

AN EXPOSITION OF  
**GENESIS**

by  
Tim James



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An Exposition of The Book of Genesis as Delivered in A  
Series of Messages to The Congregation of Sequoyah Sovereign  
Grace Baptist Church, Cherokee, NC.

by  
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## A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

The following manuscript contains the unedited, verbatim personal notes used to preach a series of messages on the book of Genesis. The reader may expect to find errors in punctuation, spelling, style, and some marginal and parenthetical notes which have no explanation.

However, even in this unedited format, the material is readable, simple, profound, and will prove useful to anyone who wants to gain a better insight into the book of Genesis. For this reason, it is added to the library of works available on the Grace-ebooks.com website.

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# IN THE BEGINNING

## Genesis 1:1

1, In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The word “Genesis” means to originate or to bring something into existence or being. It presupposes a creator or one who alone existed prior to the origination of all that is. That creator, according to this record, is God. The name of God here is “Elohiym.” That name speaks to His sovereign power and His self-existence and it is in the plural. This does not suggest a pantheon or multiplicity of gods but rather declares the triune Godhead, the trinity whose full revelation is found only in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, “for in Him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (1:26, “us”). This is the record of the beginning of the known universe, the physical heaven and earth. This is not understood by applying scientific principles, hypothesis, testing, and proof. Science cannot prove what it cannot handle, and thus honest science must approach the concept of the beginning of things by calling it a theory. The fact is that this record can only be received and understood by that which science denies altogether (Heb. 11:3). Faith neither wants nor requires empirical evidence (provable, verifiable) because it rests and relies entirely on inspired canon, the infallible Word of God. To those to whom God has given faith, that faith itself, is both evidence and substance. Many who possess “natural faith” believe this record of the creation of the natural universe. Natural faith can believe this account, but natural faith cannot understand what it means (1 Cor. 2:14-15). This is simply a way of saying that the creation of the physical world means something else of something more than the record that is before us. The redeemed, those who have been saved grace, look at this

account with eyes of faith and those eyes are fixed of Christ and Him crucified. Those eyes look upon what cannot be physically or naturally seen (2 Cor. 4:18). Spiritual eyes see by comparing scripture with scripture (1 Cor. 2:12-13).

That being said, if we look at these first three words and how the word “beginning” is employed in scripture we can begin to grasp the import of these words, “in the beginning.” The word “beginning” is also interpreted in the scripture as “before the foundation” or “from the beginning.”

First and foremost, the spiritual person understands that if something was begun, there must have been a beginner, one who started the existence of the known universe. This one was pre-existent or had being before all else began. This being is declared to be God. One philosopher called God “Ens”, which simply means being or the being. It is another way of saying He “is.” Another man described Him as the eternal “isness.” From the burning bush, this Being said, His name was “I am that I am.” If one comes to God, according to scripture, he must believe that “He is” (second person singular of “I am”). He is described in scripture as He, “who was and is and is to come.” Christ said, “before Abraham was, I AM.” Who is the being, this God, who was there, “in the beginning”? He is Jesus Christ the Lord (John 1:1-3; Coll. 1:16; 1 John 1:1-3).

What happened before Christ began all things? He declared the beginning from the end, declaring how what He began would end. Before He started this thing called history, He ordained how history would end (Isaiah 46:9-10; Heb. 1:10)). History is not a series of haphazard occurrences; it is a series of ordained events that will bring things to their appointed end, events that were begun for that purpose. History is His Story, the story Christ (Rev. 1:8)

Before he began all things, the earth and the fullness thereof and all that is therein, he chose out of a fallen race that he had not yet created, a people that he would save by His grace, through His substitutionary work (2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 1:3-6;

Prov. 8:22, 23, 27). That substitutionary work was accomplished in purpose before He began all things (Rev. 13:8; Heb. 4:3). He wrote the names of His elect in the Lamb's book of Life (Rev. 17:8). See Ecc. 1:9; 3:15). In the beginning....



# DARKNESS AND LIGHT

## Genesis 1:1-5

1, In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2, And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3, And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4, And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5, And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

The beauty of the book of Genesis, for the believer, is the knowledge that all the events declared concerning the origin of the physical universe has a spiritual application and teaches truth that cannot be understood with natural eyes. That application points in some particular way to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The scriptures testify of Him, and all the prophets gave witness of Him. We have seen that the first 4 words of this book are a declaration of the deity and glory of Christ, who is the beginning and the end, described as the creator of all that is. Before us, in this passage, especially verse 2 is the source a great deal of conjecture. Theological scientists suggests that verse 2 is about a gap in the history of creation and with this gap theory they seek to explain things like carbon dating, the existence of dinosaurs and what they call prehistorical as opposed to historical. Their efforts seem, to me, to be a desire to reconcile science and inspiration, a totally

unnecessary enterprise because we understand the creation by faith. Some folks say that the creation was somehow marred by some cataclysmic event and God had to fix it, do a redo. This suggests that something occurred outside the realm of God's sovereign control. That is not possible lest God cease to be God. Some well-intended folks say that verse 2 couldn't be a part of creation and thus must be an unplanned occurrence because God would not create darkness and chaos. They think that they are defending God's glory Is. 45:5-7, Ps. 18:11, 139:12; Amos 3:6). Remember that verse 2 is in the account and report of creation and the Lord declared the end from the beginning and whatever this means, it is assuredly falls between the end and beginning and is thus ordained. Verse 2 is right where it is supposed to be and is part and parcel with the physical creation of the heavens and the earth. Rather than this being an account of disorder and chaos occurring, this is a record of a thing ordered by Him whose very thoughts shall come to pass. This ersatz chaos and formlessness and darkness are of great importance to spiritual understanding and faith understands it.

Physically, verse 2 can be likened to an artist's blank pallet whereupon the artist will create his masterpiece. This verse is proclamation of the grace of God in salvation and is accomplished with the concept of darkness and light, "They that dwelt in darkness have seen a great light." "God, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son (the Light of the world)." "For 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 that takes its place in the history of creation to consummation is explicitly designed for "the Glory of His grace." That being the case, since grace is for sinners, this verse and its surrounding context is about the creation and the fall and the recovery of fallen ones, to the praise of the glory of His grace, the story of the new creation from the ordained fall to the ordained salvation of men.

