related. Thus, we will try to find answers to such questions as:

- What does ignoring of God’s commandments lead to?
- What is the attitude that God likes when He gives commandments, tasks etc.?
- What is the general behavior of “The Man of God”?

“The Man of God” is an expression which might seem improper considering that all humans belong to God; even so, the word “man” itself has a great significance and importance if we quote the proverb [translator’s note, Romanian proverb]: “it is not a wonder to be a noble (gentleman) but it is a great thing to be a man.”

In the Old Testament, we find the expression “the man of God” to be used for specially appointed men, messengers of God, prophets, such as the example in Deuteronomy 33:1: “And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel” — and it was also used in the case of the angel of the Lord who announced the birth of Samson (Judges 13:6, 7).

In the New Testament we find the expression “the man of God” used for all those faithful in the “house of sons” during the Gospel Age, such as in 1 Timothy 6:11: “But thou, O man of God, flee these

things ...” or in 2 Timothy 3:17, “That the man of God may be perfect ...”

Although the expression “the man of God” is followed by the person’s name in some cases, the verse for our lesson reads only: “man of God, which came from Judah” (2 Kings 23:17). Many of the kings of Israel were immoral and did not have a conduct that followed God’s laws and commandments, and Jeroboam, king after Israel’s division and during the events to be covered in our lesson, is not an exception from immorality, yet on the contrary he behaves worse than those before him.

Looking at his history before becoming a king, he [Jeroboam] was a servant who raised his hand against Solomon, for which Solomon tried to kill him; thus he [Jeroboam] exiled himself to Egypt where he expects the fulfillment of Ahijah’s prophecy by which he was to rule over the 10 tribes of Israel (1 Kings 11:31, 26-40). Upon his return from the exile in Egypt after Solomon’s death, he uses excessively the words of prophet Ahijah: “and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth” and he takes upon himself more prerogatives than should have been apportioned to a king, such as: he gets involved in selecting other priests than those who were empowered by God through the law, he builds altars (house on high places), makes two calves to be worshipped in Dan and Bethel, and institutes a new feast to honor the worship to those calves (1 Kings 11:28-33).

When everything seemed to work according to his [Jeroboam’s] heart, during this period of immoral and divinely disapproved acts and events, a “man of God,” one of His special messengers, came from Judah unto Bethel with a **clear and severe** message concerning the state of affairs in Jeroboam’s kingdom.

The mission of this “man of God” doesn’t seem to be a very difficult task: “go there, say this.” However, we will see the difficulty of the trial he will have later.

This “man of God” initially behaves worthily of his mission. He takes the message to “Bethel,” where the drama takes place, and exactly at the time king Jeroboam was bringing sacrifices, he prophesied against the altar and he speaks about the one who will destroy those immoral high places: “Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name.” The sign that the Lord spoke and that the prophet was a “man of God” was: “the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out” (1 Kings 13:2, 3).

The king, being disturbed and angry for being interrupted during his sacrifice, commands to lay hold on the prophet for daring to speak against him and the altar. This action had a high price as the hand which he put forth against the prophet dried up, so he was humiliated in front of the prophet and of the people who were watching.

He was forced to ask the prophet to pray for him that God will heal his hand, which “the man of God” did — “and the king’s hand was restored him again” (1 Kings 13:6). This event suggests the manner in which in the future, when the kingdom will be fully established on earth, when some will want to do evil because of the tendencies inherited from the present time, they will be stopped so the evil would affect them first and not reach other people, and to the extent of the gravity of their deed, they will need the prayer of the “men of God” — the first of whom will be asked to pray will be the prophets’ class.

Let us see now the trials of the “man of God.” As a result of the manifestation of the power of God, the king admits the sovereignty and authority of his man and invites the prophet to a kingly feast.

It was not easy for the prophet to refuse this type of offer as he was hungry, but the Lord’s commandment — “Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest” — was alive in his mind (1 Kings 13:9). However, his answer “if thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place” (1 Kings 13:8) seemed to imply that he might give in for an offer greater than this half.

Yes! It seems that he left open “just” a little the door of his firmness, and thus “the man of God” cannot pass the next similar, yet more subtle and more difficult trial. Content that he fulfilled his mission, tired and hungry, he rests under a tree. And behold, an “old prophet from Bethel” unsaddles next to him and without any hesitation declares himself to be the Lord’s prophet and says that the Lord spoke to him through an angel saying “bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water” (1 Kings 13:11-18).

Ah! “The man of God” was tired and hungry, and he made a long trip from Judah, and now he fulfilled the Lord’s will, didn’t he? Until now, he withdrew himself from the temptation of eating at the king’s table, and behold, upon his return he fails! Yes! To his misfortune he failed, and as a punishment he did not make it home to Judah, but was torn by a lion because he did not remain firm in the Lord’s commandment (1 Kings 13:24).

Do we remember how a hungry man sold his firstborn right and inheritance for a bowl of pottage of lentils? It was Esau, of course, who being in a similar situation with our character — hungry — did not appreciate enough his state of favor and traded it for an insignificant price.

Beloved brethren, let us try to learn some lessons from this experience. If we believe that Jesus is our Redeemer and righteousness, and we answered the invitation to sacrifice, and partake with Christ by making “a covenant with” God “by sacrifice” (Psalm 50:5), we also gave a positive answer to the question “Are you the man of God?” And we share the same desire as our Lord to be “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” for the Master’s use [2 Timothy 3:17].

We started on the road of consecration and warfare against the flesh, the world and Satan. We were tried by many temptations but we overcame many of the blocks and trials that were in our way for the purpose of distracting us from our mission. “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Hebrews 10:32-36).

During our first trials, perhaps most of us have been more firm and gained one or more battles, resisted smaller or greater trials without giving in on our decisions or on the Lord’s commandment. Certainly, Jesus our Redeemer, “the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2), left us a model of firmness towards temptations and tempters!

Upon finding Jesus in a state of hunger and thirst caused by the 40 days of fasting, Satan seeks different temptations to distract him from God’s plan and cause. The Lord answers firmly to temptation with “it is written” (Matthew 4). Jesus is also tempted in various situations by the leaders of the people, yet he remained firm in everything up until the end of his mission, fulfilling God’s will and commandment with faithfulness.

We also have examples of firmness and faithfulness in the Old Testament, as we remember the firm and enduring Job, who although he belonged to the “house of servants,” he behaved like a son, having upon him the most severe trials planned by Satan.

We should also listen to Apostle Paul who tells us about the “cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 11) when he beseeches us in Hebrews 12:1-2 with these words: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”

Success or failure is dependent upon ourselves, as we read in the Manna text from November 11: “One great difficulty with the Lord’s people is that, even when determined for a right course and thus resisting the temptation, they do not take sufficiently positive action. Many say to the tempter, I have concluded not to yield at this time. Thus they leave in their own minds an opportunity open by which the tempter may return. Our Lord’s course was the proper one: we should dismiss the tempter once and forever. We should take our stand so firmly that even the adversary would not think it worth while to come back at us along that line; ‘Leave me, adversary — I will worship and serve my God alone.’ ”

On the contrary, if the matter is discussed, the result will be that the adversary will bring other motives and arguments and we will be in danger of being overwhelmed by the arguments. We remember Balaam who received a clear answer from the Lord, “Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed” (Numbers 22:12). Yet he still tried some other answers; and although the will of God was ultimately done, he was counted among those who are not worthy to be followed, along with Cain and Core (Jude 11).

Let us turn now and look at ourselves. We also have trials of constancy and firmness in our faith through our conversations with the brethren, here at this convention and in the ecclesia we come from. I do not wish to say that these trials come from the adversary like in the case of “the old prophet” who, just as Moses by the stone in the wilderness, allowed himself to change the original message given by God, believing that He will accept the “enlightened” thoughts that came through his mind.

There can be beloved, experienced brethren by whom some of the most subtle, refined and difficult trials might come, because if they and us if we are not careful, we can be beguiled and believe that God and the Spirit talk to us independently from His written Word, and that the “enlightenments” brought upon certain scriptures are so clear that they can be

demonstrated without the effort of interpreting a scripture with another scripture, as we are admonished in 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

Those who were thus beguiled claim that “the Lord spoke or revealed unto them” that which they preach and we “must sit and eat and drink their food and drink.” Let me mention some of those foods that pass from time to time by us: “There isn’t a heavenly calling anymore and the door for any opportunity to suffer for Christ is closed.” Let us notice that the attack comes on the side, not frontally, in order to gradually and continuously give in.

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” and God will not leave unrewarded the sacrifice and efforts of any of His faithful ones. And other scriptures such as: “for he is faithful that promised” (Hebrews 10:23, 11:6) — the faith and firmness in faith being essential to receiving the promise [translator’s note: also see Matthew 16:24].

Of course, if there are today “men of God,” there are also conditions set in order to join them! Even during this time we live in, there still is a high calling, there still are opportunities to suffer for Christ, and the Lord still sends us with his commandments in his field to continue till the end of “The Work of the Harvest” by “plucking the tares” and “gathering the wheat.”

Yes, “announcing the presence of the Bridegroom,” “rising to meet Him” and “entering with him into the wedding room,” are events that still continue and will continue until all “the wise virgins” will be “sealed in their foreheads with the knowledge of the present truth, which will be sufficient to separate them from Babylon and make them worthy to enter with the Bridegroom for the prepared feast” (Matthew 25:6-10, 22:10-14, Revelation 7:3).

Let’s see a different type of food that we are “invited” to: “The Millennium hasn’t started because the work during the thousand years will be only light and joy from its beginning, and it does not include destruction but only edification, which supports a completely different *principle* than the nature of the other “days” of God which started with “the evening,” continued with the night and *then* there was the “morning” of light.

The similarity between this day and the beginning of the creation days is obvious in Zechariah 14 (especially verses 6, 7), Isaiah 19, as well as all other scriptures, if when we interpret this subject we keep in our minds the words of Apostle Paul: “no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20).

I would suggest we consider briefly a few edifying Scriptures on this topic, as we can see that: the purpose of the returned Jesus Christ is to “rule thou in the midst of thine enemies” “with a rod of iron” (Psalm 110:2, 2:9), together with those “that overcometh” (Revelation 2:26,27), “till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (1 Corinthians 15:25, 26); the period of this rule over the nations being “a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6).

The Apostle Peter also tells us so clearly in Acts 3:19 that “the times of refreshing” and “restitution of all things” start at the same time with “the presence of the Lord,” and as a proof for his statement he says that “All His holy prophets” spoke the same.

As we see and recognize that the Gospel Age destined for the election of the New Creation started in the year 29 with the Baptism of Jesus as Head of this New Creation, although the Jewish Age **did not end yet**, and that this year was **only** the beginning of the Harvest of the Jewish Age (Matthew 3:11,12) which ended in the year 70 when they were destroyed as a nation, the two ages **overlapping** thus for a significant period of time, even so we see today the **overlapping** of *two* different works which belong to two different Ages: (1) a *harvest work*, which belongs to the Gospel Age (Matthew 13:30,39); (2) a *preparation work* of the field for the Sowing, which belongs to the Millennial Age (Amos 9:13).

Briefly, the work of the harvest of the Gospel Age still continues until the “door” for opportunity to enter into this work by making a “covenant by sacrifice” (Psalm 50:5) will be closed by the releasing of the winds in Revelation 7:1-3, “when no man can work,” the time or summer of harvest being then passed similarly to Israel’s case in year 70 (John 9:4).

Yet although these things which are characteristic to the Gospel Age are still actual and develop in front of our eyes, we also see some **new works** that do not belong to the Gospel Age but are undeniably part of the time of the fulfillment of God’s promises — fulfillments which, as we know from the Scriptures, belong only to the kingdom, thus to the Millennial Age.

Among these new works that develop in the order described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and are wonderfully explained in the Studies in the Scriptures, volume 2, chapter 5. In “The manner of our Lord’s return and appearing” we see clearly many **fulfillments of the kingdom**, such as: the resurrection of the saints, the partial return of favor to Israel, the smashing of the “feet of the image” by the “stone” of the world kingdom of the Christ which grows every day under our eyes — a kingdom “which shall never be destroyed” (Daniel 2:44, 45). Thus, this period of the kingdom overlaps the sacrificial gospel age until

the last member of the church from the gentiles shall be elected and passed to the other side of the veil.

These undeniable truths, along with all the other truths that today are seen so clearly in the Scriptures by their own explanation, were shown unto us by a “pointing finger” of God, for which we thank Him with humility and thankfulness.

The question asked to the faithful ones at the beginning of the Gospel Age — “what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” — is today just as necessary for some (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Truly, both at the first coming of our Lord and during the entire gospel age which ends with his second coming, the knowledge of great and wonderful truths of God have *not* come through the usual elders of God’s people but through *special servants* who were also called “stars,” 12 + 7 in number — we also read in Revelation 12:1 and 1:16, 17 that “star” is applied to a person and *not* to a class.

And *who* could glorify himself that the light he has did not come from the seventh star, “the wise and faithful servant” — *Pastor Russell* — who was made “ruler over his household” “his Lord” “when he cometh” and over his servants “to give them their portion of meat in due season?” (Luke 12:42-44).

Yes! It was the means by which our eyes and ears were opened so we could see and hear the grandeur of God’s plan of love and of the time of mercy in which we live having access to God’s mysteries.

We wouldn’t want to be among those who attract our eyes towards them and their wisdom, but rather towards God and the arrangements of His Word, so he might be our wisdom “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Including the words in Matthew 24:45-47, Luke 12:37-44 and others, as well as his new message sent through the “wise and faithful servant” of these Scriptures.

We would not want to be mentioned similarly to the “man of God:” “Alas, my brother!” (1 Kings 13:30). For that “man of God” was killed by a lion upon his last trial, for not “standing up!” Is it possible that our last trial might concern the food and turning from our way?

We would like to meditate upon the following suggestions:

(1) Good food and drinks — teachings from others houses or other elders;

(2) The trip without a return — the way of consecration in the covenant of sacrifice for the Lord, at the end of this age;

(3) The announcement — the prophecy against the present Babylon and the civil powers, revealing their immorality and the high places of idolatry.

As always, the “man of God” does not keep quiet — the Lord’s messengers are strong in their faith and teaching received from the Word of God and in the preaching of the message concerning the kingdom and the revealing of the religious systems and their connection with other men, similarly to John the Baptist who was beheaded as a type of the last members of the church.

It is possible those at the end of the John class might suffer similar physical or spiritual persecutions. If that will be the case, let us be reminded of the Lord and of his strengthening words in John 18:37: “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.”

In the July 21 Manna text, we read the following truth, which we should never forget: “It was His witness to the Truth that cost him his life, and it was the giving of his life in defense of the Truth that constituted the redemption price.”

Similarly all of the Lord’s followers are to bear witness to the Truth ... It is such witness to the Truth that is to cost all the true followers of Jesus their lives in presenting themselves living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God through Christ Jesus.” None of those who followed strictly in the footsteps of Jesus has been killed by a lion on their way, but they are called “blessed;” yes, they were not moved by trends of teachings, and have not forsaken the flag of faith and of sacrifice for a softer, more comfortable “bed,” or for other food.

We read in Revelation 14:13, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.” They shall be overcomers over the house of Jeroboam —

Babylon, the present ecclesiastical and civil system that will be utterly destroyed — and there shall not be high places of worship anymore. Only then will all people be invited to an abundant feast upon the mountain of the house of the Lord, yet at that time, no one will be able to suffer for being joint-heir priests with Christ (Isaiah 25:6, 7).

As of the “man of God” and the old prophet, we might say that they both sinned to different degrees, but we believe that this kind of failure can be avoided by faithfulness, firmness and constancy towards God upon the *principle* of that “which is written” and not upon the wisdom of the human mind.

May God and His Word be the first in everything, and let us search in the manner of the Bereans all messages that seem to come from the Lord, analyze them even if they come from experienced and wise elders of whom we are impressed. “To the law and to the testimony” ... as God tells us in Isaiah 8:20.

May God further bless His spiritual food at this convention, even if we took the food with us long ago and the road seems long and difficult; may the blessing that we receive here develop in us an attitude of joy and love in the faith, hope and love of being children of the Lord who start fires of love in their ecclesia and other ecclesias.

I will end with the words of Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:17, 22, which is also my greeting to you: “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.”

May we all be delivered out of the mouth of the lion and may the name “man of God” honor our Father through our thoughts, words and works. “The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you” (2 Timothy 4:22). Amen!

## Part 2 — Bro. Ioan Galis

*Beloved* brothers and sisters, I bring you the love of the brethren from my ecclesia in Ruginoasa, and also of the brethren from Valea Almasului (Almas Valley). **What does it mean to be the Man of God?**

We understand instinctively the name “man of God” and each one of us desires it, because being a man of God means life and happiness.

The first “man of God” was Adam, who was created in the Creator’s image and likeness. After breaking the commandment, he lost this name, and after the verdict was given, he also started to gradually lose God’s image and likeness, from then on being considered sentenced to death. However, it was provided in advance, in the plan of the Father to liberate Adam and all his followers from this condemnation by paying a redemption price which makes it possible to wake up from death’s sleep to a new trial or judgment when, if obedient to the laws of the kingdom, the people will receive once again this name of “men of God” by which they will live forever — see Acts 17:31.

Some of “His people” who proved by their deeds their serious intentions to be called “His people,” God made known the beautiful news that by the death of His beloved Son, it will be possible to bring Adam and mankind back to the state of perfection that was lost in Eden — the state of “men of God.”

By Moses, He told us that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head — see Genesis 3:15. God made the following promise to Abraham, and thus to all of us: “and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:3).

During the Jewish Age, God used the prophets to tell us about the Messianic Reign that will be established on the earth as a result of the sufferings and death of His beloved Son — the prophet Isaiah said: “... the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed ... when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed ...” (Isaiah 53: 5, 10).

These prophets who were called “men of God” were not perfect, yet they were faithful and respected the Word of Jehovah more than their life. That was the example of Daniel who was thrown into the lion’s den, or the three young men who were thrown into the fiery furnace. It was the same for Jeremiah who was thrown into the mud pit. “And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder” (Hebrews 11: 36, 37).

These men of God adored Jehovah and they preached His character and truth under all circumstances. When the Pharaoh told Joseph: “... I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer” (Genesis 41:15, 16, RSV). Daniel replied similarly to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:26-28.

All these men of God of old were humble people and when the Lord gave them a task, they recognized that they were not worthy of the great honor of communicating the Creator’s message to the nation.

Moses recognized his worthlessness when faced with such an important mission — to liberate the nation from Pharaoh’s rule — and he would have preferred someone else to take his place. He said: “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (Exodus 3:11).

When the angel told Gideon: “The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour” (Judges 6:12), he understood that God would use him to save the people from under Midian’s oppression, but his reply to the angel was: “my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” The Lord told him: “Go in this thy might ... have not I sent thee?”

When the Lord’s Word came to Jeremiah that he was to be “a prophet unto the nations,” he said: “Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child” (Jeremiah 1:5, 6). But the LORD told him “Say not, I am a child” for “I have made thee ... an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah” (Jeremiah 1:17, 18).

Although God communicated His will unto them, all those worthies of the past admitted they are only servants, as Paul tells us: “Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant ... but Christ as a Son over his own house” (Hebrews 3:5, 6).

In the Gospel Age, our Lord Jesus Christ, even the Son of God, presented himself at Jordan as a thirty year old perfect man, who would fulfill the will of the Father and pay the ransom price. When the holy Spirit came upon him as a dove, he was begotten to a new nature — divine — that was higher than the nature that he had prior to his birth through Mary.

Paul tells us in Hebrews 12:2 that God set before Him a greater “joy.” Brother Russell talks about this joy in the 5th volume, under the subtitle “Made Perfect Through Suffering” (Volume 5, Chapter 5).

(1) A joy to render a service which would be acceptable to the Father.

(2) A joy to redeem mankind, and make possible their rescue from sin and death.

(3) A joy in the thought that by the accomplishment of this redemption he would be accounted worthy of the Father to be the mighty ruler and blessing, King and Priest of the world; to reveal to the world a knowledge of the divine plan, and to lift them up from sin to divine grace, whosoever would accept the terms of the New Covenant.

(4) A joy that the Father had promised him; not only a return to the glory of a spirit-being which he had with the Father before the world was, but a more excellent glory — to be exalted far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named, and to be made an associate in the Kingdom of the Universe, next to the Father.”

The Lord had these joys in His heart until the end of His Life.

The Father did not want Jesus to be alone in this glory and joy, but to be the head of a body of 144,000 with whom he will help mankind, to raise them back to the perfection that Adam had before the fall. First, Jesus selected the twelve apostles, then he made the beautiful invitation: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).

This means that those who feel a sincere and serious attraction towards God, admit their condition as sinners, repent, and accept Jesus in their heart as their Redeemer and Justifier, and who believe that his blood can cleanse any unwilling sin, from then on, they receive a certain degree of peace with God.

In Romans 12:1, the Apostle Paul beseeches us who reach this stage to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God. Here we understand that we must make a full consecration and follow in Jesus’ footsteps in the narrow way, and as a result of this consecration — if the consecration was real, not caused by fear or selfish love, but by sincere, altruistic love — we received the robe of Christ’s righteousness and were begotten unto the divine nature by the holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:4), and thus became new creatures.

Quote from *Tabernacle Shadows*, page 119: “Consecration to God says, Any work, anywhere; I delight to do thy will, O God; thy will, in thy way, be done. Consecration to God, then, will insure a searching of his plan revealed in his Word, that we may be able to spend and be spent for him and in his service, in harmony with his arranged and revealed plan.”

As “God’s people” we need to develop a character in Jesus’ likeness. Although we cannot be perfect in our flesh, in our hearts and minds we must have a

perfect love to the degree that we will love our enemies. As long as our vessels will be under the control of the new creature, it will not allow sin, and on the contrary, the new mind, the new will, will crucify and kill any strange thought that comes from the flesh, the world and Satan and is not in harmony with the covenant of sacrifice (Romans 6:6).