Happenstance does not enter the picture. One man said, “has it occurred to you that nothing has ever occurred to God.”

This expression of darkness and light, night and day is seen throughout the record of creation. This is seen in the way they are expressed. We, in the West, generally express a day (24-hour period) as beginning with the rising of the Sun. The people of the east generally express a day (24-hour period) as “from sunset to sunset,” the day beginning with the setting of the Sun. This being the case, and the fact that the Lord dealt first with a people from the middle east, the language fit their way of seeing a day. So, we see each new day, in the context, described as from “evening to morning” (vv. 3,8,13, 19, 23, 31). On the 7th day, the Lord rested having finished the work of creation but on that day, of that day there is no mention of morning and evening. But the use of language in this manner is not about the east and the west, it testifies of Christ and His work of salvation. It is about darkness and light and the entrance of light into that darkness and dispelling the darkness. The Spirit of God hovers over the void and darkness of humanity because The Spirit of God takes the things of Christ and reveals them to the elect and He does this revelation when God says “let there be light” upon the darkened void, and there is light and it is good (John 1:1-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 1 John 1:5-7; Ps. 27:1; Eph 5:8-13). Read text.

# LIGHT AND DARKNESS DIVIDED

## Genesis 1:4-5

4, And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5, And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

In the fourth verse, after declaring that the light He called into existence was good, God divided the light from the darkness. This may seem to express the concept of the 24-hour day, but that part of creation was accomplished on the fourth day with the creation of the Sun and the Moon. As we saw last time, these first 5 verses are the beginning of the teaching of spiritual truths that address the salvation of sinner by the introduction of light into a world of darkness and despair and formless void. That Light is Christ, the Light of the world and is revealed in His preached Gospel and when applied by the Spirit, makes saved sinners to be light, shining in a dark world. Ere the sun and moon were made; God divided the Light from the darkness and named the Light, Day and the darkness, Night. There was Day and Night before there was what we refer to as night and day, discerned by the rotation of the earth on its axis. What, then, is the meaning of God dividing the Light from the Darkness?

The first thing that is obvious is that there is a definitive opposition. God saw that the light was good, and, by omission, the darkness was the opposite and therefore evil or at least void of light and therefore void of good. Surely God saw them both, having created them both and according to Psalm 139, the darkness and light are both alike to Him. The distinction is first

seen in the word “saw.” It does not only address visual perception but also speaks of the manner of seeing. We often use the word “see” to mean different things. When something is explained to us, we say “I see”, meaning that we understand. When we are perhaps opposed to a thing, we might say, “I don’t see it that way” meaning that we don’t regard it in that way. The word “saw”, the past tense of “see”, is defined as “regarded, looked upon, considered or even viewed with particular interest.” We know that how God sees a thing is how that thing is. For example, the world sees (regards) saved sinners as imperfect, unrighteous and an unholy mess and they have natural, empirical evidence to prove what they see. But God sees, regards, his saved ones as holy, righteous, and perfect and so they are because the Light of the Gospel has shined in their hearts to reveal the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God, in the context, regards, considers, views the Light with particular interest. There is no indication that he regarded the darkness at all, save that He divided the light from it.

The next thing to consider is the word “divided.” The word means to sever, separate, set apart, cause to differ, make a distinction. Each of these terms is used to define the eternal election of grace. The division is the first type and picture of election unto salvation. Election means to choose out of and as it applies to salvation it means to choose out of, distinguish, set apart, separate, sever and cause to differ (1 Cor. 4:7–margin). Election is of grace and therefore it is of God alone and has nothing to do with the works or the will of man who is the personification of darkness. Addressing that distinction our Lord said to the Ephesians, “ye were sometimes darkness, now ye are light.” He divided the light from the darkness (Rom. 11:5-6; 2 Tim. 1:9). The most definitive passage in scripture, that declares that upon it the purpose of election stands is found in Romans 9. It employs the birth of twins, Jacob and Esau and declares that God hated one and loved the other (Romans 9:11-13). Immediately, it is obvious the election of the doctrine of

love (2 Thess. 2:13 “beloved of the Lord.” Also, it is a doctrine that divides, once it is personally declared (John 15:19). No one could possibly know of your election unless you personally declared it to be so. Since it is of grace, it is a declaration of your lack of merit. God divided the light from the darkness. Men love darkness rather than light. God loved light rather than darkness. The purpose of God according to election stands on God’s love and hate. He divided the Light from the darkness.

Finally, He gives the light and the darkness names. The Light He calls Day and the darkness He calls Night. Yet to this hour, these terms have become the way of describing distinctions and polar opposites. How often do we say things like, “the difference is night and day”? God divided the light from darkness.

The poet wrote;

“Long my imprisoned spirit lay—

Fast bound in sin and nature’s night.

Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;

I woke, the dungeon flamed with light.

My chains fell off, my heart was free.

I rose, went forth and followed thee.”

“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (1 Thes. 5:5).

God divided the light form the darkness.

# THE NEW CREATION

## Genesis 1:1-2:3

1, In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2, And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3, And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4, And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5, And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6, And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7, And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8, And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9, And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10, And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

11, And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12, And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

13, And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14, And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

15, And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16, And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

17, And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

18, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

19, And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20, And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21, And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.



22, And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23, And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

1, Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2, And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3, And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

This book of Genesis, as is all the law and prophets, is about Christ and His successful work in the salvation of His elect. The Old Testament is Christ in picture and type. Every bloody sacrifice pictured Christ. Every High Priest pictured Christ. Every plant, herb and vine bearing seed after its kind speaks of Christ and His finished work. Every prophet typified The Prophet. Every king pictured Christ in the capacity of sovereign and here in Genesis 1:1-2-2:2- (2 Cor. 5:17-18a) is a picture of Christ creating the new creature, the saved sinner. The record of the physical creation is the story of the fall and the recovery of man completely accomplished by the gracious work of God. It is the story of the new creation and the grace that accomplished it. In this hour we will look at this as an overview and in the weeks to come, we'll consider particular references as they exalt the glory of the creator, savior, sustainer and consummator of all that is.