God’s people recognize that the brethren are their “joy and crown” (Philippians 4:1), and do not look on their own benefits, but on “the things of others” (Philippians 2:4). They love not only when they are loved back, they do not ask to be loved, do not complain when love is not shown to them, and they generously show it to others (see February 29 Manna text). They do not speak evil of others, easily acknowledge their mistakes when approached by others and receive their rebukes in love; they are glad to honor another above themselves, to look up to others and be “little in their own eyes.” They rejoice in others’ progress and knowledge that has been achieved through the study of the holy Scriptures in harmony with Apostle Peter’s recommendation in 2 Peter 1:20-21, even if they are less capable.

They are glad to talk with their neighbors about God, Jesus and His kingdom, and spread tracts and brochures. God’s people will never say “I don’t have time” when he should do the will of God. They apply in their lives the advice of the wise Solomon: “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression ... The desire [“beauty” in the Romanian Bible translation] of a man is his kindness” (Proverb 19:11, 22).

For them are the words in Luke 22:28, 29: “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.”

They understand from the prophecies that the true King of the Earth has returned and has seated at the table those who were watching, and started to serve them in his usual manner: through one special messenger — see Luke 12:35-44, Matthew 24:45-47.

They understand that the “wise and faithful servant” of these Scriptures is Brother Russell, by whom the Lord served us and serves at this present time, even if he is now on the other side of the veil.

They search the Scripture in the same manner the “Bereans” did, and notice and admit that the message given by that servant is the result of a correct interpretation of the Scriptures, and that other sounds, theories or interpretations of the Scriptures are human understandings that do not respect the rule of interpretation of the Scriptures presented by the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

Therefore, they receive the food given by the Lord through him, and as they recognize it as clean and true, they do not try to prepare different food, but instead they notice clearly the scriptural evidences that further strengthen the understanding that this food is “meat in due season” intended and considered by the Lord as an absolute necessity, to deliver us “from the snare of the fowler” and to cure us of the contagious plague that infected the church of Laodicea — our times. See Revelation 3:17-19 and Psalms 91:3, 4.

They understand that the prophecy of Habakkuk 2:2, 3 refers to the seventh angel, the Laodicean servant, pastor C.T. Russell who wrote the prophecies “plain upon tables [in his six volumes and other writings that have been translated in many languages] that he may run that readeth it” [“that it might be easy to be read” in the Romanian Bible translation].

Among those prophecies written upon tables is the biblical chronology that shows the time of the fulfillment of the word the angel told to Daniel: “Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end,” “and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand” (Daniel 12:9, 10).

And what is it that we came to understand? Many, very many things! We understand that a time, two times, and half of a time are three and a half years, which was fulfilled in 1260 days, which are the 1260 years that started in 539 AD (when the abomination that maketh desolate was set up in the holy place) and ended in 1799 (when Napoleon took the Pope as prisoner). Then was fulfilled the prophecy of Revelation 12, which spoke of the woman (early Church) who was taken into the wilderness for 1260 days.

What else did we understand? That the same date is the start of the 1290 days (years) and for the 1335 days (years) which are shown in Daniel 12:7, 11, 12. When the 1290 years were ended, the John class symbolically ate the “little book” (Revelation 10:9), meaning the start of the Miller movement (when it was studied and taught about the topics of our Lord’s coming and the resurrection of the virgins at the beginning of the kingdom). Thus, the virgins prepared themselves and went out to meet the Bridegroom, as it was shown in the parable of the ten virgins. After 30 years, it was the fulfillment of the 1335 years when the Bridegroom returned at “midnight.”

The historic events that happened at the end of these prophetic days leaves us no room to doubt or change these dates. Where could we place the fulfillment of these days if we were to say that the chronology that was studied, verified, and given by

the “wise servant” is not true, meaning that the 6000 years of unrestricted permission of evil was not fulfilled in 1874 and the seventh day hasn’t started; or if we would say that the 70 jubilees have not ended and the great Jubilee of the earth hasn’t started?

If we do not believe one of the chronology dates, all other dates don’t find their fulfillment anymore. If we do not believe these dates, gradually and unnoticeably, we will end up in darkness and will not know where we are in the stream of time.

Let me share with you a little story from when I was in prison: A young man who called himself a Jehovah’s witness asked one of his older brothers: “brother, when were the days of Daniel fulfilled, the time, two times and half of a time?” His brother said: “these days were fulfilled during 1918-1921, when the brethren were thrown into prison.” He interpreted literally, the three and a half years expression. I thought then, and I still think now, how sad it is that some put aside the compass.

Dear brethren, as “people of God,” “new creatures,” “men in Christ,” I think that it is good to keep in mind these chronology dates as we have them in the Studies in the Scriptures and also to consider Brother Russell’s last thoughts from 1915 and 1916, which were written in the Watch Tower and the Forewords of the Studies in the Scriptures, and which thoughts mentioned the last changes made after the last chronology date — in the year 1914 — as they were observed from the study of the Scriptures up to then and the receiving of new revelations through the historic events that followed.

These changes were only regarding the time length of different works, and not their character. Thus, he showed that the last members of the Church are not glorified and that the harvest continues through the same methods and efforts until the “release of the winds” when all will have been sealed; and that the year 1914 is only the beginning of the fall of the rule of the Gentiles, and not the absolute end of their power, which was proven during World War 1, when the empires were crushed (1 Kings 19:11, 12).

Having these thoughts, I think that we can be called “people of God” or “new creatures,” yet, even if not all of us can believe all these thoughts, we should still be peaceful children of God and not reach the stage where we cannot meet with one another, or speak evil of others in spite of the differences of opinions, as long as we have an untouched “unity foundation” — the two conditions that are mentioned at the baptism and the Memorial!

Dear brethren, let me bring to your attention some prophecies that can only be fulfilled before the



resurrection of the prophets: Daniel 2:44, “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed ... it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

Isaiah 52:7, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ... that saith unto Zion, [while these ‘feet members’ of ‘the Christ’ or ‘Zion’ are still ‘upon the mountains’] Thy God reigneth!”

Isaiah 21:12, “The morning cometh, and also the night” — Yes, the Millennial Day begins also with an evening (Zechariah 14:7, 1-21), same as the days of typical Israel and the creation days mentioned in Genesis 1:5-31: “And the evening and the morning were the first day ... second day ...”

Revelation 11:15-19, “... We give thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged ...”

By understanding these scriptures correctly, we believe that the restitution of all things starts before the resurrection of the prophets (Acts 3:20-21).

I will end with the words of Brother Russell (R2570): “Only those who see the beauty of the great King, who discern something of his justice, his mercy and love, his wisdom, his power, can clothe their new minds with these glorious graces which more and more shine before our anointed vision as the beauty of the Lord our God. And the more clearly they are discerned, the more faithfully can we copy them, and the better do we love the joyful sound, and the better can we sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb.”

May the Lord help us to see more and more of this beauty at this convention, and may we keep in our hearts a beautiful remembrance of these moments we met together and shared, until we will meet again here or on the other side of the veil. Amen.



## Presentation Eleven

# The Power of The Example

Brother Luca Sorinel (Romania)

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*Beloved* brethren in Christ, beloved friends of the Truth, may the grace and peace be multiplied unto you by the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, our Lord. We thank the Lord for the privilege of being together and partaking of God's truth. I bring you greetings of Christian love from the brethren in Salsig, Romania, whom I meet with.

Our subject is "The Power of The Example" and the theme text is 1 Peter 2:21, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." In our text, the Greek correspondent of the word "example" is *hupogrammos*. This term is used only once in the New Testament by Peter, and it means "the perfect model."

The word *hupogrammos* was used in relation to the Greek elementary school education of that time and it describes the way the students were taught to write. The teacher would draw parallel lines on the wax board so the pupil could write straight and at the same time he would also write a line of text at the top of the board. This line of text that the pupil was urged to imitate was called *hupogrammos*. Thus, Peter tells us that just like the pupil who learns to write by imitating the perfect example (*hupogrammos*), as students in the school of Christ, we can gain life only by imitating the model of perfect life that Jesus gave us.

There is yet another way to use the word *hupogrammos* that plays a role in the meaning of Peter's words. Sometimes the teacher would write on the wax board and the pupil's hand would follow the existing tracks. The teacher would begin by holding his hand over the pupil's hand, but later on, he would allow the pupil to try alone. The edges of the writing would prohibit any deviation from the pattern.

We are certain that Peter considered this aspect also, because Jesus does not stop after illustrating an example; just as the teacher guides the untrained hand of the pupil, even so he directs us through his grace. Besides leaving us a *hupogrammos* that is in

spiring in its perfection, he is also ready to help us constantly in our endeavor to follow him, just as he promised in Matthew 28:20, "... lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

### Hebrews

In Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 1:1-3, we read: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

Although Apostle Paul writes primarily to the Jewish Christians, this epistle is addressed to the entire church. In this introduction, the apostle points out to us Christ's superiority compared to the prophets or angels, as well as that God spoke to us through the Son after he spoke through the prophets; thus, we are privileged that He spoke to us through the most valuable messenger, who is the brightness of His glory and the very image of His substance. May this thought awake in us more adoration, reverence and praise towards the Heavenly Father, as we feel even more in debt to His grace.

### The Example of His Life

The scriptures tell us that Jesus didn't write any epistles, messages or anything else during his earthly mission, except for the mysterious writing presented in John 8:6, 8; yet through the example of his life, he wrote more than anyone else.

In Revelation 5:1 we find "... in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." This book is the self-concealed divine plan, and the fact that it has the seals illustrates that it was not known by anyone except for the Father. The question in verse 2, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the

seals thereof?”, needs time in order to be answered, as we read in verses 3 and 4.

The question was asked before Jesus came in the world and was unanswered until Jesus’ resurrection from the grave, as it is shown in verse 5: “Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”

God started with our Lord when giving him the opportunity to prove his worthiness and open the book of the great plan in order to fulfill it. He was the most worthy of honor among the heavenly hosts, the only begotten son. He was the first in line for the privilege of service and he did not refuse but accepted it, as it is written in Hebrews 12:2, “... who for the joy set before him endured the cross, disregarding the shame” (Diaglott).

The Apostle points to Jesus, the Captain and Perfection of our faith, and emphasizes His joyful disposition to do God’s will, His faithfulness and loyalty as a son. He took over the burden, not knowing what the cost would be to become the Messiah, because the Father kept those things as a mystery. Even so, he was glad to do the Father’s will, manifesting his unreserved faith in God to the point that he came in the inferior human nature and thus became the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the son of Mary.

Accordingly, the Father expects that after He welcomes us in His family as sons, we may also have a strong, unreserved faith in the wisdom, power and beauty of His plan, as He is too wise to be wrong and too good to be unmerciful.

### **Jesus Fully Devoted**

The four gospels give us very little information about Jesus’ life between his birth and the beginning of his mission, except for Luke who provides a few extra facts. It is very probable that Luke used more sources of information, including Mary, the Lord’s mother. We find in Luke 2:49 a piece of information that stands out. Jesus said: “How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” Jesus proved from early childhood that He was a loyal son to the Father and that he wanted to be in His Father’s business, yet finding out that the Law forbade that before the age of 30, he kept quiet and obeyed.

We have much to learn from this affirmation — serving the Father of the entire universe. Let the purpose of our life be to serve God only, for as the Savior said, we cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon. God wants us for Himself.

The wonderful prophecy of Psalm 40:7, 8 was fulfilled when our Lord consecrated himself to do the will of the Father and came to John to be baptized in the Jordan. The words of his heart were: “Lo, I am come; in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God: Yea, thy law is within my heart.” These words were full of meaning for our Lord and so he came to be baptized in water, but John didn’t understand it and was puzzled that the One who did not know sin came to be immersed by one who baptized towards the forgiveness of sins.

Except for Jesus, no one could fully understand that it was proper that all justice would be fulfilled. Jesus’ immersion in water was not a symbolic cleansing of sin, but an example from the forerunner to his followers, showing the full consecration of his will until death. As he was Spirit begotten, there was an exterior manifestation with the “dove” and the voice from heaven that approved: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

We read that “the heavens were opened unto him,” meaning that God revealed higher things and parts of the divine plan were made clear to Jesus through a special enlightening. Matthew 4:1 tells us: “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness.” The spirit of devotion to the Father led him to the wilderness for prayer, meditation and study of the word of God with the purpose of learning and then conforming to the divine provision.

Let us be reminded here of our Lord’s words after the resurrection, as they are in Luke 24:44, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”

The Apostle Paul urges us the same in Romans 12:2: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The Apostle Paul said that we should not be conformed according to this world and its ideas, hopes and goals, but to be refashioned, transformed through the renewal of the mind, by replacing our mind with Christ’s mind and by striving to act as he would if he was in our shoes and in our circumstances.

### **Temptations**

At the end of the 40 days our Lord was hungry and then it was that the tempter came and told him: “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” Jesus answered by saying: “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Satan prepared this temptation well and he

was timely, as Jesus was very hungry and in the wilderness where he could not find food for himself. Jesus defeated the temptation as his spirit of devotion towards the Father helped him to overcome by not using for personal needs the divine power that he would use on other occasions to miraculously provide bread or turn the water into wine.

We have not received the power of performing miracles, yet we can be tempted in a similar way by using for personal gain certain privileges given unto us, such as preaching in the name of the Lord and proclaiming the truth with the goal of gaining honor and great rewards. These temptations may be frequent with God's people and a degree of doing so would mean falling into temptation.

The adversary then came to our Lord with a different temptation: he suggested that the Lord should cast himself down off the pinnacle of the temple and thus draw people's attention to the fact that he possessed supernatural power and that he was under the divine protection.

Since the Lord answered the first temptation with a scripture, the tempter falsely applied a scripture and tried to convince the Lord that God would protect him in precisely that circumstance. Yet Jesus noticed immediately this falsification of the scripture and replied: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." He refused to tempt God by falsely applying His promises.

Some disciples of Christ may also be tempted to do things in a spirit of foolishness, believing that God will miraculously break the laws of nature to protect them from hardship and suffering. This conduct is not approved by God as it might be pride that makes us do something that was never authorized by His word. Our bodies belong to God after we consecrated them to Him, so we do not have the right to risk something that could end in injury or death, except for when duty or necessity would justify it.

Eventually, the adversary tried to pull a compromise. Upon showing our Lord the kingdoms of the world, he promised to turn them over to the Lord, should he admit the adversary's authority over the authority of Jehovah. Satan implied by his words that the Lord could get everything in an easier manner, which would not require suffering, sacrifice, shame or obstacles, but simply some cooperation with him.

The Savior replied promptly: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." We are told that after this Satan left him, as every temptation was rejected with the help of the word of God.

His word can overcome every temptation if it is correctly used, and if we have the same strong con-

viction that Jesus had, Satan is going to give up only when faced with this attitude. Any hesitation or delay from us expressed by saying "not this time" or "for now" I have decided to resist, will leave an open door that the tempter will swiftly use by coming with more arguments and better tactics.

Yet another way to fall in this type of temptation is by making a compromise with the nominal systems, by not being so strict but cooperating to a certain extent with the world and with its spirit so we could have a better relationship with people and thus more influence over them. The nominal churches failed very early in this snare devised by the adversary, when they didn't keep themselves as virgins for the heavenly Bridegroom but illegally married the civil power systems.

### **One Goal**

When the Lord was on His way to Galilee, he got tired and sat down by Jacob's well where he had a discussion with the Samaritan woman. The disciples went to the city to buy food and upon their arrival they asked him saying: "Master, eat." Yet He told them: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Notice here that he doesn't say "my meats" or "one of my meats" is to finish the work of the One who sent me.

Jesus had one goal, one wish, one pleasure — to fulfill the will of the Heavenly Father. This singleness of purpose made the success of our Lord's mission possible, as he would certainly have not succeeded if he had a multitude of goals. Full consecration implies singleness of purpose; such sacrifice truly carries a pleasant fragrance to the Lord.

It is nice to be reminded here of the prophetic words in Psalm 45:7, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hated wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The oil of gladness represented the holy joy of our Lord and the holy prospects that supported him during the period when he left the heavenly glory, made himself poor, and sacrificed his life for us, so we might be rich.

### **An Example of Humility**

Apostle Paul draws our attention, in Philippians 2:5-6, towards the value of Jesus' humility and humbleness and urges us to cultivate "this mind" that was in Christ Jesus, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

This text does not teach the doctrine of trinity or that Jesus Christ desired the Father's position, as it could easily be misunderstood. The mistake in this text belongs to the translators who misconstrued the phrase, as the apostle's thought could have been

translated with the same words but with an opposite meaning: that He did not believe that by plundering or grasping he could be equal with God.

If we analyze the context, it becomes very clear that Christ was very humble, that He “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Satan followed an opposite path and he allowed in his mind selfish thoughts that were against the spirit of love and loyalty. Gradually his judgment clouded and he started to see evil being good and good being evil and then lawlessness rose in his heart so he started to apply his ambitious and rebellious plans. God allowed that by usurpation Satan would become, for a while, the ruler of this world. The result of this evil path is death, and among other scriptures, Isaiah 14:12-15 shows that he will be destroyed.

What a contrast there is between Satan and our Lord, of whom the Scripture tells that “though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” In this case, as in the case of any being, the following divine principle is applied: “The Lord resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

Satan’s influence over mankind made Adam and his followers lose the likeness of God and to walk on the broad way of destruction and separation from God, replacing the spirit of love with the pursuit for the spirit of selfishness and pride, and the desire to be the greatest, the most appreciated.

After Jesus told the apostles many times that he would be killed and then resurrected on the third day, there was an argument that started among them about who would be the greatest, probably regarding who would replace the Lord.

In Mark 9:33-37, while they were in Galilee, after traveling to Capernaum, they found themselves in a house when the Lord asked them: “What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?” But they did not answer because on the way they were talking about who would be the greatest. Luke 9:46 says that there was a reasoning among them regarding who should be the greatest. In Mathew 18:1-3 though, we read that “At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

“And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little

children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

What a wonderful Teacher the apostles had among them, and what a precious lesson He offered them through the example of the little children! The little children are humble, they are too young to have developed the spirit of selfishness, and we all know how quickly they forget anything that went bad between them and how they forgive one another. Jesus observed this bad tendency of exalting oneself and wanted to correct it when he said: “Except ye by converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Close to the end of our Lord’s mission, we read in Matthew 20:20-28 about the request of the sons of Zebedee. Jesus promised to his apostles that they would sit with him on his throne in the kingdom. Being very hopeful because of this promise, it is probable that they discussed the office they could occupy. This is the reason why the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus and asked that in the kingdom her sons would be on Jesus’ left and right side. The Lord did not reply, but he turned towards the disciples asking them: “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

“They say unto him, We are able.” The answer was quick and the Lord liked it, as we can see from his approval that they would drink the cup and would follow the same path. At least they were ready to suffer with the Lord and to follow him, even though at that time they could not understand the meaning of the words baptism and cup.

This tells us that all we can do in the beginning is to be ready to suffer and give our life in the service of the Lord and of the brethren. We need to hold on to this good disposition of willingness to do the Father’s will until the end of our earthly course.

We know then that the other ten apostles were very angry with the two brothers, but the Lord gave us a new lesson showing what a great difference there is between the kings of the world and the Son of Man. Jesus said: “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

### **Service to Others**

Jesus came to be the king of Israel, yet this king was so different from the other kings because he did

not look for how much he could get from people, but rather for how much he could do for the people. The rulers of the nations were motivated by selfishness, but Jesus had love and a spirit of serving. He was not looking for how little to serve and how much to be served. As the Teacher said, this is also what is expected from his followers as the only proper path. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord" (Matthew 10:25). It is very proper for all the Lord's followers to remember that they were called to serve — they consecrated their life not to serve themselves, but to serve others.

The Apostle Paul says in Galatians 6:10 "... let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of the faith." We notice here that our special service is for the household of faith. Many misunderstand the Bible and think that the time for the salvation of the world is now. Any effort to help the "groaning creation" is worthy of praise, yet those who are correctly informed about the divine plan have presently the special work to develop the new creation or seed of Abraham by which, later, all the nations will be blessed.

Jesus was involved in this work to serve his followers and he was careful to fulfill exactly the features of the divine plan, just as he declared: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

We do not know what awaits us and how long this time for work will last, but it is sure, as the Lord predicted, there will be a night when any progress of the spiritual matters will be impeded or even stopped. Let us then appreciate any privilege of service that the Lord is handing us and not let it pass from us. Everything that the Father offers us through his providence is for our development as new creatures in his Son's likeness.

Let us remember here the words in Romans 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Here we are told that God decided that the only ones who will be in this select company will have to be eventually in the image of his Son, copies of Jesus' character.

The office that we will occupy during the kingdom will depend greatly on the measure of our service. If we are trying to receive as much as possible and serve as little as possible, we will not be the characters the Lord is searching for, to rule during the kingdom, and we will actually lose the kingdom. This kingdom will be for those who are happy to serve and consider it a great privilege to lay down their lives for their brethren to the extent of their possi-

bilities and opportunities, as they consecrated to dedicate their lives.

### **Light of the World**

Our Lord says of Himself: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). The privilege that has been given unto us is to follow the Lord, to walk in the light, as the Lord said in Matthew 5:14-16: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The Apostle Paul also said: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8). We can shine light towards the world not directly but as a reflection, just as the moon reflects the light from the sun to illuminate the earth. The light of the truth that comes from Jesus will continue to shine further if we do not impede it.

Let us then remember that the priest's constant cleaning and trimming of the candlestick in the Holy shows that we ought to pay special attention to the words of life in order to reach a clear knowledge of the truth, and to carefully clean every error as soon as we notice it, whether it is in doctrine or in our daily walk and talk. Our Lord warns us saying: "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23). Satan wins the greatest victory when he succeeds to deceive a person who was enlightened and sanctified through the spirit of truth.

The church's main mission is to prepare and develop itself, yet there is also a secondary mission which is to testify about the truth as our Lord Christ did, whose words were: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37).

### **Living Epistles**

We remember that the apostle Paul said that "we are his workmanship" (Ephesians 2:10). He made large investments in us and wishes the epistle of Christ to be written in our hearts not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, as the apostle Paul poetically describes in 2 Corinthians 3:3. The context also says that this living epistle is "known and read of all men."

One thing is certain, that not everyone reads the epistles of the New Testament or the Bible, but they do read us because it is a much easier task. The effectiveness of transmitting the truth message to others depends greatly on our living epistle, which might or might not be the epistle of Christ.

Even if we present the truth beautifully and clearly and make use of the best methods, this would not produce a desired effect in the hearts of the people if we do not live the life of true Christians, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, for whom the “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” In a way, it is possible that this living epistle of Christ is more valuable than others that are fundamental for the knowledge of the truth. Our lives may be a good advertisement for the message of truth, yet also a drawback if the living epistle of Christ is not in our character.

What is the epistle written in our hearts by the holy Spirit? Is it the understanding of chronology? Is it the understanding of the types and shadows? Is it the literal knowledge of the Bible or other things as such?

We believe that the answer is no, although all these are given with the purpose of writing the epistle of Christ in our hearts. The writing of the epistle, however, is made by writing and copying in our

hearts the character traits of our Savior, such as: his humbleness, his gentleness, his patience, his peace and his joy, his faithfulness and his loyalty, and not lastly, his love.

It is possible to know the Scripture and still not have the epistle of Christ written in our hearts. The Spirit of the Lord does not stop with the transformation of our mind, but continues to control every aspect of our lives: our talking, our behavior, whether at home, in the world or in the household of faith, our dress habits and much more.

All these will be tuned according to the perfect example that Jesus left for us. There is a wonderful scripture in 1 John 3:3 that can be quoted here: “And every one that hath this hope [set] in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

In conclusion, let us all, “... with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). God bless you.



## *Presentation Twelve*

# A Man Used by God

Brother Krzysztof Makarzec (Poland)

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*Greetings,* dear Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Every one of us, without regard to age, is looking for praise for their work and behaviour throughout their lives. Praise from our Brothers or Sisters is important, but the most important praise is the one that comes from our Lord, because this means victory and the prize.

Every period of the Church's development ends with such assurance. To the victors of the period in which they are living, it is written: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).

The basis of these considerations are found in the words of our Lord, spoken to the good servant from the parable of the talents. As recorded in Matthew 25:21, "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things:

enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Our Lord's words to the servant cover the following three points.

(1) Our future life is a consequence of how we are living now.

(2) We, in the future, will be tools which the Lord will use.

(3) Our blessings in the Lord will be through our participation in His joy. We read in 1 Corinthians 2:9 "... Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Let us consider what we should be doing so as to earn the title "A man used by God." We have several examples of men used by God from the Old Testament.

(1) Genesis 6:9. "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Do we have a clear conscience in all matters of everyday life, and can we say that we are walking with God?

Are we not afraid of the jeering and laughter caused by openly admitting faith in Jesus Christ? Certainly this is what happened to Noah.

(2) The second example is the man, Daniel. We read about him in the Word of the Lord. Daniel 1:8: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, ... therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." In our baptism we also have shown our decision to follow the Lord and not to give in to worldly temptations. How often we must remind ourselves of the danger of being defiled.

God's help, similar to the help that Daniel received, is promised for us. Daniel 1:9: "Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs." Daniel 1:17: "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams."

Remember. Whatever we do possess — knowledge, understanding, wisdom — we owe it to our Lord. Let not our talents give place in us to pride, because "God opposes the proud."

Daniel 1:20: "And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers ...."

This is what God requires from us, that even now, in the smallest matters of life, we display proper conduct, full of gentleness and Godly wisdom. With an understanding of future things, we stand above our fellow men.

Let us consider how Daniel behaved when his life was endangered because the King wanted to know the meaning of his dream. Daniel 2:17-18: "Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to ... his companions: that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel ... should not perish ...."

We are not alone in our chosen path. We can support one another, asking blessings of the Lord, with our hearts open before Him. Let us look into the word of God to see what characteristics a man must possess, if, in the future, God would use him to accomplish His plan.

#### **Characteristic Number One: One Goal in Life Only**

The best example, I think, is the life of the Apostle Paul, who said, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

Is your life also marked by drawing closer to Christ? Do everything without any doubt, because as James says, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (James 1:7-8).

#### **Characteristic Number Two: Complete Submission to The Lord**

As clay is subjected to the potter, a sick person to his doctor, a soldier to his commander, so are we fully subjected to our Lord. When from your life your ego, or self, disappears, you will start noticing great progress. Let us not depend on human wisdom, for we have the wisdom of God at our disposal.

The Apostle Paul, who gave his all, encourages us through his letter to the Colossians: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

Did you, dear brethren, say "Yes" to the Lord and "No" to yourself? Do we remember the words of our Lord: "For 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" (John 12:49).

#### **Characteristic Number Three: Prayerful in Warfare**

Prayer is an indispensable element of our spiritual life and also indicates the level of our spirituality. Through the power of prayer, we can receive help, blessings, and direction in the choices we make in life. Our Lord, who spent entire nights in prayer, is our example. He was in continual communion with his Father. Are we also in like manner concerned with our salvation?

Do we say that we are walking in the footsteps of our Lord? Do we, in the daily chaos, hear the Lord's answer to prayer? If there is no answer, do we again kneel and implore the Lord?

The Apostle Paul also appreciated the power of prayer when he asked the Thessalonians for prayers on his behalf, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified" (2 Thessalonians 3:1).

#### **Characteristic Number Four: Diligent Study of The Word of God**

God's Word contains His will regarding us. If we would like to be used by God in His Kingdom, then His Words must be actively living in our lives. This is what the Apostle Paul said to Timothy: "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

Let us use the Word of God properly, avoiding common and empty talk. Do not get involved in arguments or doting about words. In all situations, let us strive to have the support of God's Word, because this is how Jesus resisted Satan in the desert. "It is written ..." (Matthew 4:10).

#### **Characteristic Number Five: Be a Servant, Not a Master**

The Lord Jesus desired to teach us the principles that we should use throughout our lives. He gave us an example when he washed the apostles feet. "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you ... If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:15-17).

We should remember that we will benefit most if we take on the position of a servant. We want to serve in very great things, but often God tests us in very small things. If we serve in the wrong way, then in the future it will be impossible for our Lord to involve us in his work in the Kingdom.

Let us try to: "... think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3). One of the goals of our service is to create unity, this is what the Apostle Paul encouraged in 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Unity is possible if we do not think ourselves to be more important than others. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than them-

selves” (Philippians 2:3). Then we will notice the needs of our Brother or Sister, which in turn will give us an opportunity to serve.

**Characteristic Number Six:  
Have The Living Message  
For Mankind**

Remember that our Lord gave his life for all mankind; this includes those who defame and test us. This message to the world is not only through preaching, but most of all our lives, which are being carefully observed. “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12).

**Characteristic Number Seven:  
Expecting Spiritual  
Achievements**

In many areas of everyday life, we evaluate our performance. We should also do this in the spiritual sense. Do we see results stemming from our increased understanding of God’s word and a change in our character?

Perhaps we are not making much progress and are stuck at a certain state. This is not encouraged by the Apostle Paul. “Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Hebrews 5:11, 12).

It is easier to see what is lacking in other brethren. The Word of God, however, encourages us to look at each other in order “to provoke unto love and to good works” (Hebrews 10:24). Remember that while we are still alive, there is still spiritual progress to be made. Our walk is compared to the pursuit of an athlete, who understands that he has already achieved something, but has not yet reached his goal.

The Apostle Paul speaks of his life in this way: “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12-14).

**Characteristic Number Eight:  
Being Clad With The Power From Above**

Jesus, prior to his departure, assured his disciples that they would be “... endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Let us not depend upon our own strength and abilities. With all his highly educated background, the Apostle Paul still followed the Lord’s promises exactly.

He knew that the source of his strength was the Lord’s. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). Also, “And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God” (2 Corinthians 3:4-5).

In summary, let us look at the barriers which may detain us on our path of consecration.

**Barrier Number One:  
“I Am Too Young”**

Our adversary is only waiting for such a thought to arise in the heart of a young person. The earlier we start the work on our own character, the less we will have to correct. Apostle Paul encourages young Timothy with the following words, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

**Barrier Number Two:  
“I Am Not A Good Speaker, I Am Too  
Shy to Participate in Meetings or  
to Have Fellowship”**

Moses spoke similarly unto the LORD, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue” (Exodus 4:10).

**Barrier Number Three:  
“I Am Weak and Lack Strength to Fight  
Against Sin”**

You depend too much upon your own abilities and on human wisdom. You live by the rules of this world. It is good if we admit that we are weak. This means that all earthly ways have proven to be disappointing, all that is left is to take advantage of the strength which God provides. This is what David did when he faced the unmatched battle with Goliath.

Psalms 89:20-22: “I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.”

**Barrier Number Four:  
“I Judge Others By Their Appearance”**

This is the misconception that Samuel made when he was to anoint a son of Jesse to be a king. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD’s anointed is before him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:6-7).

Let us overcome these obstacles and discover “... the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Peter 3:4).

**Barrier Number Five:  
“I have Insufficient Material Possessions,  
I am Neither Appreciated, Nor Understood”**

This clearly is no barrier. This is a situation our Lord found himself in at the time of his first advent.

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isaiah 53:3).

Our Lord Jesus often had to move from place to place fleeing for his life. He came in the name of his Father, and had difficulty being understood. Our Lord achieved victory, and is able to help those who desire to run for their inheritance. “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18).

Let us then overcome all obstacles that we encounter. Remember “His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3).

I wish you all to hear those most wonderful words from our Lord, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Amen.

## *Presentation Thirteen*

# The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

Brother Hans Ranik (Germany)

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*Dear* Brethren! In the Gospel of Matthew 18:1-5 we read the following words: “At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and sat him in the midst of them, and said ‘Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.’”

After hearing this example that our Lord gave, the disciples must surely have asked themselves what this must mean. How can we as mature adults become children? Our beloved Lord explained with another comparison in the same chapter of Matthew, verses 10-14, where he states: “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

These wonderful words of our Lord show us how very much our Father cares for his children, and how close they are to His heart. God does not want us to flatter ourselves in any way or to appear to be great in our own eyes. He lays much more worth on his children remaining modest, small and humble.

Our Lord expands upon these thoughts in the Gospel of Mark, where we read in chapter 10:13-16:

“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.’ And he took them up in his arms and put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

Here our beloved Lord shows us clearly and plainly how to succeed in earning a place in the kingdom of God, namely in purity, humility and righteousness of heart, which is the case with an innocent child. Pastor Russell further enlightens us with these words:

“The special characteristics of a little child are: simplicity of heart, meekness, truthfulness, freedom from ambition and rivalry, faith, confiding trust, love, obedience, teachableness, indifference to social distinctions and popular opinions, guilelessness” (R1766:6, 3796:4).

### **Humility**

Dear Brethren, only when we have learned all of this and have made our hearts free of these harmful character traits will we be allowed to enter the kingdom of heaven. Let us remember the words of our Lord in Matthew 18:4, where we read: “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

The divine laws, dear Brethren, are completely different from man’s laws. How serious is the matter for all children of God, but also how wonderfully comforting for all of those little ones in the Lord, who have precisely recognized that they are nothing of themselves, and that everything is grace on grace, which they have received of the generous heavenly Father.

Therefore, the above words of the Lord are so completely enlivening and encouraging for all of the small and humble ones of the Lord, who hope completely for eternal life through the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ, as promised in the 21st verse of Jude.

The Apostle Paul points to the greatest in the kingdom of heaven and to the heavenly high calling, with the following words to the Corinthians in I Corinthians 1:26-31: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption: That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

### **Blessed Are Your Eyes**

The words of the Apostle Paul, dear Brethren, are proven by the words of the Lord himself in Matthew 11:25-26, where it states: "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in they sight.'"

Also in Matthew 13:11 we find further proof, as we read: "He answered and said unto them, 'Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.'"

Verse 16 and 17 tell us further: "'But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them.'"

What a blessed surety of faith, that God, with few exceptions, did not call the great and mighty, but rather the small and humble! By knowing this, what a powerful stimulation and joyful disposition we should have, to serve Him in full submission and faithfulness and at all times to remain loyal. Aren't we, dear Brethren, duty-bound to serving our loving Father with greatest thankfulness?

What is the proper thankfulness? Our thanksgiving drives us powerfully forward to love our heavenly Father and to show our heart's faithfulness. But how can we best do this? Our beloved Lord and Mas-

ter said it himself in the above text of Matthew 18:5 and also in chapter 10, verses 40 and 42: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me ... And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

In Matthew 25:40 our beloved Lord speaks even more plainly: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

### **Proving Our Love**

Consequently we can best prove our love and thankfulness to Him through our beloved brethren, with whom we still live on this earth. Therefore, we appreciate as a very special privilege the fact that we can now do much good for our fellow pilgrims as we move toward Zion, whether it be in a spiritual or in a temporal way. We should turn all our strength into action in this regard.

Gladly, we want to do our best to encourage our brethren in fellowship with one another with full hearts to rejoice in the steadfastness of our God and his wonderful truth. For we will receive a rich blessing according to the divine principles of God for all of our weak efforts; a blessing which is more than we ask for and more than we can understand, by the grace of our Lord, if we remain faithful to the end of our pilgrim walk.

Every service, dear Brethren, even the smallest handshake, will be rewarded with a rich blessing from our God. How happy and blessed we can be, when we do something good for the smallest of our brethren, and how beautiful it is to know that our beloved Lord considers it as something we do for him.

Isn't that wonderful? Where such a spirit rules among the brethren, there must live a wonderful and beautiful harmony, as well. All opposition will easily be lifted, and a condition will be reestablished like the one mentioned in Psalm 133:1 "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

Now, dear Brethren, there is still a question: How often should we do good unto others? Once, twice, or more often? It would be terrible, Brethren, if the scriptures didn't offer us an answer. The Apostle Paul writes to the Galatians in Chapter 6, verses 9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

This, dear Brethren, means clearly and unmistakably, that we should do good to all men where we have opportunity. According to scripture, this is also a true and righteous service to God, which will be rewarded by our gracious heavenly Father.

### **Growing in Wisdom**

Let us return, Brethren, once more to the words of our Lord in Matthew 11:25 “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

Does this mean that we should always remain babes? Does this mean that the wisdom before us would remain hidden forever? O no, dear Brethren, our Lord did not mean this. He meant the worldly wisdom, for worldly wisdom puffs up. A true child of God seeks and strives for the wisdom which comes from God. In the Proverbs of Solomon, we read in Chapter 2, verses 1-6:

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”

Here we are clearly told, dear Brethren, that we should also acquire wisdom, but not worldly wisdom, which in no way helps us to recognize and understand the plan of God. Worldly wisdom can quickly pull us away from God. It is intent upon setting the plan of God in question and not only that, it wants to deny God and to claim his very existence a fairy tale.

We see, however, where worldly wisdom leads. It knows what must be done to bring about change, and even to improve the ruling situation, but it is not in a position to accomplish such changes. We live in a time where there are inventions every day in almost every area: medicine, business and mostly in technology. What is new today becomes old, even obsolete, within a couple of months.

Unfortunately, dear Brethren, there are some of us who are enthusiastic and are impressed with worldly wisdom and would like to possess and use it to some degree, because they see it as good and helpful in the progression of the Gospel Age.

Now, someone might say, that this is an opportunity for spreading God’s word through today’s lightning-fast media. But, dear Brethren, we ask our-

selves, why didn’t God present this help 1900 years ago to the apostles as such an “aid” rather than allowing them to travel far, and often in dangerous paths, in order to assemble the early Church and to ground them in the truth. They were pursued, humbled, arrested and killed.

Brethren, I think, and am also of the opinion, that we should be ready and willing at any time to give a witness of God the Father and Jesus Christ, His Son. We know that God has called 144,000 members for Christ’s bride. God knew beforehand that some would leave the high calling, yet the number of his chosen ones never changed.

### **Love Not The World**

What can or should we do, in order that all men should come to a knowledge of the truth? The Apostle Paul tells us in I Timothy 2:1-4. “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

Another Apostle, Apostle John, tells us that we should not love the world, neither the things of the world, for whosoever loves the world does not have the love of the Father in him. Everything which is in the world is not of the Father. The world passes away with its lusts, but we who do the will of God remain eternally (1 John 2:15-17).

Let us, dear Brethren, be not too amazed at worldly inventions and ideas, but rather more and more practice the love and good works toward all men and especially toward all the household of faith. Let us be simple as children, as our beloved Lord demonstrated through his example as “the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

### **Doing Good**

Dear Brethren, please allow me to read a couple of words from the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans in Romans 12:2-3. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

Dear Brethren, may these few words also be an encouragement to us to do good to all as God gives

us the opportunity. We shouldn't say "Perhaps tomorrow, since I can't do it today." Tomorrow might be too late. We shouldn't think "who needs our help anyway, these days everyone has an income, and perhaps more than I have myself."

Brethren, it isn't only about helping one another materially. Can we overlook the tearful eye of our sister or brother who is asking for a symbolic "cup of cold water," of comfort? These are the small works which bring us a great reward. When we do this then it is good, it is more than we did before. If we haven't been in the habit of doing this, let us immediately begin, it isn't too late.

Finally I would like to quote the Manna text from February 18. "The Kingdom is only intended for

those who by God's grace shall at heart become like to the Lord Jesus, in that they will love the Lord with all their hearts, with all their souls, and be able to say, 'Not my will, but Thy will, O Lord, be done.' No other condition than this of full submission to the Lord can make us acceptable for the Kingdom; for no other condition represents full self-submission and full love to God. And let us not forget that all the heavenly things which 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man,' God hath reserved for them that love Him supremely."

May we prove ourselves worthy; that is my wish for all of you, as well as for myself. Amen.



## *Presentation Fourteen*

# He Who Has Ears Let Him Hear

Brother Tadeusz Zurek (Australia)

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*Dear*ly beloved Brothers and Sisters in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

As the representative of the Polish Ecclesia in Melbourne, I bring you warm greetings and brotherly love from your spiritual family residing in Australia.

My topic today is from St. John's Revelation, which is known as a book of prophecy. It contains many symbols, pictures, and visions of the future. Some of them have come to pass and others are still awaiting the right time for their fulfillment.

The words of the message addressed to the last members of the Church of God on earth are being fulfilled before our eyes. Today's spiritual deliberations will be from the well known verses in Revelation 3:14-22.

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: 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. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame,

and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

### **Advice to Laodicea**

In the above verses, John the Revelator notes the words of our saviour who portrays himself as a true and faithful witness as well as being the beginning of Gods' creation. Through his messenger, our Lord portrays the characteristics of the Church in Laodicea; showing their deeds and giving warning and reprimands. He mentions their boastful words and turns to them with sorrow as to one who is miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

Next, he commands the angel of the Church of Laodicea to acquire salve to anoint their eyes in order that they may see clearly. Approaching the end of his reasoning, our Lord says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten," but later on he gives a spark of hope with the words, "be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at your door, and knock," says the Lord Jesus, waiting if you will hear my voice and if you will let me in, because I want to sup with you.

Dear Brethren! Although these words were written to the messenger of the Laodicean Church, they pertain to all individual members of the Church presently living. These are words which apply to us and therefore they should be a warning and a lesson to us. They are warnings against our carelessness and lack of zeal and consecration to the Lord God, Christ, the Truth, and the Brethren.

Let us remind ourselves that Laodicea was a rich and independent city. Two thousand years ago trade flourished there. Laodicea was famous for its textile industry and its production of highly valued black wool. Also, it had a medical school and its doctors were famous for healing illness of the ears and eyes. Nearby flowed warm waters in which you could nei-

ther warm nor cool yourself because they were lukewarm.

The inhabitants of the town were rich and proud; they did not require assistance, they were very self sufficient. The word of God teaches us that this kind of pride and arrogance is not pleasing to God. Let us remind ourselves of the proud, rich people of Sodom and Gomorrah, whom God destroyed with fire. Also in the city of Laodicea, besides the illness of ears and eyes, the widespread immorality also brought the inhabitants much sickness, for which there was no cure.

### **Last Members of the Church**

The last words of the 17th verse refer with sadness to the last members of the church on earth who are living in great prosperity and affluence. They are compared to the spiritually wretched, miserable, poor, and blind. We know that these strong words of sorrow do not apply to the world, but to those who know the word of God, yet do not appreciate the value of God's word.

Though one can always find an explanation; after all it is the 21st century, so much has changed since the writing of the New Testament; other needs and wants, the stress of employment, the growth in technology, inventions, and information.

Yes, these are great changes, before our very eyes we can see the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy in Chapter 12 and verse 4 regarding the increase of knowledge. With awe and pride we look at what we can buy with our money, thanks to mankind's knowledge. We are wealthy in today's goods, independent. Even without limiting our comfortable lives we are able to help others with what we have left over.

Let us recall our Master's lesson about the widow; she was not wealthy but she gave to charity all that she had — the Lord praised her for this. Her deed is known and told all over the world, even by non-religious people; we also often repeat this experience. The Lord Jesus used her example for a certain reason, so let us draw lessons out of this for ourselves.

Knowing the works of the last members of the bride class, the Lord Jesus reprimands them and says: Because you are lukewarm, without dedication, you want to combine truth with untruth and good with evil, as this would be most comfortable for you. Yet you know that this is not God's standard, that God can not tolerate hypocrites who try to slip through by diplomacy.

Christ's love advises us to sacrifice our present time for Christ and for his work; this example is given to us by the Apostle Paul in the letter to the

Philippians 3:8. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

### **Tests and Experiences**

If we follow this example, surely the end result will be glorious and blessed by the Lord; however, along the way we will encounter sorrowful tests and experiences. Let us remember that neither the Lord Jesus or the Apostles were free from these tests and experiences. It will be these tests that will determine the prize which will be rewarded by the Heavenly Father. Tests were to come upon the Church of the Laodicean period during the second presence of the Son of Man on earth according to his words, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock" (Revelation 3:20).

When these experiences come, it will happen as foretold, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand" (Psalms 91:7). We must realize that this is referring to the called out members of the true church, whose head is Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:13 says "... fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." The Apostle assures us that gold, silver, precious stones, and precious teachings based on the promises of God's Word and the attributes of God's character, will withstand the fiery trials. None of the Lord's people can ignore this lesson, especially those who believe that they are on trial now and are experiencing such trials. But let us be alert, because harsher tests will surely come upon the bride class.