The very first thing we see is the very first-of-*all*-things. This first-of-all-things sets the course and theme of all that is, was, and is to come. "In the beginning, God...." The first cause of all

that is, is God (John 1:1-2). God is the creator and thus is creator in the new creation. Terms like old and new are relative to time for the benefit of the creature, who is bound to the concept of time. The writer of Hebrews wrote “For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” V. 2 is a concise record of the fall of man. The word “was” can also be interpreted as “became.” That which brought creation into darkness and formless was Adam’s sin and ruin. But even in that great catastrophe there is a word of hope because we see the presence of the Spirit of God moving upon the darkness. (John 16:8-13). The Spirit of God moving is the beginning of the new creation. V. 3 is the first mention of Christ (compare John 1:3-7). And note well that He is revealed by the spoken word. The first Gospel preacher was God himself. Christ and His Gospel is the divine communication from on high and establishes the principle of how men understand and know...by faith in what God has said. Christ is the Divine luminary and by Him what can be known and understood of God is manifest. In vv. 4-5 we see the first mention of the word good (none good but God) and the first concept of the election of grace. God divided, made a division between the light and the darkness (opposites-day and night). Our Lord said “work while it is day for the night cometh when no man can work” there is nothing in darkness that can be used in the light. Referring to the salvation of sinners, Paul wrote that Christ has brought us from darkness to light. This truth of salvation is seen in the description of the first day (the day of salvation) and the next five that follow. It is not “morning and evening” but “evening and morning”– darkness to light.

What follows until the new creation of man is a picture of grace in preparation of all things for man (the crown of God’s creation) to use in his new life (vv. 6-8). The firmament above and below the earth is water and water is put for the word of God, God’s doctrine throughout the scripture (Deut. 32, Is. 55).

It is also spoken of as the thing necessary for regeneration or the new birth (1 Peter 1:23-25, James 1:18). It is on the earth in the preaching of the Gospel, is in the heavens as to its source. There is no new creature without the Word. This is the second day... evening and morning.

Verses 9-13 marks the third day and a place for man to stand and inhabit. The earth was made for man, made to be inhabited. The new man is on the earth to look upward (Heb. 12:2, Coll. 1-1-3). He walks by faith and not by sight. Also, on this day the provision for this new life begins; grass and herb bearing seed after its kind. These are used in metaphoric terms to represent man's mortality and the coming of Christ. (All flesh is grass, Christ as a tender herb, He shall see His seed...that seed is Christ). "After *his* kind" (not *its*) pictures imputation of Adam's sin and Christ righteousness. And also, that fruit produced is according to the vine. Evening and morning...

Vv.14-19 On the fourth day God put illumination in the heavens, Sun (Christ), Moon (Church) stars-luminaries that even in darkness, looking through a glass darkly the new man is never without light from heaven (Abel, being dead yet speaketh). Good...evening and morning.

Vv. 20-25 God made every typical beast that would be useful to the new man. After the fall, men would consume many kinds of the beasts but the new man lives on every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The Gospel is the feast of fat things, the fatted calf, the paschal lamb, the grapes of Eschol and wine on the lees well refined (Christ-the bread of heaven, the water of life). The new man is given dominion, "Christ has made us kings and priest unto our God." 5th day, good, evening and morning.

Then after God had graciously prepared all things for his creature, He made the new creature in His image (vv. 26-31). The new man is a spiritual man. He is conformed to the image of Christ who is the image of the invisible God. The new man cannot be seen. The making of natural woman from the rib of

natural Adam is revealed in chapter 3. But in the new creation man and woman are created alike and in the same manner, because in the new creation, in Christ that is neither male nor female, but all are one in Him. And God gave to the new man everything that he had prepared for him and told him so (1 Cor. 2:9-12; 3:21-23). Very good...evening and morning.

Then, our Lord, having finished the work of the new creation rests on the seventh day...the Sabbath means rest, Christ is our Sabbath...He is our rest and when he had created us anew, he, entered into His rest, sat down on the right hand of the Father (this is God's Sabbath, His rest, into which we enter). On this day there is no mention of evening and morning. It is just Day. There is no marking of time because the new man is an eternal being. There is no setting or dawning of the sun because Christ is the new creature's light, and he is light in Christ. He is in heavenly places in Christ. He had entered into rest and he rests eternally in Christ because the work of his new creation is finished, completed, accomplished on Calvary's Tree. And there, in that eternal estate of joy and glory there is neither distinction nor necessity nor existence of evening and morning (Rev. 22:1-5).

## AFTER HIS KIND

### Genesis 1:11, 21, 24, 26-27

11, And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

21, And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

24, And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

26, And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27, So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

As we have seen thus far in this book of creation and generation, the several aspects of the creation of the physical universe all point to picture and typify the new creation, the new creature in Christ, which is salvation. And salvation is the theme of this entire book and this entire Bible. Since it is about salvation, it must necessarily presuppose a condition upon which salvation is

required. This is pictured in the earth becoming without form and void with darkness upon the face of the deep. All that follows pictures some aspect or means employed by God in the recovery from that ruined estate.

In the creation of all flora and fauna, and finally humanity one thing stands true of all. Their seed is in them and they produce fruit after their own kind. This forever answers the question of the chicken and the egg as to which came first and likewise that a trout will not produce a jaguar. The future assurance of the continuance of a thing is found in its seed. This is the essence of life and existence. The old adage says, "One can count the seeds in an apple but who can count the apples in a seed."