An unbiased love of the Lord God, the Lord Jesus, of the brethren, and even of our enemies is the main attribute which God tests and acknowledges. Let us always remember this and keep it in mind so that we do not end up defeated and deceived by the Adversary.

He is always ready to portray darkness as light and light as darkness. We can expect that this great conflict between societies will get deeper until it ends with anarchy; which will be the destruction of all law and order.

It was to begin with the house of God, from the consecrated and those enlightened by the truth, about which we are informed by the Apostle Peter in his letter: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17). Let us be ready for such tests, especially in serving brethren as well as all who have important responsibilities, and specifically

those having the deeper knowledge of the Word of God.

Let us be prepared for tests and experiences about which we read in Matthew 24:24, "... if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." We know that these tests will be based on perfect love. Today greed, selfishness, boastfulness, and lack of shame are the powers which shake the whole world and every individual. It is easy to notice how these human moods enveloped the world and have led to the current seeking of individual rights — often undeserved by them and seeking to receive compensation for wrongs done to their forefathers.

In past times the work of humans as well as animals was not sufficiently compensated. The prophet Zechariah talks about this in chapters 8 and 11. Can those who are called, guide themselves using the same criteria? Shouldn't we return good for evil, not look for bad intentions, nor complain, nor murmur, nor slander. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:7 "... Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" For the Apostle Paul, life was Christ and death was counted as gain. What about us?

Should we expect such conditions in the House of God with one acting against another? Brother against Brother? Even now a chill can be felt among the Brethren, a division into groups, differing viewpoints leading to misunderstandings; anger, arguments, jealousy, etc. which move the Lord's people, the brethren of our Lord. Should such things be found among the household of faith? Among people who know the truth, for whom the Word of God is a light shining in darkness?

The Word of God informs us that this is what we should expect in the present time. We read this in Matthew 24:10 and also in Matthew 10:21 "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death." These words are often applied by the brethren to times past, when our Lord Jesus was present on earth for the first time in the flesh, or to the dark ages. But rarely do these thoughts come to our mind as being possible during our lifetime.

Delivering unto death, crucifixion, sawn asunder, and being thrown into the arena amongst wild animals, or burnt at the stake, may not be literal, but the pains can be the same or even greater, because wounds coming from someone near, do not heal so quickly.

Evidently the experiences foretold in Matthew 24:9, "and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake," are not sufficient. We may be tested with anger, slander, evil suspicions, and perhaps hate from those with whom we eat spiritual food from the

Lord's table, which our Heavenly Father abundantly supplies at the present time.

The Word of God informs us that when these things come to pass, we will be able to conclude that these are the last days for the Church. These experiences will be similar to the experiences that our Lord went through at Gethsemane. It was there, in these difficult moments for Jesus, when one of the twelve revealed himself as a traitor, about which, much earlier, the Psalmist David prophesied in Psalm 41:9, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

### **Building Character**

Considering the state of the Laodicean Church as portrayed by the Apostle John, and including his warnings of this time period as well as his reprimands and scoldings, let us hasten the building and repair of our characters.

Let us replace the spirit of excessive criticism with the attribute of patience and perseverance in enduring opposition. Let us distance ourselves from the complaining and dissatisfaction around us, being satisfied with what we have. Let us remember the Lord's words in Deuteronomy 31:8, "He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee."

Let us strengthen our faith, rejecting all discouragements and with even greater determination, let us hold on to the teachings of the Bible. Let us use the full extent of our abilities to carry out this great work in rectifying our characters.

Let our ears listen only to the voice of the Lord and the comfort and promises flowing from him. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." He who has a love of hearing and obeying the Word of God, let him listen to this present and specific truth.

In the work of rectifying our characters, a great help may be our eyes. Remembering the instructions directed to the Laodicean Church in Revelation 3:18, let us protect the eyes of our spiritual understanding against such diseases as short sightedness, color blindness, and cataracts.

Spiritual blindness as well as other ailments of spiritual sight will not let us see the length, width, height, and depth of God's love. It will also prevent us from seeing or being able to evaluate the once only offer of the high calling or the fullness and beauty and harmony of the Plan of God.

### **Looking to the Future**

Every member of God's consecrated people should have their eyes turned to the future, having

formed in their mind a vision of the approaching new reality — a new heaven and a new earth. The Apostle John received such a vision during his stay on the Island of Patmos.

He saw a new spiritual order structured in heaven; he saw Christ together with the Church, and a new social order on earth based on God's principles of love and justice. This order on earth will be new, because it has not existed here before.

In the Garden of Eden there was no formal order because there was no society, except for one human pair subjected directly to the law of the Creator. Every one of us with our spiritual eyesight should reach out to this new joyous future which will shortly be here when the Plan of God is accomplished.

Let us anoint our eyes of spiritual understanding with the salve of humbleness, total consecration of self, as well as obedience to the will of God, and unconditional love. Let us watch our ears and eyes and through these endeavours let us carry out the improving of our characters. The success of our work, to a large extent, will depend upon the mindset we have, specifically in having a proper control of our thoughts and feelings.

Every day when we communicate with our Heavenly Father in prayer, ask Him for blessings for the new day, ask for grace which would protect us from evil thoughts, hasty words, coarse behavior, suspicions, or the spirit of excessive criticism. We do not have a deciding influence on many outside events, but it does depend on us how they affect our characters.

### **Time for the Lord**

Besides the time allocated to morning, evening, and meal time prayers, let us try to regularly allocate time to the Lord. Let us learn to take advantage of moments of time between other duties, turning our mind to spiritual things.

Let us remind ourselves of a certain Samaritan woman who spoke with our Lord, and said that in this spot, on this hill, her forefathers gave glory to God. Jesus answered her in John 4:21, 23. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh ... and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Wherever we find ourselves, whether at home, at work, or on a trip, in isolation or in company, remember, that our behaviour can be a prayer. What we are and what we can be, depends upon our thoughts and intentions. Therefore, we must be careful what fills our mind, what we read, watch, and what we talk about.

The Word of God tells us that our daily meditation should be the Law of God. In Psalms 119:97 the Psalmist says, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." If we are to make progress in the development of our characters, we must be close to the Lord every day. If through perseverance and study of the Word of God we fill our minds with God's thoughts, then there will not be any place, or time, to be busy with anything else.

Going through daily difficulties and duties can be an opportunity for specific spiritual deliberations. Among these deliberations, the most important is our prayers. Prayer is power, it is the thread that connects us with our Heavenly Father.

Every prayer demands concentration of thoughts as well as directing these thoughts to the throne of grace. The Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:8 wrote, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." This reminder by the Apostle can be taken personally by every consecrated Christian. Everyone, individually, is responsible for their own mind.

In becoming imitators of Christ, we give our will to our Master, agreeing that from this moment we will not be obedient to our will, but that we will act according to the leadings of the Lord's will. Under this condition, the Lord received us to himself, to his family, and so every departure from the principles of God's Word would not be in accordance with our covenant. Through His word, God gives us necessary teachings in regard to His will.

### **Importance of the Heart**

If these indications from God are accepted into a good heart, then they will give the fruits of obedience which will lead to spiritual growth. How a person thinks in their heart, can be seen in their actions.

Luke the Evangelist in Luke 6:45 wrote the words that Jesus spoke, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

Many of us have learned in part to control our actions, abstaining from fleshly oppositions. Many of us have also learned in part to control our tongue, remembering that this tongue, with which we glorify God, can also be used to wound those around us as is written in James 3:1-10. Control over our actions and words will be made more difficult if our mind and will

are not in agreement with the will of God. In the above verses, James indicates a way of controlling ourselves.

Each of our thoughts should be discerned and not careless; if it is evil or selfish or depraved, it may become accepted, and could germinate, bringing great injury — this will become evident in our words and actions and it could spread to others.

This is why James recommends self examination according to the instructions in the third chapter of his letter. If the thought in our mind is right, it can be accepted and supported. If, however, it is not, it should immediately be rejected out of our minds as being a bad influence. If a thought is pure, not selfish or full of anger, it can be deliberated upon further, but if it isn't pure, it should immediately be forgotten.

Each member of the Lord's people, irrespective of their fleshly conditions, if carrying out the instructions of God, will assuredly become useful, and in this way prepared for the Kingdom of God and for the honorable work which will then be entrusted to them under the direction of the Head of the Church.

During the perfecting of our characters in this last phase of the history of the Church, we must take stronger control of our tongue. In other words, that which comes out of our lips.

The Apostle John in Revelation 3:17 gives a reason why the members of the Church in the Laodicean period receive the Lord's chastening. The reason for this was their speech, full of pride and arrogance, thinking they were self sufficient, self confident, and capable of supplying all of their own needs.

Speech is used to express a person's thoughts and feelings. According to the Lord's teachings, the heart pictures the person's character and the lips audibly represent the character. If the lips are predisposed to speak of evil things, then the attitude of that person is bad and their mind is filled with evil.

What you fill your mind with, is what you will speak about most often. The new creature must decide what they will fill their mind with, what company they will keep, where they will walk, what they will read and look at, and what influences they will subject themselves to. If someone notices, for instance, that their mind is filled with jokes which awaken laughter and nothingness or foolishness, which are not decent for a child of God, they should cease this immediately. We should put the most care into looking after our hearts, who's feelings we

should constantly put under the control of the will of God.

### **Principles of Truth**

Let the principles of truth and justice take the prominent position with humbleness, patience, mercy, brotherly kindness, love, also the highest honor for God and Christ, as well as all that which is beautiful and holy — let these be the guiding principles of our life.

If these principles are engraved in our hearts, we will not have difficulty in controlling our tongues. Then, from the good treasures of our heart, our lips will speak the words of truth and wisdom, bringing glory to God and awakening beautiful thoughts and honorable feelings in the minds of others.

Dear Brethren! Taking the above thoughts into our hearts, let us try with greater zeal than ever before, to control the old nature and its misleading tendencies, getting control over our tongue.

Let all the members of our body be in total subjection to our Lord, as his servants. So that our legs and hands may be useful in the work of the Lord, they must be used in the praise of his name.

In the same way our ears will be able to serve the Lord, only if they are obedient to him. Also, our eyes which are a great blessing and gift from God, should be protected from fleshly desires and the pride of life. They should serve in recognizing the wise and just, love filled, will of God, for His creation.

Having in mind the words of warning and reprimand directed to the Laodicean Church, being aware of the shortness of human life, as well as of the close of the Gospel Age, let us be more zealous in our service to the Lord. Let us hurry in improving and progressing the work over our thoughts, our hearts, and our characters.

We don't have time to postpone this work until tomorrow, remembering the words of the Apostle John in Revelation 1:3, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

He who has ears, let him hear every advice and direction the spirit is giving to the Church of Laodicea.

May our good and merciful God and Heavenly Father continue to bless our eyes and ears with spiritual understanding. Amen.



## *Presentation Fifteen*

# The Thoughts of the Faithful and Their Benefits

Brother Gheorghe Ilea (Romania)

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*Peace* unto all of you, brothers and sisters, as I bring the love and greetings of your Bible Student brethren from Sighetul Marmatiei.

Our lesson today is from the epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians, 4:8, and from Peter's words in 2 Peter 1:11. Let us pay attention to the word of God expressed through the mouth of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, in Proverbs 22:20: "Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge?"

Let us read, dear brethren in our Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul's advice concerning counsels and thoughts in Philippians 2:5-8: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ["did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped," RSV]: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The thought of humility should guide all of us in everything we do and say, as well as in our relationships with others, as the Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 5:5: "... all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." Therefore, beloved brethren, it is good to keep the thought of humility in our relationships.

If we turn our thoughts to God's words expressed through the prophet Jeremiah, chapter 29, verse 11, we read: "For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (RSV).

We will continue with the advice given by God to the captives in Babylon who were under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, as it is in Jeremiah 29:4-10: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all

that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD. For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place."

We conclude from the above verses that God thought about the welfare of His people, even when they were in captivity. Let us continue with the advice the Apostle Paul gives us in 2 Corinthians 10:5 "... and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

In order to fulfill this scripture we need to direct our attention to Paul's words in Philippians 4:8. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Beloved brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ, let us now analyze together a few aspects from the above verse regarding the thinking process.

### **(1) True**

Firstly, Whatsoever things are true, think on these things! We find the answer to this statement in Paul words in Colossians 1:12, where the apostle reveals unto us the truth about the Gospel Age saints, among which we believe we are counted: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Verse 13 in chapter 1 of Colossians gives us the beautiful concept that He delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. Verse 14 of Colossians 1 gives us another beautiful concept which is that in him, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

In verse 15 we have a beautiful thought regarding two important aspects of the Truth: (1) Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. (2) Jesus Christ is the firstborn of every creature.

Verse 16 tells us the truth that by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by him, and for him. In verse 18, we have the beautiful thought that he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Verse 20 tells us that God decided to reconcile all things unto Himself by him, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth, making peace through the blood of his cross. Verse 21 in chapter 1 of Colossians tells us the truth that “... you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled.”

### **(2) Honorable**

Let us continue with the second point of Philippians 4:8, “whatever is honorable” (RSV). We will begin by saying that all the advice that God saw fit to be given unto us through his holy prophets, His Son Jesus Christ, and His apostles, are indeed honorable. We quote a few scriptural references, such as:

(1) Exodus 20:2-3, which tells us: “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

(2) In Exodus 20:12, God says through His servant Moses: “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”

(3) We find a beautiful thought in the book of Proverbs 25:27, where God says the following words

through Solomon, the son of David: “so for men to search their own glory is not glory.”

Our thoughts go to another scripture, spoken by God, through the mouth of the prophet Malachi, 1:6. “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?”

We continue with the word of God preached by Peter in 1 Peter 1:17 “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”

There is another beautiful thought in a scripture which God spoke through the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:10, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.”

Let us mention another scripture from God, that came through the words of Samuel, as we read in 1 Samuel 2:30 “... Those who honor me I will honor; but those who despise me will be disdained” (NIV).

Beloved brethren, these scriptures that we read together and many others like them are worthy of honor. If you and I keep in our minds all these counsels and live by them, then we honor God and He will honor us forever.

### **(3) Just**

Point number three, the Apostle Paul urges us in Philippians 4:8 to think of “whatsoever things are just.”

Evidently, every word that comes out of God’s mouth is just and we should consider it such. Speaking of this, God urges the faithful ones throughout the Gospel age by the words of the Apostle John, in 1 John 4:1, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” This scripture says that we must analyze the words of those who speak in the name of God and if their teachings diminish the value of any of His qualities or of some part of His plan, we should reject it from our thoughts immediately.

Another teaching of the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:1 reads: “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” According to this scripture, we cannot allow in any manner our minds to abandon God’s principles, yet our personal liberties and rights may often be set aside in the interest of others, in order to please God.



The Apostle Paul was one who abandoned all earthly privileges for the cause of Christ and of the church. This is what he says in Galatians 2:5, 11. "To them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. [RSV] But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

How should we apply the counsel given by God through Paul in Romans 15:1 that says we should be patient with the weak?

In order to understand it, let us think of one of God's qualities, mercy, as it is described in Joel 2:13 "And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

So we see dear brothers and sisters, each one of us must possess the qualities mentioned in the verse above. The faithful must have thoughts of love, sympathy, interest, and care towards others, especially towards those in the household of faith, and even towards our enemies, however many times our environment will demand it.

We continue with the Apostle Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 5:14, where he tells us: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." If our duty is to rebuke brothers or sisters sometimes, let us do this with the intention to help them, and not with the intention to pull them down.

We have many other beautiful thoughts to discuss with you, but let us continue with point number four in Philippians 4:8.

#### **(4) Pure**

"Whatsoever things are pure ... think on these things." All the words given to us by God through the ancient worthies, through His Son Jesus Christ, and through His apostles are pure, because He Himself is pure; thus, let us read the words of God spoken through His servant Moses in Deuteronomy 32:1-4.

"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

Beloved brothers and sisters, we believe that we are part of His people and that His people are pure, as God tells us through the Apostle Paul in his epistle to Titus, 2:14, Jesus "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

In the book of Psalms, we find a beautiful statement about the word of God in Psalms 12:6. "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."

These short comments will end my discussion on point four, although I leave this topic open for study to all of you brethren who are present here.

#### **(5) Lovely**

Point number five in Philippians 4:8, "whatsoever things are lovely ... think on these things." In the gospel of Mark 12:28-31 we read: "And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

Beloved brethren, let us fix in our minds the answer that Jesus Christ the Son of God gave to this scribe, as it is also valid for spiritual Israel during the gospel age, among whom we believe to be. This advice, as many others that the Lord Jesus Christ gave unto us through His servants, is lovely. Let us think further of the character of the Heavenly Father who unites almighty power, wisdom, justice, and love.

Our duty is to strive to mold and develop a character in harmony with the will of the Heavenly Father, although we will not be able to do it through our own power or strength but through the spirit of God, as it is promised through the prophet, in Zechariah 4:6, "This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

In harmony with the verse in Zechariah 4:6, we find the account related in the Gospel of John 14:15-17, where we read the following words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Beloved brethren, let us consider together one of the character features of our Heavenly Father, namely love. Why did I choose this feature? Because the Apostle John tells us in 1 John 4:16, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

In verse 21 the apostle directs our attention to the following commandment: "And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." Therefore dear brethren, this thought should also guide us, because God is love.

### Qualities of Love

We will consider next what qualities this love has and we will find the answer in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 [Diaglott], as we read: "Love suffers long and is kind. Love does not envy. Love is not boastful; is not puffed up; acts not unbecomingly, seeks not that which is not her own; is not provoked to anger; does not impute; rejoices not with iniquity, but rejoices with the truth; covers all things; believes all things; hopes for all things; endures all things."

Beloved brethren, let us think now of some of these features of God's love that were enumerated earlier.

(1) The first one is in verse 4, love is long suffering with the imperfections and weaknesses of the brethren, as well as with those who are on a wrong path and oppose the truth. Let us remember that the whole world is more or less influenced by the god of this world, Satan, who blinds the mind and judgment. This is why the Apostle Paul strengthens us through the word of God in his epistle to Hebrews, chapter 12:3: "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

(2) Let us discuss another feature of God's love presented in verse 4, namely that love is kind. It not only seeks to do what is right, but it does it with pleasure. If our hearts are fervent with kindness, then all our thoughts will be in harmony with this kindness, for whoever thinks of doing kind deeds is full of kindness. Love is kind toward all people, especially towards the brethren in Christ (Galatians 6:10).

(3) We will consider here, beloved brethren, another feature of God's love which is presented in verse 6: love does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices with the truth. Any favor we would gain by remaining in misunderstanding or error would not be in harmony with the love feature. Love rejoices with the truth, especially the truth that praises God and His Son, as Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:6 "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of dark-

ness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

(4) Let us analyze another feature of God's love from verse 5. Love is not quickly provoked. There are many bad traits in our day, such as: moods, quickness to anger, and argument, getting upset, as well as a disposition to be easily offended. These bad traits all stem from an unreformed, selfish heart and are contrary to love. We read the Apostle Paul's words in Ephesians 4:31, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice." In 1 Thessalonians 5:9 we read: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Brothers and sisters, if we manifest any of the bad traits mentioned above and if we would apply to ourselves a punishment, we would gradually become more careful in our conduct, and we would gradually overcome such weaknesses. This battle of ours is pleasing to the Lord and we will receive from him all the help, if we will request it according to Hebrews 4:16. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

(5) Let us analyze another feature of love presented in 1 Corinthians 13:5 "... [Love] does not impute evil." Do we want this noble feature to rule our heart? Then let us watch our thoughts! What do we think of? According to Galatians 6:16, it is understood that God's covenant people of the Gospel Age, spiritual Israel, are under the law of Christ, the law of liberty.

In James 1:25 we find the following account: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." This law of liberty is the law of love which should be written in the thoughts and in the hearts of each person of faith of the Gospel Age.

In Zechariah 7:10 we find the advice given by God through this prophet: "And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."

In Proverbs 3:29 we find the following advice: "Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee."

Beloved brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ, if the foundation of our thoughts is the love of God, then we will be able to say words of love towards both our brethren and mankind in general, and also say words of praise towards God and His Son

Jesus Christ. We will be able to do good to our brethren and even to our enemies.

By practicing these daily in our lives, we will be able to develop a character according to the will of God, which will bring the result expressed by the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1:11. “For so an entrance

shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Beloved brethren, may God’s peace be with you all, who are in Jesus Christ, Amen.



## *Presentation Sixteen*

# What Manner of Persons Ought We to Be

Brother Fred Binns (England)

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*Our* title is taken from 2 Peter 3:11, which reads: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

In making this statement the Apostle was dealing with two important features of Scripture, Christian character and prophecy. Let us take up this theme then. Let us examine the Prophetic Word and why it is important to acquire the spirit of holiness.

Let us do so in the spirit of the same Apostle's advice to us earlier in his epistle. Chapter 3 verses 1, 2: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

And with our advantage of hindsight, how instructive are these "words which were spoken before by the holy prophets" and the interpretations of the Apostles.

So first let us look at the Apostles words in the context of their own times.

It is very clear that Peter and all the other Apostles fully expected a time of judgement and the establishment of the Kingdom. His statement in his first Epistle, chapter 4, verses 7 and 8 make this clear: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

### **Admonition For Our Day**

How timely this admonition is today, so let us indeed have this "fervent love amongst yourselves" (verse 8), even though Peter was not speaking of our day.

He was of course speaking of his day and the expectations held both by himself, and all the other Apostles, that judgement was near and time was short. And at some time beyond this, the Kingdom would be established at the appearing of Christ.

In this they were all perfectly correct, what they did not know, and this was of Divine arrangement, was just how long that time would be between the Judgement on the apostate nation of Israel and their return to favour and the Kingdom.

We read in Acts chapter 1 verses 6 and 7 of this very situation: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."

The Lord did not correct their anticipation of the Kingdom, he had taught them for three and one half years to expect this very thing and indeed had shown them as much of its new character as they were able to understand. But they did need to understand the fact that there were to be "times" and "seasons" (verse 7) beyond their knowledge.

It is easy for us, with the wonderful advantage of the hindsight we have already mentioned, to see what some of these times and seasons involved and to more fully understand that same Prophetic Word that so inspired the first Apostles.

### **Peter Quotes Joel**

Let us take the prophecy of Joel quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Joel 2: 28-32) and then make our application of it in the knowledge of all those "times" and "seasons" which have become history over the last 2000 years.

But let us first remind ourselves of Peter's application as it was current in his day.

He clearly saw that the prophecy was speaking of the Pentecostal pouring out of the Spirit. And that the new order spoken of by the Prophets was commencing.

He saw now a house of Sons as well as a house of Servants, just as John recorded in his gospel (John 1:12) that “as many as received him,” that is from the house of servants, “to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”

But he was also aware that although Israel had rejected their Messiah, and would be sorely judged, God would not cast off his house of servants, but after a measure of correction would finally bless them with this same Spirit.

Peter clearly saw from the Book of Joel both, the promise to the two houses, of blessing to both and also the coming Judgement on the nation.

Let us read it just as Peter quoted it, and note where Peter applies the word to his own time, and where he pauses to introduce the Lord as the One in whom the prophecy meets its fulfillment, and note how he concludes the quotation.

We read as follows from Acts chapter two, commencing at verse 17: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Here Peter stops to interpret Joel’s words, for where Joel says “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved,” the prophet is referring to Jehovah.

### **Peter Introduces Jesus**

And now Peter must introduce the One whom Jehovah has raised up, in whose name only is salvation, Jesus of Nazareth, seated in heavens power to bring to fruition this great prophecy.

Now, at some length, Peter opens up this great revelation, showing his hearers clearly that Jesus of Nazareth is that One. We will read just the first and last verses from this very lengthy, but important lesson.

Verse 22: “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you

by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” Now down to verse 36: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Here in fulfillment of the prophecy is the One on whom they must call. And so we read in verses 37-39: “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your *children*, and to *all that are afar off*, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

Have you noticed Brethren that Peter has reverted back to the prophecy, the last part of verse 39, was from Joel verse 32. This reads in full, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.”

Let us look again to whom Peter applies this verse in his day. “For the promise is unto *you*.”

“And to your *children*.”

“And to all that are afar off.”

He applies it to his hearers, the present generation, to their children, that is the next generation, and to the dispersed of Israel throughout the world.

We might be disposed to apply that last statement, about those who are “afar off,” to the call of Gentiles, since the Apostle Paul uses this same expression in his epistle to the Ephesians. And in effect this would be so later on, for the prophecy had declared, “even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

But this is not what Peter had in mind. The revelation of the call of the Gentiles was still future and we know in any case what difficulty Peter and the Church at Jerusalem had at first in receiving this.

### **The House of Sons**

What Peter now saw with the coming of the Spirit was that a new Household of Sons was coming into being and that these, for a period at least, must come out from the House of Servants, since they must first be corrected.

He would see now, more clearly than ever, the words of the prophecy in Isaiah 1:9: “Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant,

we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.”

And so he continues, in Verse 40: “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save your selves from this untoward generation.”

Yes, “Save your selves from this untoward generation.” What we term AD 70, had in the mind of Israel’s Creator, already been allocated its position in the “times” and “seasons” “held in His power” (Acts 1:7).

And it is clear from the writings of Peter and the other Apostles that they expected it to be much nearer. However, the important thing was that they saw it coming. And Peter warns his hearers in no uncertain terms to be ready.

So we read in verse 41: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

But as we all know, there is a problem with Peter’s application of this Prophecy of the pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh to the First Advent. It seems evident to all thinking Christians that it would apply more properly to the Lord’s Second Advent.

In the past, we have used the expression “double application” to get around this difficulty, and this has certainly served us well, allowing us to look towards a second and future fulfillment when it will truly be upon “all flesh.”

However, looking back as we have done, to the days of the Apostles we may see this in a different light. Their problem was only that they had no apprehension of the length of time involved in the fulfillment of the Prophetic Word.

They were quite clear as to the fact that the Kingdom was both Spiritual, a House of Sons, ruling from Heaven, and would also be established here on Earth, represented by the House of Servants.

What they could not see was the extent of both the work and the time involved, and of course this was the same for the prophets themselves.

As we read in 1 Peter 1:10, 11: “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”

### **God’s Spirit upon Israel**

This would be so for the Prophet Joel, he could see the importance of the pouring out of the Spirit on the whole house of Israel and that it would be

upon Sons and Servants and under the inspiration of the Spirit it was to be during the same period, “in those days” (Joel 2:29).

We will just read that portion of the prophecy again, Joel 2:28, 29: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (29) And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”

Now it is clear that to Peter, the expression “afterwards” and “those days” of Joel were the last days, as we read again from Acts 2:17, 18, as Peter interprets it for us: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”

Now to agree that the Apostles were not permitted to know the lengths of the times involved is one thing, but to assume that they were incorrect in believing that they were living in the last days is quite another. If we assume that the inspired writers were mistaken, surely this compounds our problem.

### **Times and Seasons**

On the other hand, taking them at their word, and with the much longer view that hindsight has given us, we can see now the wonderful extent of the Divine Purpose. And also get a better perspective of those “times” and “seasons” still to come.

Take now for instance, the Apostle Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 10:11 “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Yes prophecies and types all “written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.”

The Apostle may not have been given an insight into the lengths of “times” and “seasons” to come, any more than the Prophets before him, but he grasped the significance of those that had passed into the history of his time.

Not only the Nation of Israel, who were a wonderful figure of many spiritual truths,” ensamples” (1 Corinthians 10:11). But more than this also, the earlier age which saw the creation of Adam, who Paul clearly tells us in Romans 5:14 was “the figure of him that was to come.”

## God's Glory in the Face of Jesus

And again the very age of creation itself pointed to this selfsame time. For we have it from this same Apostle in 2 Corinthians 4:6, that, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

All of these great ages which spoke of this wonderful time, culminated in the coming of the One who would fulfill all those things spoken of by the Prophets.

We have quoted from the Apostle Peter regarding how all the Prophets wondered at all that they saw, and their puzzlement," searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11). And now we can continue where the Apostle left off.

1 Peter 1:12: "Unto whom [that is the Prophets] it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

Yes not only the Prophets but the angels also, who had seen the very earliest ages, sought to understand the manner in which these prophetic times would be unfolded. A great work was being laid before the creation in type and prophecy. In whatever way it was revealed to the angels, before the foretold ages of glory could come, a lamb was slain.

This we have from the pen of the Apostle in 1 Peter 1:18-22: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

Foreordained to be the One to remedy the effects of rebellion in the creation, removing forever its effects. He was to be the One to establish it as an everlasting glory by the investment in Himself of the Divine Nature.

No wonder Peter returns at once to that important corollary of the Prophetic Word. Our fitness to already be part of that great work. Let us just

repeat it once again that we may fully understand its import.

Verse 22 "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

## The Fullness of Times

This wonderful exhortation crucially encapsulates the essence of this great work. It was put into operation from the very beginning, has continued to this day and will overflow into the coming age until, in the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:10: "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

Yes "the dispensation of the fullness of times." What a wonderful expression! At all times we see now, as we have already read in Acts 1:7, our great God has ever "put in his own power His times and seasons." Only as they enter our world as events in our history do we see them. From the very first prophetic promise to Mother Eve to this day, these "times" and "seasons" have rolled out at the moving of the Divine Spirit.

Seen in this light we can well understand the thinking of Peter and Paul.

The "Seed of the Woman" Genesis 3:15 had come, the One who would turn the Edenic "curse" Genesis 3:17 into a blessing, had come.

Into his hands, and only into his hands could be placed the great work of fulfilling all of the Prophetic Word that this first Prophetic Promise heralded.

We have quoted from Peter's first Epistle verses 18-22. Let us remind ourselves of verse 20, "Who [that is Christ] verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

"Manifest in these last times." Peter is quite clear on the matter, he understands that the Advent of the Lord heralded the fact that he was living in the "last times."

I realize that this raises a question, because we are accustomed to see the last times of the First Advent as the end of the Jewish age. Now this is quite correct up to a point, but we have already seen that all the Apostles expected more than just the dissolution of the corrupt leadership in Israel. They had been taught by the Lord Himself, from this same Prophetic Word, that a righteous government was to be set up in Israel and that they themselves, according to Matthew 19:28, would be leaders in this government.



We quote: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

So firmly did they believe the Lord that, regretfully, they almost immediately began to argue amongst themselves who would be sitting on His left and right hand. How sad, what manner of persons ought they to have been in all holy conversation and godliness? (2 Peter 3:11).

Many scriptures might be cited as further confirmation of the Apostles expectations, but the time has come when, in the light of the foregoing we can now make our own tentative assessment of the Prophetic Word. I say tentative because we are not prophets, only earnest students of our Heavenly Father's Holy Word.

But with the advantage of much fulfilled prophecy and with our longer perspective on the Apostles interpretation of this word, perhaps we might make some little progress in deepening our understanding of this precious Word.

Let us turn then to that fulfillment of prophecy that began our meditation, the pouring out of the Spirit and view it as Peter did as the manifestation of the long prophesied work of redemption and the inauguration of a new order.

When we do this we have to turn at once, not to the Book of Acts, but to the Gospels and to Jordan. For it is here that we find the true commencement of its mighty work.

We read in Matthew 3:16-4:1 "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

At last the true "Seed of the Woman" had come and the very first work of the Spirit, as we have read, was to bring Him face to face with that old Serpent. At last the great Prophetic Word had begun to unfold. The adversary left the field defeated, "a stronger than he [had] come upon him, and overcome him" (Luke 11:22).

And Luke again, in his account of this confrontation in the wilderness, and the leading of the Spirit adds this comment "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about" (Luke 4:14).

What a contrast, first our Lord is "led" by the Spirit, but after the challenge of the Adversary has been met we see Him "returned in the power of the Spirit."

The "Second Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:47), to use his other title connected to this ancient Prophetic Word, had also come and the "Son of Man" would now begin the fulfillment of every one of its predictions.

However, before we continue we should complete our quotation of Luke 11:22, which tells in the Lord's own words that "he taketh from him [the strong man] all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

This is such a fundamental fulfillment of the Prophetic Word, in respect to the work of the holy Spirit, that it is worth reminding ourselves of the account which is found in its entirety in Luke 11:14-22.

In the account the Lord had just cast out a devil from a person, whereupon his enemies accuse Him of doing so by the power of Beelzebub. The Lord quickly demonstrates the falsity of this statement but then goes on to show us the true nature of what had happened.

So we read in verses 20-22. "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

### **Power of God's Spirit**

There can be no mistaking what is going on here. Our Lord by the power of the Spirit ("the finger of God") has dispossessed Satan of one of his captives and Satan can do nothing about it, "a stronger than he had come and overcome him." Not only this, but He had not long since given His Disciples power over the demons and they likewise were powerless to resist and when they returned to Him in triumph he said unto them, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

Satan, had made himself the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4) and held all mankind under his power but this was about to change.

Of course all this was prior to Pentecost, but it still provides an impressive forecast of what was to come. After the faithful completion of His own ministry by the Spirit's power, our Lord was raised to the Divine Nature and made to "sit on the right hand of the power of God" Luke 22:69. From whence He would send the Spirit upon His Church.

First upon the 120 Disciples who had gathered on that fiftieth day, then at Peter's preaching 3000 added to the Church, and soon to become 5000, as the power of the holy Spirit gathered the Church out of Satan's World.

The Apostle Paul joyfully described this work in Colossians 1:12, 13 in the following way. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

One by one over the past 2000 years saints have been "translated" out of Satan's Kingdom of darkness into Christ's Kingdom of light.

The battle has been hard, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2) has contested every inch of the way, for he at least is in no doubt that these are "the last days."

Very soon we trust the last saint will make his or her "calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10) and the next stage of the Prophetic Word will come into operation.

Let us not forget we have all been witnesses of a wonderful fulfillment of a very special "time" or "season," "which the Father hath put in his own power" for almost 2000 years. The return of His house of servants to their rightful heritage.

### **Prophetic Word Fulfilled**

What will this next stage be? Nothing less than the Prophetic Word spoken by the Prophet Joel (2:29). "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

And we have this clearly placed in front of us elsewhere in this wonderful Prophetic Word. It is of course found in the prophecy of Zechariah. Let us read it from verses 10-14 of chapter 12, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart."

What a comprehensive work of the Spirit we have here, nor will it end there, for the promise is that it will be "upon all flesh" and so we confidently expect the final stage of this mighty work eventually to encompass the entire human race.

And when we have thus defined it, do we not find something very similar described in yet another marvelous Prophetic Word?

### **The Waters of Life**

I refer of course to Ezekiel 47 and to the waters of life. Let us read the first five verses: "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over."

Do we remember the words of our Lord to the woman of Samaria as he dispensed this water of life? Of course we do, it is found in John's gospel chapter four verse ten: "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

From whence did the Prophet see this water issuing? "Out from under the threshold of the house," (verse 1) from the door. And who is the door? Our Lord of course.

For the last 19 centuries this infinite reservoir has been made available through our Lord. First in him "ankle" (Ezekiel 47:3) deep, then to his Church "to the knees." Very soon to Israel, "to the loins." And finally over all the world, "waters to swim in, a river that can not be passed over."

### **True Worship Restored**

And do we hear the Lord's words again as He dispensed this Living Word in verses 23, 24? "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the

Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

Now we begin truly to see what it is we “ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness.” This is what Israel must soon enter into. The Apostle Paul made clear mention of this in his epistle to the Romans chapter 11 verses 25-27, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

Throughout our study of the Prophetic Revelation, this theme of godliness and holiness is constantly emphasized. How could it be otherwise? How can God use any person or nation for His deeper designs except they be fit for His great purposes?

Having then considered the Apostles’ interpretation of this great stream of prophecy, let us look at it as it appears to us in our own time. Let us read together from Ezekiel 36:24-27, “For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

Could anything be clearer? Surely now from both the Prophets and the Apostles we have seen what will be the next feature of the working of the Holy Spirit in the affairs of Israel.

But when and at what time you may ask? Well of course they did not know for this was, and is still a feature amongst those “times and seasons which the Heavenly Father is keeping in His own Power.”

What we can do however is return to some of the prophecies regarding the coming of the Spirit on the nation we have quoted from and see what prophetic features are shown to have preceded this great event.

We read from Zechariah 12 of this spirit of “grace and of supplications”, what were the preceding events that the Prophet tells us about? Let us read from verses 2-9, “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah

and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God. In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.”

I think we can cautiously say that we see the beginnings of a fulfillment of some of these gracious promises to Israel. Jerusalem has become a “burdensome stone” and a “cup of trembling.” But all nations are not yet gathered against her, the immediate danger presently being from those who, as descendants of their father Abraham, should have seen themselves as brethren.

But then Israel is still Jacob trusting in their own strength, and as the Apostle Paul has already told us still “ungodly” Romans 11:26.

But this will all change with the coming of the “spirit of grace and supplications,” just as the Apostle explains. In this same passage of Scripture he mentions this key “time or season” that was to be fulfilled and places it after the change of the Church, for it is after the “fullness of the gentiles has come in” (verse 25).

I would like to suggest that as we place ourselves in that time of the coming of the holy Spirit upon the nation, and the commencement of their change from Jacob to the true Israel, we will be brought to the Prophetic Word which tells of how these present events will be dealt with.

We can not for certain determine that Paul had the prophecy of Obadiah in mind when he penned the above passage in Romans, but the wording is so close that we certainly can safely take direction from this prophecy. In any case this Prophetic Word has

to have a fulfillment and as we read it together you will see how appropriate it is to the resolution of the current world situation regarding Israel's present dilemma.

We read from Obadiah 1:17-21, "But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it. And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south. And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD's."

It is open to debate, but I feel that the Apostle has combined parts of verse 17 and verse 21 together to give, in Romans 11, the Church his teaching respecting Israel. "All Israel" were to be saved. More importantly all Israel were to be holy. Yes all Israel. Yes both Houses, Natural and Spiritual, Sons and Servants.

So we see that at this time the Israeli army will fall on the Palestinians and Oh, No, dear Brethren, nothing of the kind, just read that last verse from Obadiah again and with the Apostle combine the principle of the 17th verse and remember that at that time Israel will be a Holy Nation.

### **The Church**

Verse 21 tells us clearly who will be dealing with the Palestinians and the terrorists. "And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD's."

No carnal weapons here dear Brethren, for the Saviours, Christ head and body, will "judge the mount of Esau." "And the kingdom shall be the LORD's."

Now we have a resolution for another interesting part of the Prophetic Word. Another end time prophecy of course. One that has occupied our attention a very great deal, Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. In particular the fact that amongst all the nations that come upon the land of Israel we can find no Semitic names.

Of course if our thoughts on Obadiah are correct this would be expected. And also, the fact that Israel appears to be resting confidently yet apparently without any material defenses now can be associated with the concept of a Holy Nation at rest with their God. Of course the turning away of ungodliness will not be done overnight, time, that essential factor which our great Creator has wisely held all this time in His own power will still be all important. Just as we read at the close of all those momentous events depicted by Ezekiel, it will only be at the very close of this great day that Israel will fully come to see "what kind of persons they ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

As we read in chapter 39:21-22, "And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward."

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Let us close with the words of Peter that have been the theme of our meditation, for until it is true of every member of the Church. Every member of His body. Every one of the household of Sons. Every branch in that Olive Tree, it can not go forth to the house of Servants, nor to the world of mankind.

Brethren, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all Holy Conversation and Godliness?"

## Presentation Seventeen

# Divine Grace

Brother Bernard Boulier (France)

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*Paul* said in Romans 5:20, "... But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." We are going to take inspiration from this quotation to uncover the different aspects that the grace of God covers and how it has been, and will be, exercised during the various ages. We will then be able to see and appreciate altogether what is the length of the grace that is granted to us at the present time.

A grace can be a blessing, it may be received through faith. It justifies, because the sacrifice of Christ has been done by grace. So it is a free gift and an unmerited favor, which we have to show worthy of in trying to be His faithful servants. This free gift justifies us from any sin and if we have faith in the redemption through Christ, we appreciate the benefits given through grace, since it is has been offered to us for our salvation.

During this study we are going to see the following aspects: the definition of grace, grace in the different ages, grace as a free gift, grace that justifies, grace received through faith, the sacrifice of Christ by grace, and how to be worthy of this free gift.

### (1) The Definition of Grace

Grace can be defined as a favor given by someone, who acts without obligation or owing anything. The synonyms of the word grace are: benefit, gift, or favor. It is through kindness that a grace is bestowed. Grace is a blessing and it provides a protection.

To exercise grace is to consider that a fault is erased. In the process that precedes grace, there is forgiveness and mercy. The words commonly used to describe what is done by grace are: benevolence, amiable, compassion, gentleness, kindness, goodness of heart. If we take a closer look at the use of the word "grace" in the holy scriptures, in the New Testament, it is used most often with different aspects that are developed. "Grace" (Greek, *Charis*) is one of the most used words in the Bible. It is used 170 times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament grace evokes a favor.

What is surprising when we study this word is that grace is not a request, it doesn't imply any requirement to fulfill, any duty or any sanction. It is not a law to respect and nothing is asked for this favor. On the contrary, grace is an offer, a free gift that shows love, goodness, mercy, forgiveness. It regenerates today and determines our future, everlasting hope.

### (2) Grace in the Different Ages

Before examining in detail the process of grace, we have to consider the different ages during which the grace of God was exercised. Pastor Russell explains this to us in the following quotation (Volume 1, Page 298):

"The Apostle Paul calls our attention specially to the sureness of God's promises to Israel in the future, and shows what favors they lost by unbelief, and what favors are still sure. He says that it was because of pride, hardness of heart and unbelief that Israel as a people had not obtained that which they sought — the chief place in divine favor and service. Paul's reference here is not to all the generations of Israel from Abraham down, but to those generations living at the time of the first advent; and his words would apply to all the generations which have lived during the Gospel age, the age wherein the chief favor has been offered — the high calling to the divine nature and joint-heirship with Jesus.

This favor Israel as a people failed to recognize and lay hold of. And though God visited the Gentiles and called many of them through the gospel, they, like fleshly Israel, will fail to obtain the heavenly prize. Nevertheless, a class, a remnant, a little flock from among all the called ones, heeds the call, and by obedience and self-sacrifice makes its calling and election sure. Thus what Israel as a people failed to obtain, and what the nominal Christian Church also fails to obtain, is given to the elect or selected class, the faithful 'body of Christ' — elect or chosen (according to the foreknowledge of God) through sancti-

fication of the spirit and belief of the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2).”

So we must not lose sight in this study that God’s grace is exercised now for the consecrated ones, and later will be exercised in His Kingdom to come for the whole world, for all those who will turn to Him. Therefore, let us remember that if it is true that the future blessings, similar to those of the past, are first for the Jew and then for the Greek, it is just time-wise that Jews will have the priority in Divine Grace, and it will be, as we have shown, the natural consequence of their education under the Law that will reach its goal at the forecasted time and will bring them to Christ.

### **(3) Grace is a Free Gift**

We can find in the Bible some passages mentioning grace as a gift, a benefit or a blessing that we receive. In John 1:16, 17 we read: “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

Grace is a perfect gift, coming from above, like James says in James 1:16, 17: “Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Our Lord, when he sent his 12 Apostles, gave them the following instruction, recorded in Matthew 10:8 “... freely ye have received, freely give.”

Already the prophet Isaiah announced the fact that Divine grace was free, recorded in Isaiah 55:1. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price!” Such free grace is confirmed in Revelation 22:17, “... And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

### **(4) Grace that Justifies**

How does our imperfect nature consider something just? Is it just that grace will be given to corrupted sinners? Immediately we answer no. It seems to us that God’s grace will be reserved for those who are good, pure, and delivered from sin. However, by grace, God justifies the sinner, in spite of the sin.

On all the face of the earth, God knows that there is no one who does good and who does not sin. In Romans 3:10 we read “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.” This is also declared by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 64:6, “But we are all as an

unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” But God, in His endless love, considers that the sinner is just and prepares him to be entirely pure, in order to be admitted in His presence, after having been justified freely from sins.