This concept of seed applies to every living creature in the arenas of plant animal and human, each produces fruit after its own kind. Our Lord uses the concept of seed in horticultural, animal, humanity and in the declaration of the salvation of the elect. In doing so, He also sets forth the distinction between the old creation and the new, the old man and the new, the old covenant and the new, true and false teachers, true and false doctrine, the spirit and the flesh and the saved and the lost each producing fruit after its own kind whether good fruit or evil fruit (8:22). This is paramount in our understanding that salvation is the work of the sovereign creator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord's people, His children, His elect remnant are called the product and fruit of his planting (Isa. 60:21; 61:3; Ps. 92:13; Jer. 32:38-42).

Of false teachers and their doctrine, our Lord said, "by their fruits shall ye know them" and "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

Of his people He say that they shall bring forth fruit and their fruit shall remain and that because of their connection with the vine (John 15:1-6).

The preaching of the Gospel is, in a parable, compared to scattering or sowing seed (Matt. 13:3-9, 18-22).

Our Lord, Himself, is designated uniquely as the seed of woman, whose Father is God, distinguishing Him from the rest of humanity, whose father is Adam (3:15). He, being the seed of woman, was not born after Adam's kind, but after God's kind. He was born without sin and had no carnal nature. He, being thus, suited Him to be the perfect sacrifice, without sin, spot, or blemish; "the seed of woman, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem them that were under the law'."

The Gospel in its instrumentality in the new birth is called incorruptible seed and as it applied to the new birth, being born again, the seed in that case means semen (1 Peter 1:18-25; compare Lk. 1:35; Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:1-2). Born of God: (1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4).

Finally, man was created in the image of God (1:26). Could this be a way of saying, "after His own kind." Man's creation differed from all other things created. All other things were called into being. Man's creation was a hands-on experience, and this must be attributed to Christ. Man was molded from the dust, the clay of the earth...he was made (2:7). He was created in the physical universe in the image of The Man, the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:16; John 1:3; Coll. 1:16). Christ is the God-Man, God manifest on the flesh. Jesus Christ is sinless flesh and Spirit. The image of God is thus applied to the new creation, where the child of God is both flesh and spirit, the one born of God by the seed of God; Christ and His Gospel, is declared, by the work of Christ to be both flesh and spirit, yet one whose sin has been put away by the blood of Christ, to the extreme extent that they are perfected and God will remember their sin no more. The new creature, the saved sinner, the blood-bought man is a man after God's own kind (1 John 4:17, Phil. 3:20-21; Heb. 2:11; Gal. 3:29).

# THE WORLD AND THE ELECT

## Genesis 1:14-19

14, And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

15, And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16, And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

17, And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

18, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

19, And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

On the fourth day of creation, God created the Sun, Moon, and set them in the place in the firmament. The planets of our solar system were also created at this time and set in their elliptical orbits around the Sun. All of the heavenly bodies are included under the term of "lights." The greater light, the Sun was designated to rule the day and the lesser light the Moon was said to rule the night. Their rule is limited to that of provision, but they are, nonetheless, said to rule, and the use of that word, in some way, points to the sovereign God. These along with the placement of stars in the constellations are said to be placed because they were for things that have to do with time: signs for "seasons, days and years" (v. 14, 18). This reveals that they were



placed for human history, which is the realm in which our Lord executed His work of salvation, which he had purposed before He made the worlds. This truth is also declared in that these lights were put in the firmament to “give light upon the earth” (v. 15, 17). Since the earth was made for man, mankind, these lights were for his benefit. We see in this passage the repeated theme that began the record of creation, the theme of darkness and light, evening and morning, and the division of light from darkness, which pictures election and salvation (v. 14, divide). “The people who dwelt in darkness have seen a great light.” Christ said, “I am the light of the world.” John said that this is the record, “that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” It is said of the elect that they were “once darkness but now they are light.” The word of God is described as light being spirit and life, the bringer of life and understanding to the simple, a light upon our path and a lamp unto our feet. For those who have been born from above, regenerated by the Spirit through the preached Word, the message revealed in the creation of the Sun and the Moon is of true spiritual import. He who created these things rules over them and they will continue until their purpose is fulfilled. They are not eternal. They are temporal and their significance, though essential to the physical world, teach spiritual truths that can only be received and understood by those whom God had given faith by His grace. The sun and moon typify the Lord God and His work of salvation upon the earth. Darkness and light typify the old and the new covenants, the spirit and the flesh, the lie and the truth, damnation, and salvation. The greater light is the sun; it rules the day. This declares the sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners. He rules the day. On that day, when God incarnate hung in agonies and blood on the cross of Calvary, He was ruling and reigning in absolute sway. His power and might was of such magnitude that He shut down the ruler of the day for three hours while He dealt with Christ after our iniquities, laid stripes on our sin and visited our transgression with the rod of justice as our sins had

been laid on Christ. On that day as in every other day, the Ruler of all ruled the ruler of the day. The sun pictures the true son, God and His Son (Ps. 84:11; Isaiah 60:19-20; Mal. 4:2; Lk. 1:78; 2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 2:28; Ps. 50:2; Ezek. 43:2). God is our Light, Christ is our Light, the word is our light. He is our Sun. The seventh day, when creation was finished, there is no mention of evening and morning, only God resting in the glory of His finished work.

The stars and planets are included in what is described as lesser lights. They are always in the heavens but are only visible at night in darkness. In their manifold way they, provide light so that total darkness is never the case. In scripture, men of renown and sometimes nations are described as stars. And God has used men and nations to guard, keep and proclaim His glory in salvation. But they are little lights as far as man perceives and they disappear altogether when the Sun arises. They have a glory, but their glory disappears when the greater glory appears. This is descriptive of the OC "the lesser light" whose glory disappears in the light of the NC (2 Cor. 3 :10-11...law and grace).

The moon is the lesser of the two great lights. The moon pictures and typifies many things. First it pictures the church. It is a light, a light that rules in darkness but its light is not its own. Its light is derived and is a mere reflection of the light of the sun. The church is a light in the dark world, but its light is not its own. Its light *reflects* Christ, the light of the world.