Could the Lord find goodness and righteousness amongst men? No, but he came to give them as a gift to those who have made an examination of their conscience and have admitted that they cannot be either good or righteous. Consequently, they need to be covered by Christ to be made just.

To justify the guilty is a work worthy of love and compassion from God. In Matthew 9:12 Jesus said “... They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” Disease and suffering are not always physical, some have an inner pain or a disease or a spiritual weakness. What does God offer as a remedy in this case? His grace and redemption. These cures are proposed by the great physician, who came into the world to offer them to those who feel sick spiritually.

We have the assurance of being declared just, by faith in Jesus Christ. It is like this that the God of all grace justifies us, and we become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. This inheritance is for the just, the one who has been justified.

Paul tells us in Acts 24:15, “... have hope toward God ... that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” Those who are naturally unjust, God, by grace, makes them just to the extent of being considered as such. Paul states that it is God who justifies. He says in Romans 8:30, “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Have not the prophets also announced Divine grace? Let us read what Micah and Isaiah have written. In Micah 7:18, “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy [to exercise grace].” And in Isaiah 30:18 we read, “And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.”

The 3rd chapter of the epistle to the Romans explains how God’s justice is manifested. In Romans 3:21-26 we read, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and

upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

### **(5) Grace Received by Faith**

We have seen that those who believe are justified by grace, but Paul adds that it is by the means of faith, addressing the Ephesians in Ephesians 2:8-10, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Grace is received by faith and faith comes from the promise given to the patriarchs and perpetuated to their posterity. As it says in Romans 4:16, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is father of us all."

The firm conviction described in Hebrews the 11th chapter, regarding the patriarchs, brings the believer to question one's self, in order to change one's life. In Hebrews 11:6 we read, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

### **(6) Christ Sacrificed Himself by Grace**

The sacrifice of Christ delivered us from sin. We can read in 1 John 3:5, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." And in Matthew 1:21 we read, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Grace came by Jesus Christ, as announced by John the Baptist in John 1:16, 17, "And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ came on earth for all mankind, after having been announced in types and shadows for centuries.

This is confirmed several times by the Apostle Paul in Titus 2:11, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," in 2 Corinthians 8:9, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your

sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

And in Colossians 2:13, 14, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

It is his sacrifice that gives the extent of the grace. We read in Hebrews 2:9, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

By his death Jesus came to look for and save what was lost and he paid the price for all sinners. Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." The blood of Jesus removed all the stains and impurities that could not have been erased by any other means.

### **(7) Who is to be Worthy of this Free Gift?**

This gift offers the possibility of a new birth and a comforter, the holy Spirit. One of the Jewish leaders named Nicodemus did not understand when Jesus told him in John 3:3, "... Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then, using the example of Moses, Jesus says in John 3:14, 15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Then, he goes from the type to the antitype in John 3:16-18. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

In fact, those who believe in Jesus walk in newness of life, through faith. It is a solemn pledge through baptism and our burial into death with our Lord, as we read in the epistle to the Romans. Romans 6:4, 5, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

What is the nature of this new creature? Jesus answered Nicodemus in John 3:6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." So the new creature is spiritual, and it develops by the effects of grace. It is the full surrender of our body and our spirit, that is expressed in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

We have to keep in mind that the value of our reward corresponds to what we bring joyfully to God. John warns us in 1 John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Likewise, we have to fight every day against our old sinful nature, to favor the new man, that God has been willing to create in us. In 1 Corinthians 3:10 we read, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."

Our purpose is to bring to perfection the work of our sanctification. We read in Matthew 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Let us also witness to those who are around us, about the hope which is in us, by Jesus Christ our Savior who, by the grace of God, gave us a free gift. We read in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

To manage to be worthy of this grace, we have to run in the race, as Paul illustrated, persevere and not fall. Let us read in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Paul chose this image of an athlete in a stadium because it is very significant of the harshness of the daily fight that a Christian has to undergo with zeal, patience, and perseverance. This passage must stimulate us and fortify us to improve continually. Other verses encourage us because they show that we need help that will be given if need it. We read in 1 Corinthians 1:8, 9, "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

Let us be as sure that the Lord provides for our needs freely, when there is a need and He sustains us. He does it because His grace and His love are granted without limit, until we are able to win the prize.

Let us see now how our heart is made firmer, through grace. The believer has a daily need of strengthening, constancy, perseverance, and protection, until the end. It is what is needed, by even the most advanced believers, because Paul wrote to the Corinthians, who were already established Christians, in 1 Corinthians 1:4, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ."

Brethren, like those of the church at Corinth, feel the need of the new grace every day, in order to be able to persevere, until the finish line in the stadium, which is until the final reward. If we are God's children, we are aware of the requirements of the spiritual life, and we need daily grace to persevere each day, until the end of the struggle.

The condition of the believer is such that he must seek constantly, with God's help, the source of all grace. 1 Corinthians 14:12, "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."

The Corinthians possessed gifts and knowledge, but what would they have become if they had not received the grace to strengthen their hearts? And regarding ourselves, even if we take advantage of new knowledge, how can we imagine to remain without grace; how can we feed our new life without this gift from our supreme Chief? Hebrews 13:9, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."

Paul taught perseverance to the Hebrews, and he wrote in Hebrews 3:14, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."

The action of the holy Spirit develops in us the Divine gift of perseverance. This gift manifests itself by the grace of God. It gives us faith and the means to fortify and to maintain our faith. This action lights up in us the love of God, preserves it and brightens up its flame, so that our interest is concentrated on the strengthening of our spiritual growth.

The grace or spirit of goodness enlightens us by first teaching and makes it known to us with more clarity and certainty, while we are still being taught. The strengthening corresponds to a growth in our behaviour such that our convictions and our good resolutions become a common practice. Through



experience, our feelings guide us towards holy things. Encouragements and trials, as well as our successes and our failures, contribute to achieve the same result, which is our sanctification. The Christian gets stronger, like a tree that takes root because it underwent rains and storms.

Like Paul said in Ephesians 3:17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ...." This allows us to be rooted and established in love. Grace, when it acts, transforms deeply. It gives a gradual strengthening of the consecrated one all life long, until the final glory. It is through faith that we are kept by the power of God, like Job was kept when he was in the fire of trials. As we read in Job 17:9, "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

To reassure us and to strengthen us we have the words of our Lord, who said, talking to his sheep, in John 10:27-29, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

### **Conclusion**

We have received a free gift by grace. It justifies us from all sin, if we have faith in Christ's redemption. We appreciate the benefits that grace bestows upon us since it has been offered to us for our salvation. To be worthy of it, let us follow the instructions

given in 1 Peter 1:13-15 (Revised Standard Version), "Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct."

This free gift is not limited, it is not reserved to a nation. It was not for Israel only, but for the whole world, because Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, suffered death for all.

The damage brought by the fall of Adam will be fully repaired by the grace of God, through Christ. So, all mankind will have the opportunity to be restored to the condition Adam enjoyed before he disobeyed. Those today who do not enjoy this grace, because of a lack of faith, will surely receive these benefits in the next age, if they turn to God.

Those who are engaged in the race take part in grace, and appreciate this incredible gift prepared in the plan of God and offered freely by Christ's shed blood. Let us exhort each other in order not to receive the grace of God in vain. With joy let us share this unique gift and let us continually render thanks to our heavenly Father, who watches over those who hope in His grace!

Let us conclude with the words of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians, recorded in Ephesians 6:24 (Revised Standard Version), "Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love undying."



## *Presentation Eighteen*

# Marriage in the Scriptures

Symposium, Family in the Light of God's Word, Part One  
Brother Jozef Sygnowski (Poland)

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*Dear* brethren, may peace be with you. I would like to share a few observations with you on the subject of marital problems. Marriage is a divine arrangement. It is an agreement between God, a man and a woman. Our Lord Jesus confirms it: "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh" (Matthew 19:5). These words are a testimony that marriage is a unity which should not be broken.

Marriage is a life consisting of many elements:

- Struggles and achievements
- Successes and disappointments
- Joy and pain

God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). These words do not mean that marriage protects against life's difficulties and experiences. Neither is it joy alone. However marriage brings more joy than any other relationship between people if they are bound by love. Marital love means:

- Sharing joy and sorrow
- Caring for one another
- Becoming one body

We can conclude that marriage is a gift from God, who through love may send some joy from heaven unto Earth.

What is Love in Marriage? It is an emotion which directs the course of life. It is a pleasant, mutual feeling between a man and a woman. Love is drinking from one cup of sadness, concern and joy.

Love means patience and mutual effort. It's a feeling of two hearts manifested in one life. Love means obedience and service for one another. Love means respect for another person according to God's rule. "Love and let the loved one live in love." If husband and wife keep the attitude of love in their marriage then the Lord will be guiding their steps and their

love will be strengthened with elements of spiritual love.

"Love is patient, Love is kind, and is not jealous, Love does not brag, and is not arrogant, Does not act unbecomingly, it does not seek its own, Is not provoked, does not take into account of a wrong suffered, Does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth, Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, Endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

Those who follow these rules are receiving God's guidance and blessings and bring joy to all of the members of fellowship in Christ — the Ecclesia.

Marital vows and marriage itself are more than a legal agreement, they are a solemn covenant made before God and in the presence of the Church of Christ. Marriage in the Lord symbolizes Christ and the Church.

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:31, 32). Therefore, marriage belongs to the original order of creation and it is a preordained role for the majority of people on Earth.

Marriage is not a casual adventure in one's life, but it is God's order established at the beginning of creation. It was the first social institution originated in Paradise.

### **Let us Consider Why did God Establish Marriage?**

The Scriptures answer that the most important goals of marriage are:

- Parenthood and filling the earth
- Physical intimacy
- Spiritual fellowship between spouses

In His word, God pointed out very clearly that marriage serves a biological purpose. God's com-

mandment states: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28). Thus God indirectly allows man to participate in the procreation of the world. The family is a union of two people established by God not only for the purpose of procreation, but also to care for their children.

“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward” (Psalms 127:3). If children are our inheritance from the Lord, they should be brought up in the love and fear of the Lord. Parents should remember that they are caretakers by God’s authorization and that they will some day be accountable for executing this duty and privilege.

The second purpose of establishing marriage is to express physical intimacy. Sexual desire is neither shameful nor worthy condemnation, on the contrary, it is God’s gift intended to bring about satisfaction and pleasure. However, this physical desire, just like any other human desire, needs to be controlled and managed by will. Man should feel respect and responsibility before God in those matters.

One should avoid the temptation of falling into licentiousness (debauchery). Establishment of marriage is the means against the sin of fornication, as the Apostle Paul says: “... it is better to marry than to burn” (1 Corinthians 7:9). “But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband” (1 Corinthians 7:2, NAS).

Apostle Paul, in the seventh chapter of first Corinthians, emphasizes that joy is an outcome of mutual interests and solicitude between spouses. Physical intimacy is not only a way of expressing love, but it is also a source of intensifying and maintaining love in marriage. Every human act reflects feelings, human understanding, and interests in another person. Human actions not only reflect existing relationships but they also help in building those relationships. As a result, physical intimacy is not only a specific expression of closeness, but also the means of deepening and strengthening love.

Therefore, the Apostle Paul warns spouses of depriving each other of the obligations of love: “Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again” (1 Corinthians 7:5, NAS).

It is then about mutual care — it is the apostle’s principle that spouses should serve one another. Husband and wife belong to each other in complete mutual love. “The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body but the wife does” (1 Corinthians 7:4, NAS).

The Scriptures say that: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, NAS).

The third purpose of marriage is the mutual spiritual union, support and comfort so that one party could rely on the other in favorable and unfavorable circumstances. God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Therefore, loneliness is the first thing that was considered not good in God’s eyes.

Marriage creates a close, intimate relationship between the heart and mind. Procreation will cease, sexual desire will be gone, but as far as spiritual closeness and a feeling of mutual happiness, these will never end. With passing years, a true marriage becomes a deepening spiritual relationship in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness.

The Scriptures clearly teach us how beautiful is the marriage of two people who are in a double covenant: covenant of sacrifice with God and in covenant of marriage. Two people of the opposite sex, two hearts, two characters are becoming one body. They become one in hope, in desires, one on a path of life, in faith. They are servants of the same Master. Is not this beautiful?

Nothing separates them neither in flesh nor in spirit. They live in one Truth. They pray together, praise the Lord together, they admonish each other, they strengthen each other. They attend the meetings together to learn and to share happiness with others. Together they are going through difficulties, persecutions, they share their joy, they do not have any secrets before each other, they do not sadden each other’s hearts. They sing hymns and psalms to each other and strive to praise the Lord. Christ lives in their hearts. In return He gives them His peace. He is present in their spiritual fellowship.

This is what secures marriage from evil influences. Every husband is to “... love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband” (Ephesians 5:33, NAS). To help achieve the goal of marriage, God left a message for both husbands and wives.

### **God’s Message for the Husband**

In His message for the husband, God makes him responsible for everything that has to do with making the marriage a happy one. It is the husband who must be ready to sacrifice himself for his wife. Therefore God established the man as the head over his wife and his family. “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church,

He Himself being the Savior of the body” (Ephesians 5:23, NAS).

In the light of the above guidelines, the husband is the head of the family. But what does this mean? How can one execute his headship? Can one rule in a dictatorial way, can one always be right, can one rule by force and harsh words?

Christ, who is the Head of the Church gives us the example. Did he demand respect from his followers in a proud manner? Did he ever harshly ask his Bride: “who is the Son of God here? You are to respect me!” Jesus gained respect by giving a personal example in conduct, speech and in overseeing his followers.

The key to appropriate rule of authority for a husband and a father is to follow the example of Christ. He did not have a wife, but he gave an example to all husbands of how to follow God’s message.

The words of Jesus make us aware that a husband should be the source of strength and comfort to his wife and their children. In what way?

- Through exemplary conduct and instruction, executed with kindness.

- He should help his wife in increasing her knowledge of the Heavenly Father and His plan of salvation in order to fortify her faith in Christ.

- He should be approachable and should always find the time for his wife and children. He is not only to be able to hear but also be able to listen to.

- A husband will be the comfort to his wife if he does not abuse her and if he does not make decisions in an arbitrary way without asking her opinion: “... a man of understanding walks straight. Without consultation, plans are frustrated” (Proverbs 15:21, 22, NAS).

We conclude from the above thoughts that a husband’s mission is not only to maintain discipline. He should also strengthen his family in an emotional and spiritual way.

*Husbands and fathers, are we like Christ?* As I mentioned earlier, both Apostle Paul and Apostle Peter were giving valuable advice to husbands. Because Apostle Peter was married, his advice has double value. I would like to point to one more message for husbands given by Apostle Peter: “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, give honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel” (1 Peter 3:7).

Strong’s Concordance renders “according to knowledge” in the sense of “searching for knowledge, higher meaning.”

*What does it mean to live with your wife in an understanding or according to knowledge?* Let’s remem-

ber that the covenant of marriage binds two minds, two characters, two persons raised in two different environments, having unequally shaped spiritual values, different ways of thinking.

The role of a husband is to live with his wife with understanding, according to knowledge. He really does have to be aware not only of her physical needs but what is more important — emotional, psychological and spiritual. This “conduct with understanding” also means that he will understand his role commissioned to him by God. It also means respect for feminine dignity of his wife. Apart from that, the husband is obligated to treat his wife with love and respect. He should express with words and deeds that he appreciates her and her qualities: “So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another” (Romans 14:19, NAS).

Nobody deserves to be called a neighbor, better than our own spouse. Therefore a loving husband who believes in God will let his wife know how much he appreciates her. A husband, who leads in expressing his love and respect, brings more blessings into his household. And what is his wife’s role in such a family?

### **God’s Message for the Wife**

The Scriptures relate that when God created Adam, He made him the master of Paradise. He was the king giving orders to all animals surrounding him. Yet he was not happy.

God decided that “it is not good for man to be alone.” He created a woman to be “a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18). These words contain the complete message for the woman.

Her role is to spread love, peace and beauty around her. Using the wisdom of her heart she should judge all matters, soothe concerns, misunderstandings, and bitterness. Woman can explain and comfort, can calm family storms and suppress harsh and angry words.

A wife’s love and kindness can do miracles. She can restore balance with one word, sometimes with just one look. She influences her marriage and family life with her character, will, goodness of her heart and her wisdom. She creates good or bad relationships with the neighbors, she sets the tone for the family life, resolves misunderstandings, she fans the fire of her family’s heart and she shelters it. She creates and strengthens bonds of love and friendship.

In her hands lies a key to the whole family’s peace and happiness. A man and a woman are created by God to match each other. When they are together, they complement each other and become a unit.

*Woman as a helper for the husband — how to understand it?* It means submission and obedience, expressing respect for the husband: “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22, NAS). The acknowledgement of who is the head of the family is necessary. The wife should always express her wish for the husband to lead the family. She asks her husband for advice, benefits from his suggestions and validates his decisions.

Solomon in Proverbs (31:10-31, NAS) is further elaborating on the role of a woman in marriage. Verses 10-12 state that an “excellent wife” is dependable, loyal and trustworthy. She toils to give food to her husband and her children and to care for them in a proper manner (verses 15-19 and 21, 24). She secures her husband’s good name by impeccable conduct and display of respect (verse 25). She is not a thoughtless busybody, neither does she criticize anyone with malice. Her words are constructive (verse 26). She is respected by strangers, by her husband and her children (verses 28, 29, 31).

Apostle Peter mentions that a woman’s role is to display a gentle and quiet spirit: “And let not your adornment be merely external - braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet sprit, which is precious in the sight of God” (1 Peter 3:3-4, NAS).

A wife and a mother having those qualities is not only appealing to her husband, but, what is more important, wins her approval before God, as did the holy women in former times.

“Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord” (1 Peter 3:6). “Then Isaac brought her [Rebekah] into his mother Sarah’s tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her” (Genesis 24:67, NAS).

Rachel, for whom Jacob served 14 years at Laban’s house, was the most beloved wife and mother. Even a secular proverb also praises the inner beauty of a woman: “A beautiful woman is a joy to the eyes, a good woman is a joy to the heart. The first is a gem, the second is a treasure.”

Wives — in your hands is the building of a household — the haven of peace for the family through fulfilling of God’s purposes and of the mission of marriage.

In our fellowship there are many admirable marriages, before whom I bow my head and thank our Lord that He helped you to achieve them.

### **Satan’s Influence on Marriage**

The last days are not favorable to marriage. The Second Presence of Christ is limiting Satan’s power

over the Church. The adversary of God’s people knows it and aims at our marriages. Especially within the last 40 years, Satan has been active attacking our families. That way he wants to achieve his goal and extend his life. He is shooting deadly arrows on our marriages, such as:

- Infidelity
- Spirit of materialism
- Marital dishonesty
- Egotism and immorality

All this he labels as good, saying that “you surely shall not die.” Satan rejoices when he manages to break a marriage and justify the spirit of animosity by giving it Biblical validation.

Nowadays all who divorce motivate their decisions with infidelity of one of the parties, quoting our Lord’s words: “but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity” (Matthew 5:32, NAS).

Satan further wants to turn children against their parents, destroy the respect and trust which unite families. First, he destroys familial acceptance, then shakes the stability of marriage and finally turns love into selfishness thus achieving his victory! Marriage disintegrates, but what is God’s view on this matter?

### **God’s View on Divorce**

Our Lord Jesus, when speaking about stability of marriage mentions the words of God Himself: “Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Matthew 19:6, NAS). It may signify that God recognizes only one justified reason for a divorce.

Through the prophet Malachi 2:14-16 God says: “For I hate divorce” (NAS) thus reproaching people departing from their married partners. God’s word gives council on settling marital matters and avoiding the bitterness of divorce.

Apostle Paul teaches that “the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband” (Romans 7:2, NAS). It means that only death can separate a husband from a wife, and not a secular divorce.

We can ask a similar question to the one asked to our Lord by the Pharisees, who quoting Moses wanted to know why he permitted an issuance of a certificate of divorce. Our Lord’s response was:

“Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way” (Matthew 19:8, NAS).

So who wants to break marriages — God or Satan? Certainly not God. God does not want to destroy an institution He Himself created. Marriages, which are disobedient to God, are slaves to Lucifer. And he, as Jesus said, has only one goal: “... to steal, and kill, and destroy” (John 10:10, NAS). He steals people’s trust, so that his lies would be believed in. He kills highest marital feelings and destroys the welfare of family life.

The following are horrifying statistics from year 2001: in Poland for every thousand marriages there are 256 divorces, in Western Europe 500, in the former Soviet Union 800. This shocking phenomenon is becoming more and more frequent in our fellowship and Ecclesias.

*Brethren, is it the way to be? No, that is not to be, my Brethren!* Entire families should fight Satan, as it was in Nehemiah’s day, and not allow divorces to happen.

### **How to Fight Such Problems?**

We find the answer in the fourth chapter of Nehemiah. When the Israelites wanted to repair the walls of Jerusalem, they faced obstacles from Tobiah, the Ammonites and the Arabs, who wanted to put a stop to the work and kill the entire Judean families.

Nehemiah stood up to the enemies and gave instructions on how to fight. He said: “Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, our sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses” (Nehemiah 4:14, NAS).

There is a beautiful lesson for us in this story of how we should fight the problems in our marriages, families, how to fight for our daughters and sons. Prophet Nehemiah set family guards. Each one took their load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon. Jesus Christ teaches us, that marriage is a core unit of a community, a small group

but one fighting efficiently. Families tied by the highest feelings of love and loyalty, are capable of fighting for their loved ones.

The husband joins the battle when he notices that his marriage loses the luster of life, when misunderstandings and anger arise, etc. He kneels down and tells the Lord about his problems. He prays for the blessings to be restored.

The wife fights by showing submission to her husband, and kneels down in the evening in front of her child’s bed to pray for a healing of the situation in her home.

The father partakes in the battle by not allowing the adversary to take away the time he should devote to the family.

The grandparents help as well when they serve their family by giving examples of godliness, love, walking with God, or when they offer their advice and their life’s experiences.

The ecclesia takes an active part in the fight against the powers of darkness by professing the pure Word of God, by teaching, encouraging, warning and admonishing in accordance with the rule of Matthew 18:15-18.