The moon is both darkness and light. It is a desolate orb, save for the light of the sun. But even as the sun lights upon it, a part of it lies in darkness (the dark side of the moon). This is true of every believer, every member of the body of Christ, the church while they remain upon the earth. They are spirit (light) and they are flesh (darkness), the light of Christ is their spirit, their flesh is the dark side of the moon, void of light never receiving the light of the Sun of righteousness (John 3:6; Rom. 8:5-10; Gal. 5; 16-17).

Sometimes there is celestial phenomenon called a lunar eclipse. That takes place when the earth's orbit brings it in a straight line between the Sun and the Moon. The scripture describes it as the "moon is turned to blood." This is described thusly because in a lunar eclipse the moon appears as red or a lighter shade of red. This is a picture of the church, believers, when the cares of the world, the lusts of the world get between them and Christ. Though there is a different revelation of light, there is still light, and that light is described as blood. What a picture this is of the sure salvation of the church, the security of the church. Though the world may sometimes bring darkness to the life of the believer, he is always under the blood of the substitute. When the world assaults the church, her light remains, and that light is revealed to be the blood/death of Christ. (Read text)

# THE LORD'S SABBATH

## Genesis 2:1-3

1, Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2, And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3, And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

There are several things that are necessary for us to understand the meaning of the Sabbath as it is revealed in Scripture. These teachings are necessary in both a positive and negative sense. The positive has to do with the true meaning of the Sabbath and the negative has to do with numerous errors that permeate the teachings of those who would put the believer under the law. The most important thing about the Sabbath is found in our text in the first three verses of the second chapter of Genesis. We will look at this as the last point in the message. First, we will consider the other things.

First what is the Sabbath as to a day? It is the seventh day of the week. It is part of the Jewish economy and was never given to the Gentiles to observe. The Sabbath day begins on Friday night at sunset and ends on Saturday night at sunset, aligning with the concept of evening and morning, darkness to light defining a day. The Lord did not institute this as a day to be observed until it was given in the 10 commandments written in stone and given to Moses on Sinai, after the deliverance of Israel by the blood of the Lamb. In the ceremonial aspect of the Law,

there were 8 Sabbaths, each with a singular precept that was true to all. There was no servile work to be done and this was explicitly set forth in every case because regardless of what Sabbath was observed, it was observed to remind the observer that the work was finished, God and done the work and there was nothing for humanity to do. This was always the message. Over time, religion, even Christianity, so called, because of religion's natural bent to operate under the law, decided to change the Sabbath day, to the first day of the week and call Sunday the new Sabbath. That is simply not true. The first day of the week, the day that celebrated the Lord's resurrection, the day when believers gather to worship the Lord is not the Sabbath, this called, in the New Testament, the Lord's Day. It is not however by command of God but rather by following the example of the early church. There is no evidence that the Sabbath was observed in scripture, or even mentioned until Moses referred to it in Exodus 16 and the giving of manna and quail to the sojourning Israelites (twice the daily amount was gathered on Friday before sunset, so no work was done on Saturday). They were to rest and enjoy what the Lord had provided. Adam, Abel, Abraham, or Noah is never said to observe the seventh day as different from any other. In religion, the Sabbath has evolved into simply another way for self-righteousness to rest its ugly head. Those raised in false religion know how the Sabbath has been used to accuse and excuse behavior of what religious falsely refers to as the new Sabbath (washing the car on Sunday). Since the Sabbath day was given in the Law of Sinai, legalist religion pretty much disregards the other seven Sabbaths and relegates the Sabbath to a day. This is religious error and makes men accountable to do the whole law. The believer is not under the law at all....at all!

The word "Sabbath" means rest and for a particular reason. Rest, not because one is tired from labor but because the work is finished and there is nothing left to be done. This is clearly stated in our text (vv. 1-3). The Lord has finished the work of

creation (typifying new creation, salvation by Christ). Having finished the work, He rested, He sanctified the seventh day, set it apart, regarded it as holy because, “in that He had rested from all His work.” The day was set apart to be observed as a remembrance that the Lord had finished the work. Sabbath means rest. What rest? His rest! It is God’s rest that is observed. When the law was given on Sinai, it was the only law that was explicitly explained (Exodus 20:8-11). It was to be observed to remember that the Lord had finished the work. It was given to man, not that he might use it as evidence of his righteousness but as a remembrance that the Lord has finished His work...the Sabbath is God’s Sabbath.

Move forward a few millennia, to a hill outside Jerusalem. There on Friday, as the Sabbath day approaches, the Son of God is hung on a tree. He is there to finish the work of the new creation, the salvation of that elect remnant. From that cross, He cried with a loud voice, “It is finished” and gives up the ghost. He is summarily taken from the cross and entombed. Having finished the work, He enters into His rest because He had finished the work. The next day was the Sabbath, and he rested and the next day, Sunday, He arose to ascend on high to receive the title of Lord, which he earned being obedient unto death. Our salvation is His rest. We entered into His rest and at the appointed time were given faith to believe and therefore rest in Him because He finished work (Heb 4:9-11-marg. “keeping of the Sabbath”).

The Gospel celebrates that the work of salvation is finished, and it is Christ who finished it. Having finished it, He sat down on the right hand of the majesty on High and in the matter of salvation there is nothing for the elect to do...nothing...they have entered in Christ’s rest. The believer keeps the Sabbath every day and the believer is the only one who does. He doesn’t keep a day, he keeps the *rest* of the person who finished the work of his salvation. Every believer is a Sabbath keeper. It is the Lord’s rest, the Lord’s Sabbath.