We fight by entire families — together. Let’s hold the admonition of the Word of God in one hand and in the other the tools to rebuild our marriages which are humbleness and a wish to restore the lost happiness in marriage.

Do not allow crisis to happen in marriage because then a long treatment to heal is necessary. And if a marriage cannot be healed, a family therapy described in James 5:14-16 may be needed.

Let’s create admirable families — but another Brother, having great experience in family life, will speak on that subject. Let’s fight Satan and demonic powers, and God in heavenly peace will plan our happiness in marriage on the condition that we will ask Him for that. Amen.





## *Presentation Nineteen*

# Christian Upbringing in the Light of the Scriptures

Symposium, Family in the Light of God's Word, Part Two  
Brother Jan Kopak (Poland)

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*The* Lord has established a family order, having created man in order to multiply human population. Genesis 1:27, 28, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."

In God's image man was given the ability to take care of his offspring. This feature was also given to lower beings, even plants. Despite the devastation caused by his fall, a human being with reason, love, morality and higher feelings, shows love and care for his offspring.

Children inherit features after their parents and earlier ancestors, even as far back as our pre-ancestors Adam and Eve. The prophet David, stricken with grief for the sin he has committed, says "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:5).

We cannot change our children's inherited features. We can, however, accomplish much by properly upbringing our offspring. Modern educational upbringing states plainly that the mind of a newly born child is like a clean slate, and through the process we can write on it various things. Remembering this, we as Christians should feel a great responsibility for bringing up children who are given to us by the grace of God.

### **Moses**

In the Holy Scriptures, we can find abundant knowledge regarding the upbringing within a family where God's law and high morals are a priority. One of the important examples is Moses, the man of God.

Moses was born during extremely difficult times and he survived only because of God's providence. Having an important purpose for Moses, the Lord

took special care of him and in a miraculous way brought about his upbringing for the first years of his life by his natural mother.

We can imagine how much work his mother must have done to impart the best values of faithfulness, love of God, and the promises given to their forefathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Because of this upbringing, such a faith was grafted into Moses, that as the Apostle Paul says in Hebrews 11:24-25 "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

The history of the life of Moses would have been different, had he not been born into such a noble family. As it is written in Exodus 2:1, his parents were from the family of Levi, which later on was acknowledged by the Lord as a tribe for a particular purpose.

### **Early Influences Important**

It is not by accident that many important characters from the Bible descended from noble, God-fearing families, in which, despite human weaknesses, the spiritual and moral values were appreciated.

The Apostle Paul says to young Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:5 "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."

The influence derived from the shaping of a human being and a Christian, should start even before a child is born. Even contemporary medicine and psychology appreciate the influence of the mother and the environment upon the child's further development. In brethren's families, who live in truth, love

and peace, this development should progress in the right way for both parents and children.

In Volume 6, Study 13, entitled "Parental Obligation of the New Creation," page 531, under the subtitle "Children Born In Justification," Brother Russell writes: "In all these matters the New Creature has a decided advantage over all others in respect to his children. They should, to begin with, be better born, better endowed at birth. And this prenatal endowment should be fostered from the very earliest moments of infancy. The babe of a few days is pretty sure to be nervous and irritable and distressed if the mother is so; an influence goes to the child, not only through the mother's milk, but telepathically, electrically, from her person to the child. What a general advantage, then, the New Creature has in the indwelling of the Spirit of the Lord, with its peace, love and joy; and how favored is the infant under such care! Humanly speaking, how great are its possibilities as compared with the possibilities of others in respect to noble manhood and womanhood; and, speaking from the standpoint of the Lord's Word, how great is its advantage when we remember that the children of the Lord's consecrated people, like themselves, are under the supervision of divine providence in respect to all of their affairs; that the children of believers, too, come under the terms of the promise that 'all things shall work together for good' to them!"

The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7:14, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

Often, we may not realize that children of consecrated parents are under the Lord's special care. The Apostle writes that children are holy, sanctified, and justified thanks to atonement sacrifice which brings people into harmony with God, and also brings their children into the same condition as justified because of their parents. This justification is applicable until the child's adulthood, his independence, when he becomes personally responsible for his future life. This is why it is necessary to make the most of time, while the child is under the protection of their parents, in order to prepare their heart and mind, to accept the beautiful principles of the Gospel of Christ.

### **Responsibility of Parents**

Often parents, despite their good intentions, fail in a good Christian upbringing and justify themselves by saying that their children were not drawn by the Lord. And quote the words of Jesus who said: John 6:44 "No man can come to me, except the Fa-

ther which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

It is the responsibility of parents to prepare well the hearts of their children for the seeds of the word of truth. The parable of Jesus describing four different grounds (Matthew 13:3-9), explains on what bringing forth good fruit depends. Well prepared ground, cleared of stones and thorns, which choke springing seeds, is a basic factor in bringing forth good fruit.

The role of parents lies in preparing "good ground," in which sowed truth can develop and bring abundant truth. You need to take care through prayers, for a good, exemplary upbringing of your children.

Nothing can substitute children and parents spending time together, heartfelt and instructive talks, answering numerous questions on various aspects of life. With respect and lack of ambiguity, we should engage in conversations on Biblical topics, history and characters from the Scriptures, stories about brethren and their fellowship. Moses delivered to the nation of Israel a duty: "... when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover" (Exodus 12:26-27).

In Psalm 78:3-4 it is written: "Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done."

This principle of passing history down to younger generations is still cultivated in the Jewish nation and brings good results. It is important that the passing of this knowledge will be harmonized with an exemplary Christian life of parents and those in whose company children live.

### **Godly Environment**

Children from the youngest years are very observant and understand more than we can see. If there are disagreements among parents, if there are frequent quarrels and name calling, if in an ecclesia there is gossiping and arguments, children see and experience it. Let us not be deceived, we cannot expect our children then to respect the truth.

If at home, when even very little children are present, you gossip about brethren or express a negative opinion about brotherly fellowship, children will remember and will develop a negative view of this community and even of faith and Truth. Often, one irrational act invalidates a long process of upbringing work. That is why high moral standards for educa-

tors and their responsibility for personal behavior is a basic duty.

An exemplary and happy family life is possible when it is lived according to the scriptural advice and in harmony with the Lord's will. Apostle Paul gives much advice on how to lead such a life. In the Epistle to Colossians 3:18-29, he writes: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." These admonishments are based on mutual respect, love and deep concern for a heart-felt understanding between parents and children.

Upbringing of children cannot be done in a nervous and humiliating atmosphere. As the Apostle says, "lest they be discouraged." Even though the Scriptures often mention punishment, it does not mean that we should understand this only as a physical punishment.

In Proverbs 22:6, it is written: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This is an upbringing in discipline, but in discipline which is connected with love and its awareness. You need to explain patiently and quietly why this and not any other behavior is a proper one.

In Volume 6, page 526, we read: "It is scarcely necessary to admonish the New Creation that they should not use angry or harsh words to their children; for such know that language of that kind is improper to any one under any circumstances. On the contrary, their "speech should be with grace," with love, with kindness, even when reproving. Nor is it necessary to suggest to the class we are addressing the impropriety of a hasty blow, which might do injury to the child not only physically — perhaps permanently injuring its hearing — but also wound its affections, develop in it a fear of the parent instead of love."

The Apostle Paul's advice applies to children to obey their parents and to parents not to provoke their children to anger (Ephesians 6:1-4). Respect for each personality, even a young child, is necessary in order to achieve good results in upbringing.

It is very important in Christian upbringing to be in contact with the ecclesia and brotherly fellowship which lives according to the Truth. Personal observation and experience proves that it is very difficult to deal with the problems of Christian upbringing while being separated from the ecclesia, or when the ecclesia is not in a proper spiritual level.

Children's presence in ecclesia meetings from very early on has a lasting impact on their assimilation with fellowship. True, younger children can be a disturbance at the beginning, which may cause some of the ecclesia members to be against young children's presence at the meetings. Obviously, it is the parent's duty to minimize the distraction during the meetings. In no case, should it be allowed to isolate children and young people only because some feel that youngsters do not understand much or only make the leading of studies difficult.

Contrary to appearances, children remember a lot, even though they understand a little. Besides, they develop a habit of participating in Bible studies and devotionals and grow to know the company of brothers and sisters which becomes for them the only company in which they feel well. This is the most important stage in the process of entering the fellowship of the Lord's children.

Samuel, as a little boy, was brought up in the environment of the tabernacle. There was the ark, and there he was surrounded by the priests. Similarly, the children of brethren should grow in brotherly fellowship. Making use of this fellowship they will grow in grace and the wisdom of God.

It is a great mistake to disregard children in their early years of development and not to present them with the principles of the Truth and teachings of the Word of God, postponing it until they become adults and will become interested in these matters. It is very unlikely, that children that are kept away from the class will be able to accept what is alien for them when they grow up. Obviously, the atmosphere in the class should be very positive, friendly for adults as well as for children.

No one should be disregarded. Children are very sensitive and feel every act of disregard. Personal interest in, and regard to, by adults and even more so by the class elders, provides for children a formative experience.

### **Wise Supervision**

Another important matter is wise supervision of children's interest and entertainment. In the age of technology, television and internet, it is extremely important to direct the mind of the child in the right direction. A lot of time and energy must be spent in conversation to make children sensitive in the evaluation of what is to be treated as positive and what is simply rubbish.

It is impossible to forbid the use of modern day achievements of civilization. Being aware of dangers, one has to be seriously interested in the child's surroundings. The company in which our children choose to be in is very important as well. One needs

to take care that our children and young people form friendships from within the brethren. We need to encourage and help organize fellowship for our Christian youth such as camps, youth meetings, Sunday schools and various kinds of games and plays. As far as possible, we should try to discourage the time spent with youngsters outside the brethren, because it often brings the danger of common addictions to nicotine, alcohol, drugs, etc.

We realize that we live in particularly difficult times. For some, this however, becomes an excuse for their inability to preserve their children from worldly influences. Jesus said, "As it was in the day of Noah so it will be in His second presence." The depravation in the present day has reached sky-high proportions. Still Noah amongst all this depravity was able to preserve his family unblemished. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:8-9).

This example of the man of God, who was able to preserve his family from perishing, points out to us that we, as His heirs, can, and must, protect our families from spreading demoralization and spiritual decline.

It is obvious that in the present epoch of evil and degradation, proper upbringing is not easy, because evil is popular and proper behavior is disdained. Books, films, television, all help to advertise violence and licentiousness, inappropriate sexual behavior, and robbery. Even stories for little children which used to teach morality, now teach violence and disdain for the weak and humble. Apostle Paul writes, "Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33-34, NAS).

We have to realize that writers and creators of today's pop-culture write and create to simply satisfy the needs of their audience. And because evil things are popular, such are their needs. Being aware of this, we should keep our children's behavior under control and work towards their awareness so that they will be able to evaluate critically and learn to differentiate between positive and negative.

It is impossible to control everything mechanically. Besides, this is not the best method of education. That is why teaching through conversation and persuasion about self-control and awareness, is a proper and fruitful teaching tool. In our families, such a tool would be teaching respect for the Bible so that our children would learn to seek answers to various problems from the Word of God.

There is a need to skillfully encourage children and young adults to reach for religious literature and magazines. Children and young adults should become acquainted and gradually understand Biblical

teachings and the Divine Plan, why evil exists, what is the future of the world, what is the meaning of birth, death and the resurrection of Jesus. What hope brings forth the Kingdom of God?

Examples from life and observation prove that such conduct in education brings positive results. Because children will seriously treat matters of faith and Godliness, learning from the conduct of their parents and their environment. Becoming accustomed to reading out loud Bible verses, Daily Manna, prayers during meals, and learning our Lord's Prayer, learning hymns and poems; all these help to form a foundation to a further development of a child and their Christian character.

All these good habits, established in early childhood, prepare for the future years of youth and as a consequence one's entire life. It is certain that living principles acquired in early childhood remain unchanged throughout adult life. That is why we should skillfully direct children to gain proper education, being aware that not all disciplines of life are fit for a Christian. So directed, a young person will be able to appreciate what profession and what job will be appropriate for them. And what career will not be in opposition to human morality and Christian principles.

### **Preparing for Consecration**

Another important goal for parents, is preparing their children for making a decision about entering the narrow way of sacrifice. We should not understand, however, that we are to dominate their decision because it should be a conscious, personal choice to which they will be lead if they are brought up properly. Participation in fellowship and meetings, young people's meetings, observing a sacrificial life of parents and brethren — all this will help to make a young person aware that this way of life is right and proper.

Solomon teaches us in Ecclesiastes 11:9 "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

These words speak to people who think and seriously consider the Holy Scriptures. A young person, so prepared, can with a pure heart, accept the invitation of the Lord. Matthew 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The preparation for the establishment of children's own future family is based upon their whole upbringing. Examples from their parent's lives and the lives of brethren will become their patterns, only if they were good examples.

## Advice for Marriage

When the advice is about their marriage, young people are not always eager to listen to advice, even from their own parents. But some suggestions about choosing partners may be helpful.

In Volume 6, page 558, It is written: “Wise parents will not attempt to frustrate the natural desire of their children for marriage, but, co-operating wisely, will endeavor with their wisdom to aid them in mating properly. And the properly trained are not likely to ignore the advice of the loving and careful parent, in the most important transaction of the natural life. However, at such a moment let not the indulgent parent forget that the mating should be on the same plane — unbeliever with unbeliever — justified with justified, sanctified with sanctified.”

The advice of the Apostle Paul is clear, marriages are to be “only in the Lord.” This advice is commonly disregarded nowadays, which leads to very unpleasant consequences. If this advice, based on the scripture and on personal as well as communal experience of the entire fellowship, is observed, than surely life in our classes will be blessed.

Nothing can justify the children who are brought up in brotherly families and ecclesias and then put aside the rules of Christian life. As a result, classes die away even though numerous young and talented children once were in their midst.

Why do these children prefer worldly instead of Christian lives? Where in their upbringing was the mistake made? How can we explain that often a parent serves with the Word of God and preaches the Good News to people and at the same time neglects his own family, and children?

The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Timothy 5:8: “But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

We cannot deafen our consciousness and explain it by objective causes. Obviously, parents take care to provide for their children, education, material goods, expensive comfortable homes and utilities. However, they sometimes disregard the children’s most important spiritual needs.

First of all, we have to make our children sensitive to honoring the words of God, acquainted with a noble and honest life. We must teach them to disregard worldly pleasures, being in bad company which teaches cynicism and contempt for everything which is glorious and honest. These admonishments we address particularly to those with children and to the young who intend to have a family.

Let us remember what is written in Psalm 127:3, “Children are a gift from God, they are His reward.” Let us take special care of this gift, so that it will grow to God’s glory and to the advantage of everyone in our fellowship. May the Lord bless you in your upbringing work. Amen.



## *Presentation Twenty*

# Sin Offering

Brother Wladyslaw Symczuk (Ukraine)

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*Beloved* brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ! The subject for our consideration is the sin offerings observed on the Day of Atonement, whose description is found in Leviticus 16:5-19.

Only those begotten of the holy Spirit can notice and understand things conveyed to the Jewish nation in the Law. Those were pictures and shadows of the heavenly things and, in essence apply to Jesus Christ, as Head, and His Body — the Church. It would be helpful for the listeners of this discourse to understand the typical things to be able to better discern spiritual things.

The Great Day of Atonement was one of the many Jewish holidays. It began on the 10th day of the seventh month and lasted one day. It was the day of fasting, mourning and prayers. On that day sacrifices were offered not for the sins of the past year, but for the sins of the approaching year. Based on these sacrifices, the nation of Israel enjoyed the right to be called the Lord's people and was found in the state of Atonement with God for the coming year.

The sacrifices of the Day of Atonement in some way protected Israelites from Adamic condemnation. At the end of the year, however, they would find themselves under its condemnation. Therefore, the sin offering had to be given again and again (every year) for them to receive God's favor.

This proves that the Adamic sin was not removed from them but only temporarily covered through the sin offerings. We realize that the Adamic sin can only be removed through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We read in Hebrews 10:11,12,14: "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God .... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Studying the important subject of the Day of Atonement sacrifices, one observes several quite interesting features:

- The Sacrifice of Jesus
- Elements of this Sacrifice
- The manner in which God received this Sacrifice
- On whose behalf was the sacrifice applied first?

Nowhere else in the Scriptures do we find more clearly the Church's participation in the Sin Offering. In this type, we also notice the Great Company. The Great Company does not participate in the Sacrifice. Based on this type, we can recognize the times during which we live and be assured that the time of Atonement between God and the world cannot come until the sacrifice of the Lord's goat is complete.

### **The Gospel Age**

The Day of Atonement pictures the Gospel Age. The high priest is the central figure during the ceremony. He represents our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head and Body. Under priests represent members of the Church. Levites could be found in the Courtyard, representing the Household of Faith. Israel with their tents encircling the Tabernacle represent the whole world.

The Aaronic priesthood represents mainly the humiliation and sufferings of Christ. Christ's glory and the Royal Priesthood is pictured in Melchizedek. Aaron had to wash his body in water before he could offer any sacrifices. He had to put on the linen coat. The linen coat represents purity and perfection — righteousness of the saints. His head was covered with a linen mitre. It points to the perfection of Jesus as the head. Washing of his head was not included because Jesus Christ, the head, was clean and perfect. The members of his body however need the washing of the Word of Truth. The white robes represent reckoned perfection.

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:26, 27).

The high priest starts the scarifies of two animals: the bullock and the Lord’s goat. The bullock constitutes the main sin offering as it represents Jesus Christ as a perfect man laying down his human life in sacrifice on our behalf. The Apostle Paul comments on this in 1 Timothy 2:5, 6: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.”

We should differentiate between the human nature and the new nature. If the bullock represents Jesus Christ as a perfect human being, the high priest represents him as a New Creature. To redeem Adam and the whole world of mankind from the original sin, Jesus Christ had to lay down his life as a perfect man. We read in Hebrews 2:9 “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

The death of the bullock represents the time when Jesus presented himself as a living sacrifice, symbolically showing his death through baptism in Jordan, when he was 30 years old. Jesus considered himself dead to all human aims and ambitions, dead to his own will but alive as a New Creature and doing the will of God. His sacrifice was burning for three and a half years and was finished at Calvary — the Lord finished his life on the cross.

### **Details of the Type**

Let us consider now, for whom was the sacrifice? It is written that Aaron had to take the bullock as the sin offering for himself and his house. Since Aaron represented the Christ, the Head and Body, the words “cleanse himself” do not apply to the Head; as Jesus was perfect and did not need any cleansing. These words refer exclusively to his Body — the Little Flock. The words “will cleanse his house” refer to his family, the Levites, the Household of Faith.

Based on this type, we see that the ransom paid by Jesus Christ was first applied on behalf of the Church. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:3, “For I delivered unto you ... how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”

Further, we find out to what degree the offering of Jesus was pleasing to God. This is shown when the high priest placed the hot coals upon a censer and two handfuls of sweet incense and took them to the Holy to burn on the golden altar. The aromatic

smoke of the incense would extend and fill the Most Holy. Powdered, “beaten small” incense represented Jesus’ perfection as a human being. The fire on the brazen altar shows the trials and difficulties of our Lord.

The fire was carried by the high priest himself, representing Jesus Christ who was the first one to walk the road of great sufferings, persecutions and false accusations. He drank the cup of suffering to the end, thus showing his obedience to the will of his father. The Lord’s faithfulness in paying his vows of consecration during the three and a half years was a sweet savor to God. Two handfuls of incense represent complete righteousness of the man Jesus Christ given to redeem man. Burning of incense was very important in the ritual of offering sacrifices.

The high priest could not proceed to the Most Holy before the aroma of the incense entered the Most Holy and rested upon the mercy seat. If this condition were not met, the high priest would die. This teaches us that Jesus had to offer a complete sacrifice of his human life, as God’s justice demanded or he would lose the right to life. He committed himself to pay the sacrifice at baptism. He renounced the right to human life so that he could receive life on a spiritual level, if faithful. Thus, the satisfaction of justice represented in the smoke from the burning incense entering the Most Holy first meant that the Lord faithfully fulfilled all the conditions of his consecration.

The Golden Altar where incense was burned represents the Little Flock, the Church in its sacrificial state during the Gospel Age. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up [spiritual] sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). Their prayers and their willing obedience are a pleasant fragrance to the Lord.

### **Three Fires**

There were three fires burning on the Day of Atonement: in the Holy, in the Courtyard, and outside the camp. In this we see three different evaluations of the offering of Jesus Christ and the Church.

The fire in the Holy points to how God appreciated that sacrifice. The offering of Jesus Christ was holy and perfect in God’s eyes and it was a sweet smelling savor. The offering of the church is not perfect but due to Jesus’ merit, which covers our imperfections, it is pleasing to God. Those who are in the holy condition — the consecrated ones — can appreciate it the most.

There was also a fire burning on the brazen altar in the courtyard. On it, the fat of the bullock, its kidney and heart as well as all the internal organs were



burned. Since the bullock had a high fat content, the offering was burning well and fast. The smoke of that offering was also a pleasing savor to God. The brazen altar represents Jesus' perfect humanity. His offering was burning there for three and a half years.

Based on this type, we see how those in the courtyard — the justified by faith in Jesus Christ — appreciate the offering of Jesus Christ. They are not able to appreciate fully its greatness and completeness, in contrast to the Holy, where the offering was a sweet savor.

There was also a fire burning outside the camp — the meat, skin, and hooves were burned there. These burning parts produced a stench and the Jews would turn their heads away from it. The world looks at Jesus sacrifice in that way. People who do not comprehend a need for a ransom see his giving of life as foolishness.

### The Blood

When the smoke from the golden altar reached the Most Holy and covered the Mercy Seat, the high priest could enter the room. He would take some of the blood of the bullock and with his finger he would sprinkle the blood on and before the Mercy Seat seven times.

Thus, what does the blood of the bullock represent? In a general sense, blood represents life; the giving of blood, the given life. The bullock's blood represents the given life of Jesus Christ, the perfect man. This is shown in the entrance of the high priest from the Holy into the Most Holy.

We understand that the first veil represents the death of the human will; the second veil, on the other hand, represents the death of the human flesh. Jesus would be under the second veil for the period of three days just before he was resurrected as a spiritual being and received God's nature. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18).

The Most Holy typifies the state of conquerors. Our Lord was the first conqueror who entered the Most Holy and for that God highly awarded him. We read in Philippians 2:7-10, "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."

The high priest sprinkled the blood of the bullock upon the Mercy Seat but not on the cherubims. What does this represent? The two cherubims represent two principles of God's character — love and power. Neither love nor power of God required Jesus' sacrifice. Only God's justice demanded giving of life for life. That is why the Mercy Seat was sprinkled with blood.

Thus, our Lord after forty days entered the heaven that he might "appear in the presence of God for us," giving into God's justice his own life as the ransom price for us. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24).

The sending of the holy Spirit at Pentecost was the proof that Jesus' sacrifice was accepted, and applied on the Church's behalf. The goat offering was not possible before the merit of Jesus' blood was applied on behalf of the Church and their house — the household of faith.

### Second Offering

Let us consider the second offering of the Day of Atonement — the offering of the Lord's goat. The high priest took from the assembly of Israelites two goats and bound them to the gate of the Tabernacle.

Next, lots were cast to decide which of these goats would be the Lord's and which will be the scapegoat released into the wilderness. The goat that was selected through a lot to be the Lord's goat would be sacrificed as a sin offering for the high priest.

We pose a question: Why was it necessary to offer the Lord's goat? Was Jesus' sacrifice not sufficient to save the mankind? What role does the Church have in the sin offering?

First of all, we should note the difference between the ransom and the sin offering. The main difference is that the Church does not participate in the ransom. We often use the words "ransom," "offering," or "sin offering" interchangeably. On the surface, it may seem that these words have the same meaning. Why is it so?

These words revolve around the same axis — the death of our Savior Christ. Each of these words, however, conveys a different meaning. First of all, these words in Greek are different. The word used by Jesus is *lutron anti* which means "a corresponding price:" "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

The Apostle Paul uses these words in a different order — *antilutro* that means a "corresponding

price.” This corresponding price consists in the perfect human life of Jesus. Jesus is a corresponding price, self-sufficient and lacking nothing.

The word “offering” is translated from the Greek word *thusia* and means “sacrifice, the act of sacrificing.” The other Greek word used *prophero* means “to bring, offer, or give.” We see a different meaning in this word. We could donate a sum of money for the Lord’s work. This could be a sacrifice for us but our sacrifice will not contribute anything to the ransom.

For instance, the Apostle Paul admonishes: “that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God.” This does not mean that our bodies are a ransom for men, but they can be a sin offering.

### **The Death of Jesus**

Let us consider the death of Jesus as well as his trials, sufferings, his being scorned, etc. Such sufferings were not essential to redeem mankind. It sufficed that Jesus would die. From this we can infer that the death of our Lord had a double meaning. First of all, it was a corresponding price for the redemption of Adam.

In its second meaning, to receive the great reward of a Divine nature — immortality — Jesus had to suffer and undergo different trials as a New Creature to prove that his sacrifice was willingly burned in the antitypical three fires, a sweet savor for the Father. Jesus Christ was completely obedient to God: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

From this, we understand that the offering on our part is not needed for a ransom, yet according to God’s Plan, the church is privileged to participate in Christ’s offering, not as individuals, but as one entity, his Body. That is why this sacrifice is a sort of continuation of the sacrifice of his body. “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church” (Colossians 1:24).

### **The Lord’s Goat**

Indeed, the Lord’s goat beautifully points to the Church’s participation in the Sin Offering. The high priest would offer it on behalf of the nation of Israel. Israel represents mankind. Goats were chosen from among the people of Israel. That means that the Church is being selected from the world, from sinners. The animals were brought through the gate to the courtyard of the Tabernacle. The gate represents faith in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice.

The courtyard represents the condition of temporary justification. The high priest would bind both of the goats to the entrance of the Tabernacle. That represents consecration. The casting of the lot shows that God does not determine in advance who will be part of the Little Flock and who will be part of the Great Company. The Lord’s goat was offered as a sin offering while the scapegoat was released into the wilderness.

The high priest followed the same procedure with the Lord’s goat as with the bullock. He killed it, and its blood sprinkled upon and before the Mercy Seat. Its fat and internal organs were burned on the brazen altar. The skin and other parts were burned outside the camp. The high priest was to offer the Lord’s goat — we cannot offer ourselves, but we give ourselves into the hands of the high priest so he can offer us. To make our sacrifice holy, pleasant and acceptable to God, Christ has to apply his merit on our behalf and cover our imperfections.

Although the activities related to both animals were the same, there is a certain difference between them. The bullock was offered first. Christ was first in all. A bullock usually has a high fat content, while the goat is leaner. The fat of the bullock represents Jesus’ zeal and love in doing God’s will. Fat is consumed fast. Thus, Christ’s sacrifice was consumed fast, during three and a half years. On the other hand, the sacrifice of the followers of Christ is leaner and burns weaker and longer.

The sacrifice of the bullock had to be offered first or the goat offering would have been without any value. This is confirmed in the fact that before the blood of the bullock was taken into the Most Holy, the high priest had to burn incense on the golden altar. When the blood of the Lord’s goat was taken into the Most Holy, there was no incense burned. The smoke of the incense lingered in the Most Holy during the second sacrifice.

In the antitype, this represents that the Church’s sacrifice is not individual but as members of the body of Christ. It is only through Christ and his sacrifice that God accepts our offering as a sweet savor.

### **Entering the Most Holy**

On the Day of Atonement, only the high priest could enter the Tabernacle. He could enter the Holy only if he had with him the blood of the bullock. Thus, none could enter the Most Holy before Jesus Christ. Jesus, the perfect man, once consecrated, became the first begotten as a New Creature. Being faithful unto death, he was born as a New Creature and entered the Most Holy. Christ has become our example and his blood, or his given life, enables our

consecration and spirit begettal. Only a New Creature can enter into the Most Holy.

Further, we read that the high priest would go to the brazen altar and take the blood of the bullock and the Lord's goat to anoint the horns of the altar. There is a difference between taking the blood to the Most Holy and anointing the horns of the altar with blood.

The blood of the animals was taken into the Most Holy on two separate occasions; while the anointing of the altar was done at the same time with the blood of two animals. This pictures the end of offerings. The horns symbolized power and authority.

What constitutes the power of Christ's offering? No animal sacrifices or their blood can release mankind from sin and death. Only the sacrifice of Christ can do that through faith in the holy power of Jesus' blood. The high priest would sprinkle the blood seven times, pointing to the fact that Jesus' blood fully and completely satisfied God's justice.

#### **Where are we Today?**

We believe that we live at the end of the Day of Atonement. The sacrifice of the Lord's goat is not

complete, but is being offered on behalf of the last members of the Church class. When the last member of the body of Christ enters beyond the second veil, then, symbolically, the blood of the Lord's goat is taken into the Most Holy. This finishes the sacrifice of the Lord's goat. When this offering is presented to God, it will be applied for the whole world.

Then the sacrifice of Christ's Head and Body will be completed. Then, God's justice will be satisfied and the original sin will no longer hover as a sentence over Adam and his progeny. Adamic death, diseases, and tears will be gradually removed and become non-existent at the end of the Millennium. The whole process will be accomplished, thanks to the great effort and labour of Christ and his body — the Royal Priesthood.

At the end of this discourse, I would like to wish all the brethren that our offerings may be burned without interruptions and that they are pleasing to God. May we together with our Lord be worthy to bless all the families of the earth.



## *Presentation Twenty-One*

# And the Lord Harkened, and Heard It

Brother Jean Wozniak (France)

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*Then* they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name” (Malachi 3:16).

If the prophetic implication of these words refers to a specific time period of the Gospel Age, to the Harvest time, it has today its full application in the life of each of us who are living in those forecasted times. The Heavenly Father has in store an endless supply of compassions, blessings and Godsendings for His obedient and faithful children who ask Him for them.

“To know wisdom and instruction: to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels ... The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge ...” (Proverbs 1:2-5, 7).

### **Two Years**

Two years have passed since the echo of the departing hymn “God be with you till we meet again” sang in unison in several languages, that left its mark in this very same hall, here, in Polanica, on Friday, August 10, 2002. Two long years during which some of us were afflicted with grief, sorrow, suffering, and trial, while others had the advantage of joy, happiness, and numerous blessings. However, none of us was short of God’s attention, who watched over us according to His promises and our needs. For the Everlasting Father “... forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever ...” (Psalm 37:28).

During those two years, a lot of us have been anticipating another meeting. We were hoping timidly,

almost audibly, for this convention at Polanica, in 2004. Here, where it had been so good to meet in 2000, and then 2002. Here, in these lush green surroundings, where nature, imprinted by God, is the witness of His indisputable work that opens up before us and showers us with its various colors and subtle fragrances.

“The Lord hearkened and heard it.” God listened to our prayers and prepared for us this year in Polanica 2004, the very same quiet and soothing place, so familiar now to so many of us, to manifest to us His deep kindness with this wonderful bouquet of love and brotherly communion.

Coming from various countries of the world, from different cultures and customs, we all gathered here, not because of fleshly ties but because of heartfelt sentiments that bind us into one, extensive divine family. Like eagles that gather around food, each of us here has, by God’s will, desired to participate in this grand and rich spiritual feast.

### **Reflecting**

But though we now have to separate already, let us take some time to consider all the favors and blessings our Heavenly Father poured on us so abundantly. Let us try again, if we can, in spite of all our emotions and maybe tears, to do a brief analysis of what we have experienced so intensely.

May each one of us, in our own way, try to bring to our mind all that was felt and experienced. Let us try to see what we wrote in our own book of memories, each his own, and then let us have, altogether, a general view of the spiritual food God provided through talks, testimony meetings, vespers, and choirs.

We have received the essential part. It is all of this that God prepared especially for us, for our edification and our spiritual good, because “they that

seek the LORD shall not want any good thing" (Psalm 34:10). No, we lacked nothing, we have had heaped upon us all the necessary exhortations that are so useful to us in our daily lives. God spoke to each of us through His servants, whom he inspired to give us the words we needed to hear.

If one of the lessons seemed to give us an admonition, to rebuke us, to shake us, to wake us up from a spiritual lethargy, or to help us, to encourage us, it was so because God judged it good "for us" and our spiritual growth.

So, if God spoke to us, let us be clothed with humility and let us accept any correction from the Lord because: "He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility" (Proverbs 15:32, 33).

That is why all our emotions, feelings, and instruction that we have accumulated, should now allow us to serenely leave this place and to return quietly, with God's help, to our families, our homes and our ecclesias. David declared, "The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Psalms 121:7, 8). So, this new experience should prove beneficial for each of us and should not seem like a mere stop without any consequences.

In his first chapter, verses 22 to 25, James makes us aware of the position to adopt for our behavior. We read: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

To put into practice means that we have to accept, then rejoice in each experience of life, as well as trials, difficulties, sorrows, disappointments, joys, or any other beneficial privilege of daily life, especially those that allow us to be very close to the Lord, the truth, and the brethren.

If we want to climb up the narrow way, we will have enough trials and tribulations day after day, and every day we will need the necessary strength to lean on God's arm. If, on the contrary, in our life we happen to be at a crossroads, not knowing which direction to follow, let's stop, let's listen and pay attention to the prophet Isaiah's words (30:21), "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." So let us turn to His

word, meditating on His precepts and His will, then let us ask Him the path to follow so that we can bring our spirit into a loving, submissive, and trusting attitude. When God talks to us, may our ears listen with reverence to His voice and may each of our faculties be prompt to accomplish His commandment.

### **The Work Within**

The great work that the Lord is asking from each of us is not to reform others, but to work on ourselves according to the apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 10:5, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

If at one moment or another in our life the adversary craftily tries to discourage us, suggesting the thought that the trials and difficulties of the "narrow way" of sacrifice will be fruitless anyway, and that we'd better give up, then without delay let us turn our attention to the One who promised to never forsake His children. David assures us that "the Lord shall help them, and deliver them; he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him" (Psalms 37:40).

How important it is for each soldier of the cross of Christ to realize that our consecration is until death, and that there is no withdrawal from the fight, no listening to a suggestion to cease the fight of faith, even for an hour because: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 11:38, 39).

Each thinking Christian must try to be a model of fervent effort, and faithful to copy Christ in his daily life, actively zealous in His service. None of the disciples of the Lord should try at any moment to take a temporal or a spiritual step without being sure that it is God's will regarding the matter concerned. Every thinking Christian must cultivate what is pure, so much that what is impure will make him suffer and will afflict him. Such an understanding will compel him to dismiss from his mind any thought or action that would tend to veil the communion with the Creator.

Each New Creature must meditate without fear upon things of any virtue or value, those that are worthy of praise and that lead his feelings, his words and actions to the highest point of behavior possible.

The only ones who can always rejoice are those who live in constant intimacy with the Lord, who are always aware of their unity with Him, and who are assured that His protection and His care surround

them, that His promises are sure, and that all things work together for their best as New Creatures. Surely, this should provoke in us more enthusiastic effort, energy, vigor, permitting us to renew our determination to increase our activity and reject every earthly burden and worry.

When we are led by such a spirit, only then can we manage to increase our zeal and run, not like aimless wandering, but like those who have a goal, which is to make our calling and election sure.

Let us give glory to God, we who have the privilege to live in this time of favor, blessings, and light; and let us try to manifest a kind predisposition, energy, and necessary zeal to advance toward our heavenly home.

Let us be full of energy, full of sacrifices born through love, to be able to glorify the Lord in our bodies and in our minds that belong to Him. The Lord, when He renders His judgment, will take into account the spirit that led our actions, rather than the results obtained through our efforts.

Therefore, it is good for us to watch, not only to do with our strength what our hands can do, but also to be sure that any sacrifice and gift offered to the Lord and His cause, be so full of love and devotion that He will surely approve them, as done out of love for Him and His people, and not for vain glory.

### **Present With Us**

The Lord is always present with His people. He always thinks about us, watches for our interest, preserves us in danger, reads our heart, notices any impulse of kind devotion for Him, gathers around us the influences that discipline us and refine us, listens to the smallest call we address Him to obtain His help, His sympathy, or His communion. His watchfulness doesn't cease even for one moment whether we call Him during the busy hours of the day or in the silence of the night.

What a blessing the appreciation of such an abiding faithfulness gives us! No true child of God is deprived of this evidence of his acceptance. We will always be glad of our destiny since it is God's hand that leads us.

Let us continually thank our Lord for each experience of life, each lesson, each trial He gives us to taste; and let us use them for our spiritual growth. Looking beyond the veil, we catch a glimpse of the goodness and grace that have already started here below.

Those who do not know anything of the joys of the Lord in the present time will never be prepared to taste the joys of the Lord in the Kingdom. The happiness and grace of God cannot be considered

merely as things of the past; they must be recognized and appreciated as things of the present as well. It is day after day that the happiness and the grace of God follow us, refresh us, give us strength, and bless us.

A simple, personal analysis must allow us to know where we stand. When we shut our ears to not hear, when we look away to not see, when we hold back our feet to not go, when we cross our hands to not give, Lord, do we love You? But when you do not shut up your ear to our supplications, when you do not turn away your eyes from our grief, when you hasten to help us, when you stretch out your hand to bless us, Lord, do you love us?

When we prefer to wait instead of acting, when we look for compromises instead of a refusal, when we favor silence instead of the Truth, when we hold back our friendship in order not to act, Lord, do we love You? But when You do not delay acting for us, when You tell us "no," for us not to go astray, when You tell us clearly the Truth, when You give us your friendship without deviation, Lord, do we understand that You love us?

When we criticize others without knowing, when we condemn without listening, when we accuse without checking, when we persist stubbornly in being right, Lord, do we love You? But when You never criticize our weakness, when You forgive us after listening to us, when You justify us after forgiving us, when You do not leave us alone in our unreasonableness, Lord, we start to understand that You love us!

When we give, hoping to receive back, when we talk to be known, when we act to be seen, when we seek out our own interest, Lord, do we love You? But when You give without waiting for anything from us, when You talk to us even if we ignore You, when You act silently not to hurt us, when You think about us for our own interest, Lord, we know You love us!

Let us pay attention to the words of the apostle Paul in 2nd Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

Let us go peaceably along our way through noise and haste and let us remember that silence is peace. As much as we can and without bowing our heads, let us be friends with our fellow men. Let us express our truth calmly and clearly; let us listen to each other, even to the most boring or the most ignorant ones, because they too have something to say.

Let us run away from the man with a loud and authoritative voice; he sins against the Spirit. Let us not compare ourselves to others, for fear of becom-

ing vain or bitter, because we will always find better or worse than us. Let us enjoy not only our successes, but also our plans.

Let us love our work, humble though it may be, because it is really a treasure in an uncertain world. Let us be wise in business, because the world is deceitful. Let us not ignore that virtue exists, that a lot of men pursue an ideal and that heroism is not so rare.

Let us be ourselves and above all let us not push away friendship; let us not approach love with cynicism, because in spite of all the ups and downs and disappointments, it is as alive as the grass we step on.

Let us bow before the inevitable passing of the years, leaving behind without regret youth and its pleasures. Let us know that to be strong, we must prepare ourselves, but let us not succumb to the visionary fears often produced by fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wise discipline, let us be good to ourselves. We are sons of the Universe, sons of the Most High, like trees and stars we have our place here. Whatever we think, it is clear that the universe continues its course as it must.

Let us be at peace with God, whatever He can be for us, and whatever our task and aspirations are. Let us keep our soul in peace without noise and confusion. In spite of vile actions, hard work, disappointed dreams, life still has its beauty; let us be prudent, let us try to be happy.

God appreciates us for what we are and also for what we can become. Choose the real road of life, it's what is important.

When we work on our character, God is glad with us. Let us not neglect His friendship. Let us call on God to neutralize the negative feelings that could rise after a humiliation or a temporary setback. The real trust, the one that comes from God, is the one that gives us the strength to reach for success.

The Darker the night is, the closer is dawn. The Darker the clouds, the more abundant will be the rains that give life. The Narrower the path, the more boundless is God's help. Even if the waves from the sea are raging, the ocean's depths cannot be disturbed. Even if the storm is violent, the mountains cannot be moved. Those who live in the shadow of the Almighty cannot be shaken.

### **Avoid the Spirit of the World**

The world of today travels too fast, and does not leave room for thinking or pausing. Society without God, which is what the world proposes, is a phantom-like society no longer aware of what is going on

around them. In a world that believes only in itself, i.e. money, everything is equivalent. Therefore, nothing is of any value.

To have a conscience is even considered as a waste of time. With such a void as this, people sometimes seem to suffocate. It is in such a hostile environment that we are to work gladly for the Lord.

Let us do everything as if He had come every night to check on what we did during the day. However, let us not forget even for a moment that God has an eye on everything, whether during the heat of the day or in the dark of the night.

If our thoughts are full of the worthless things of this world, we will bear the mark of the world; if we are absorbed with our worries, our spirit will bear the mark of those worries; if we think about our weaknesses we will be crushed by them. But if we think about our Lord, we will receive His mark and we will resemble Him.

### **Six Blessed Days**

So, during our gathering, here, in the shadow of the Almighty, next to 12 springs and 70 symbolic palm trees, away from the worries and temptations of this present evil world, and far from our daily anxieties, it has been easy for us to keep ourselves in an appropriate frame of mind.

The six blessed days we have just spent together in a serene, harmonious, beneficial and spiritual atmosphere, have indeed had the goal to predispose our hearts to a physical and moral relaxation, to a full and intense spiritual communion with our Heavenly Father, with our Lord and with our brothers and sisters from various parts of the world.

In such an atmosphere, all our thoughts, our words and our actions are easily adapted to the conditions that naturally accompany those places that God considers holy, places that bring us into God's intimacy, just as Moses experienced when he was in front of the burning bush. God told him: "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5).

Polanica 2004 is one of those places, one of the stops in our life, that brought us closer to our Creator. We cannot ignore that now, as we are ready to leave this peaceful and serene haven, it will again be difficult to adapt to the harsh realities of life and to keep the same disposition of heart and spirit that is moving us now.

Thanks to the goodness of the authorities and administration of the city of Polanica and also of those in charge of the conference site, Polanica 2004 has been a big success and will remain in our hearts



for a long time. It is our duty to say thank you very much, assuring you that God is not unjust to forget your generous participation. Your reputation has become stronger and has spread throughout the world.

This convention has once more allowed us to understand and appreciate each other, like a sweet and pleasant perfume. Each handshake, each hug, each smile, and each word constituted for us a sweet-smelling savor that gives life.

All the personal and group discussions enabled us to realize how much the Truth that propels us is great and powerful. All of us, we believe, have been marked by the sharing of our mutual experiences, sometimes pleasant, sometimes painful.

This convention taught us also how much we need each other because: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). It is prayer that often allows us to move "mountains" of problems and trials.

Since it is impossible to prolong our brotherly communion and instead we are obligated to separate, we want to thank all the participants who at great sacrifice have contributed marvelously to the wonderful bouquet of love and fellowship and who by their presence here left their imprint in the big book of memories that God opened up especially for us at this occasion.

This meeting, of course, would not be possible without the participation of all of those God used for the success of Polanica 2004. To those who entrusted themselves deeply with the negotiations, preparation, arrangement of the rooms, those who made themselves available for brethren, those who contributed actively in the translation work or those who, with their instruments, accompanied hymns sung for the glory of God; to all of them, the Scrip-

tures teach: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Let us keep alive this wonderful atmosphere that is moving us here in Polanica 2004 and let us make every effort to prolong this each day of our lives until, Lord willing, a next meeting ... maybe Polanica 2006! God only knows ... but in any event, let us not waste any time and let us get ready for the final meeting, if we deserve it, in the glory of the Lord.

### **In Closing**

In closing, dear brethren, dear friends, let us make ours the exhortation of the apostle Paul in Philippians 4:4-9, and let it really sink in, deep in our heart and feelings: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men ... Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received and heard [here in Polanica], do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

May "God be with you till we meet again," it is with the words from this hymn that we will officially end our brotherly communion in Polanica 2004. Amen.