## GENERATION

### Genesis 2:4-7

4, These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

5, And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

6, But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

7, And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

These four verses are a kind of reiteration and expansion of all that has been recorded and reported thus far concerning the creation of all that is. It's called a generation in the sense that it was the beginning or generation of results of the creation. Having created all that is, Moses calls God by a new name. Before as creator, He was referred to as Elohim (the mighty or the mighty one). Now Moses attaches the name Jehovah, defined throughout the word in all upper-case letters as LORD. The name "the existing One." This is a particular designation of God as it intimates a personal interaction with His creation (Prov. 8:31). Some believe that God created all things and then stepped back to see how it would turn out, as if he created a watch, wound it and watched it run down. The employment of the name LORD (Jehovah) reveals God to be the God with hands on. This name, Jehovah, the existing One designates Him

as ‘the being.’ This is the name that Plato called Him by “Ens”...the being. One preacher called Him the eternal “isness” The state of being verb for existence is “is.” So, this name means “He is.” That is the second person singular of “I Am” the name that He used to reveal Himself as the Savior of His people. “I Am the way, truth and life.” “Before Abraham was, I Am.” Jehovah, LORD is Christ. He is LORD overall, and all men will declare Him to be so (v. 4).

In verse 5 we see the description of the creation as the elements of the natural order that the LORD God has put in place begin to flourish. Things grew. Here also we see the first mention of rain. This may be a harbinger of the results of the fall culminating in the days of Noah when the LORD God unleashed the deluge upon the earth and destroyed mankind save for 8 souls. This also is a reference to the creation of man (Adam) and why He was created. It is a proverbial saying that prostitution is the oldest profession, but, the oldest profession is the farmer– the one who tills the ground. The concept of a future garden was established (v. 8). Several things are important here. Since the things God created were already growing before man was made, man had no part in the creation of them. Also, man was made to tend what God had created. He was not only a steward but also a laborer in the fields of the LORD God. That man is the crown of creation, is suggested in that the creation was to be tended, and no creature yet created had the ability to do so. In all this the LORD God set in motion an enormous collection of metaphors in which He would reveal the salvation of His elect. Our Lord and His prophets and apostles would employ the elements of agriculture, horticulture, flora, and fauna to declare the Gospel and the glory of His grace (Christ and Him crucified). {tender plant, vine and branches and fruit, bruised reed, smoking flax, Sower fanned the seed, fig tree, hart panting after the water brook, the green tree and the dry, man and dominion, mountain and valley, grass, the flower of the field, the rose of Sharon, the Lily of the valley, hyssop, the



bulrush, the worm, the maggot the darkness and the light...all were used in this Book to preach of Christ and His work}. Nature is a bold and beautiful, sublime and accurate display of the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Verse 6 is an explanation of how that the earth, the animals and plants survived without the presence of rain. The mist here described is part of that firmament recorded in the first chapter. It was a vapor canopy that enveloped the earth and gave necessary water to all that existed. There were no seasons yet. They would ensue when the vapor canopy was part of the waters above the earth that brought the great flood. In all probability, the earth from pole to pole was a tropical paradise.

In verse 7 we have the record of the forming, (word means fashioning) of man (Adam). Though it says that he was formed of the dust of the ground, the preponderance of scripture does not speak to dry dust, but of man being formed of clay. The word Adam literally means “red dirt man.” This designation alludes to the potter and the clay and is employed throughout scripture to reveal the sovereignty of God in His employment of man in several ordained capacities. The LORD God made, formed and fashioned man to be used for His glory in wrath and grace, in justice and in mercy. He is the potter; we are the clay (Job 33:6; Is. 45:9; 64:8; Rom. 9:21-23).

The LORD God, Jesus Christ, took this thing that He had formed and blew into His nostrils the breath of life. This is said of no other creature. All other creatures were created with breath (*ruach*) but man was given life with the respiration of the Lord God, called “*neshamah*.” This is the breath of life and with the declaration that he became a living soul suggests that man was both temporal and eternal. When the law of Eden was given concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, this duality was also suggested in the sentence for breaking the commandment...”and dying, ye shall die.” Within this is also the concept of physically dying and yet living forever in eternal life and eternal death and torment. Yet another aspect of the

living soul is declared in the breath that was breathed into Adam. In scripture, when it is applied to man, the breath is said to be “*neshamah*” rather than “*ruach*.” Never is *neshamah* applied to animals, only man. *Neshama* is used in connection with the ability of speech, use of words and symbols. It is tied to the Spirit of God and man to utter speech, inspiration, and intelligence. This places man as superior to animals in that he is able to communicate with words, which is how God communicates with men (John 1) and how men communicate the word of God, the Gospel. Though there are numerous examples of this in scripture, I’ll leave you with just one, Psalm 150:6 (breath, *neshamah*).

# THE GARDEN

## Genesis 2:8-9

8, And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9, And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

This is the account of the Lord God (Jehovah) planting a garden Eastward of Eden, called in scripture, the Garden of Eden, Eden, the garden of The Lord and paradise. Plato called the place "Jove's Garden." It refers to the third day of creation and should properly read, "The Lord God had planted a garden." This rehearsal of creation on chapter two is not chronological but has to do with how the elements of creation related to one another. The Lord God had planted a garden and then formed man because there was not a man to till the ground. Before Adam was formed, all the necessary elements for his life, sustenance, pleasure and prosperity. This garden may be regarded as the entire habitable earth because the vapor canopy that watered the earth would have made all places a kind of paradise made for man. However, it is pointed out particularly as it pictures and typifies the Lord God and His work of salvation. In this garden we are first introduced to the concept called evil. In this garden we are introduced to the seductive nature of evil (the serpent). In this garden we are introduced to the concept of law and the result of transgression, which is death. In this garden we are introduced to the concept of rebellion and disobedience. In this garden we are introduced to the concept of sin. In this garden we are introduced to the

concept of substitution, and redemption by death, of imputation as a covering of sin. In this garden we are introduced to the concept of self-justification, guilt, conscience, shifting blame, victimization. In this garden we are introduced to the concept of mercy and grace. In this garden we are introduced to the concept of slavish fear of God. In this garden is the Gospel, the record of the fall and recovery of man by the work of the Lord God, Jesus Christ. It's all here in this place, this paradise that the grand and glorious purpose and scheme of redemption is played out before our very eyes of faith. The garden that the Lord planted eastward of Eden is the consummated theological treatise. The remainder of this great Book, the Bible, is but an illumination and expansion of the theme that began to unfold in the garden that the Lord God had planted.

Several things are here for us. First, the Lord God planted this garden. Planting and harvesting are often used in scripture to describe the redeemed of the Lord. In Isaiah 61, they are called the "planting of the Lord." In Jeremiah they are said to be those which the Lord "has planted with His whole heart." The redeemed are the work of the Lord's hands.

Along with all that was planted, there were trees planted that were pleasing to the eyes (beautiful) and good for food. Among these many trees were two trees that were specifically designated, given names. These names have, over the ages become proverbial as distinctive of good and evil, of right and wrong, even life and death. Countless novels, news reports and opinion pieces use these two trees as symbolism to this day, having absolutely no knowledge of what they mean. These two trees are of the Lord's planting they are there to serve His purpose; to glorify His name in the salvation of His elect.

First mentioned is the Tree of life. This name is attributed to Christ, he is the Tree of Life. Psalm 1 says of Him, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth fruit in His season; his leaf shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (see Rev. 22:2). When Adam was sent out

from the garden, an altar was placed at the east of Eden, to keep the way of the tree of life. Christ is that tender plant out of dry ground that grew to be that green tree, the prospered (Is 52:13; 53:10). Also, His people are called “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.” This alludes to the fact that the elect of God are predestinated to be conformed that the image of Jesus Christ (Prov. 12:28; Gal. 3:21). Life and righteousness are by the planting of the Lord God.

The second tree mentioned is the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” The fruit of this tree was prohibited for the consumption of man. Many have questioned why God planted this tree in the garden. Since he did plant it is sure that he was pleased to do so (Ps. 115; 135). And according to God the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not an evil tree nor was its fruit evil. It was pleasant to the sight and good for fruit (comp. 2:9 with 3:6). Also, God called this tree good (1:11-13). It was a good tree. Why, then, was it prohibited? Why was it employed in the institution and introduction of the first law and with it the penalty for transgression of it? We know that the Law of Moses was given to condemn Israel’s transgression, it was added because of transgression. It entered to how the exceeding sinfulness of sin and that sin might abound. But this law was established (primary meaning of planted) because where there is no law, sin cannot be imputed or charged (Romans 5:12-13). That word in Romans declares that sin was already in the world and this law of Eden was put in place that sin might be charged. Was that sin the presence of the serpent, the bright and shining fallen angel? Or was that sin in Adam, because he was a mutable creature and being the best of mankind, mutation would only be downward. God planted this tree in anticipation of the sure fall of Adam. It was a good tree, but not for man. That knowledge contained in its fruit, its doctrine was beyond man’s capability to handle or employ. Man would use it to deify himself, put himself on the place of God (3:5; 22). The knowledge of good and evil is good in God’s hands and His

purpose, but in the hands of man, it creates a systematic ruination wherein man can never really discern the difference and will end up calling evil good and good evil. Good and evil are God's bailiwick (Is. 45:7-8; Amos 3:6). God has power over good and evil, to employ it as He sees fit. Good and evil have power over man, it uses him (Romans 7:15-25) The garden that the LORD God planted eastward of Eden is the story of the fall and recovery of man, ordained in all its aspects for the glory of God.

## OUT OF EDEN

### Genesis 2:10-15

10, And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

11, The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

12, And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

13, And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

14, And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

15, And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

As we have seen, chapter two of Genesis is an illumination of certain aspects of the finished creation. These are not new creations but are rather explanations or expansions on elements of the creation. The Garden of Eden and the place called Eden are spoken of as different things and the same thing. They, or it was part of the finished creation and when they, or it is referred to it is an expanded explanation of what has already taken place. An example of this is seen in comparing 1:27 and 2:18-22. The account in chapter 2 is an illumination of that record in chapter 1. So, Eden and the garden eastward of Eden (the garden of Eden), are an illumination of that aspect of the creation of the flora and fauna of the earth, in that part of geography where

God set forth His predestinated scheme of the salvation of the elect. The word Eden means “pleasure” and though man and woman will be pleased in the place God had put them, Eden, first and foremost, speaks of the pleasure of God. God has always done what He has pleased. The words “pleased and pleasure” are almost always, in scripture, tied to the salvation of His people by the person and work of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53:10).

In this passage, it is revealed that there is a river that went out of Eden that watered the Garden of Eden, the garden that God planted eastward of Eden. This is said to be where God placed the man that He had made, to till, dress and keep (serve, work, guard) the garden. In this context, Eden and the Garden of Eden are differentiated because it speaks of a river that went out of Eden, proceeded from Eden to water the Garden of Eden. What we as believers know is that this is about more than geography. It is about Christ and His work in this created world, a world where God does and expresses His pleasure.

Rivers play a great part in the setting forth of the mercy and grace of God in Scripture. The river Jordan, for example, is symbolic of death and that death revealing the salvation that is from death to life, leaving the world and inhabiting the Land of promise; Immanuel’s land or even heaven (Going over Jordan, going over home). Our Lord spoke of the result of coming to Him for the water of life, producing rivers of living water flowing from the believer. The river here that flows out of Eden to water the Garden of Eden, is referenced in Ps. 46:4 and Rev. 22:1. In each of these references the river flows out from God, from heaven, from the throne of God into the city of God, Zion, the church, the body of Christ and makes the city glad, and supplies the church with all necessary sustenance. That river that flows out of Eden to the place where God had put man, is the Gospel that originates in God and comes into the world for the people of God to water the garden of God, His church, which is “a garden enclosed.” The word of God and the doctrine



of God are said in scripture to descend from heaven as water (Rain and dew). When our Lord told Nicodemus that a man must be born again, of water and of blood, the word for water means, “water from rivers or fountains.” The same word for water was used when our Lord was pierced and from His side flowed water and blood (Zech. 13:1), “a river went out of Eden to water the garden.”

From thence it parted and became four heads or four rivers (v.10). Now, you can pull up your maps, both ancient and present and join the numerous commentators in arriving at their numerous and differing opinions as to the location of these rivers to discern precisely where the Eden and the garden is geographically located, to no avail...or you can look for Christ and His Gospel. The four rivers are given four names and names in the Bible are always more than just names. And so it is here. Out of Eden (paradise, heaven) went out a river that watered the garden (the church, Zion, the city of God). This is the Gospel, the river of grace mercy and salvation that flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

The name of the first river is Pison (v. 11). It means “increase.” John said, “He must increase, and I must decrease.” The word comes from a root word that means to spring forth, scatter, to spread, to grow fat. When the gospel was first declared in earnest at Pentecost. It spread like wildfire. It began as Jerusalem, spread to Samaria and then increased to the uttermost parts of the earth (Is.9:6-7, Lk. 1:33).

The name of the second river is Gihon (v.13). This means to burst forth spring forth in the sense of a sudden, explosive force, like a deluge or tsunami. This speaks to the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation. It was the sudden burst of light that lit up the dark world and turned it upside down. It also speaks of the way the effects of the Gospel are manifested. It comes not by man’s plans, schemes, or inventions...it bursts for in a manner than no man can take credit for it, saving not the righteous but

bringing sinners to repentance. It is the messenger of the covenant suddenly appearing in his kingdom.

The name of the third river is Hiddekel (v. 14). This name means rapid in the sense of a speed of a dart or a polished arrow. This speaks to the fact that the Gospel, though shot as it were at a venture by preachers, is actually a guided missile whose target is the heart of the elect and it will hit its target. The Lord said that His sheep would hear His voice, and they would follow Him, and He would give unto them eternal life. God is the divine archer, and His polished arrow will speed apace to His appointed target.

The name of the fourth river is Euphrates. This means fruitfulness. The gospel is always fruitful, bringing for the fruits of righteousness and life and the deadly fruit of condemnation of death and ruin (Deut. 32:2-4; Is. 46:9-11:55:11; Romans 1:16-17; 2 Cor. 2:14-17).

“And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted and became into four heads.”

## LAW AND DEATH

### Genesis 2:16-17

16, And the LORD God commanded the man, saying,  
Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17, But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,  
thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof  
thou shalt surely die.

As we saw in a previous lesson, this garden that the LORD God planted eastward of Eden is a microcosm of all that follows in the Word of God. That being the case, what transpires in this place is beginning of the revelation of the Gospel of God. In these two verses we have the introduction of some firsts in the annals of human history. Here is the first command that God charges to man. Being a command from God, we have the introduction of the first Law. Along with the first law we are introduced to that which accompanies the law throughout the remainder of scripture. We are introduced to death. This being the case, we are subtly introduced to a need and a supply, something else that is a first, the concept of salvation by the satisfaction of the law.

Verse 16 reveals to us the authority of God over His creature. He commands. This is essentially the manner of God. He does not ask, He does not want where that want is not satisfied, He does not hope, He commands. He does not implore, He compels. Therefore, whatever edict He issues is not up for debate, or to be considered as an option. A command from the One who has absolute authority can only be responded to in obedience or disobedience. The Gospel is a command. It is not an offer or an invitation which can be disregarded, it is command. He has commanded all men to repent and to believe.

The Lord said of Israel in the epistle to Romans, that they have not obeyed the Gospel. In more concise language the Lord commands Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Much has been made of what kind of fruit hung from the branches of that tree and no definitive answer has been reached, even though men and women of every level of intellect have joined on the pursuit. The fact is that the kind of fruit does not matter one whit. The fruit was evidently good for food, pleasing to the eyes and to be desired to make one wise (3:6). Man's experimental act toward that fruit is what matters. He was commanded not to eat it. In the act of eating, he would acquire the knowledge of good and evil and the result of that knowledge would be death. Mentally, Adam had a natural knowledge of good and evil when the command was issued. Good would be to obey, evil would be to disobey. Upon eating He would experience the knowledge in that he began to die and experienced the fear of death, which is the judgment that follows.

In this command is a subtle hint concerning the sure anticipation of Adam's disobedience. The phrase "in the day" has several definitions in the original language. It is interpreted in the scripture as day, time, while, always, daily, and continually. These definitions do not seem to fit the flow of the sentence. There is one interpretation that is used in scripture 10 times, that fits the sentence structure. It is the word, "when." That word is an anticipation of an event or a record of an event in time. When weighed in the preponderance of scripture that declares God's sovereignty in and over all things and the fact that in God's eternal economy, Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, revealing that death existed ere it was first mentioned in this text, the word "when" clearly shows that the fall of Adam was anticipated. Since God does not anticipate that which does not come to pass, the man will surely fall.

The law was given, and death ensued. These are inextricably united throughout the Word of God. Long before Sinai the means for sin and guilt and death were established. There must be a law for sin to be imputed (example-stalking-Rom. 4:15; 5:13). Note well, that the command does not say “if you don’t eat you will live”, Adam is already living and there was no possibility of disobedience or death unless there was a law to be transgressed. The law does not have to do with life, it has to do with death. The law has nothing to do with you at all until you break it (speed limit) [See 1 Tim. 1:9-10– why, then was the law given to Adam]. When Paul asked, “what then serveth the Law” in his epistle to the Galatians, He said it “was added because of the transgression.” In Romans 5 he said, “the law entered that sin might abound” (See 7:12-13). He said to the Colossians, describing the law. “The ordinances that was against us, contrary to us.” He said to the Galatians, “if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” This command set the course for the coming and dying of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has “redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.”

Read text, then Romans 8:1:1-4.

# A HELP MEET

## Genesis 2:18-20

18, And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; will make him an help meet for him.

19, And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20, And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

This episode takes place on the sixth day of creation when the Lord God created mankind, “male and female created He them.” In this chapter, God graciously reveals the particulars of that creation as it relates to the needs of the human creature. This is another first in the history of creation because the scripture relates that there is a negative. “The LORD God says that it is not good that man is alone.” This negative was turned to a positive with the creation of the woman because in the end God called His creation good and very good. The way God describes the necessity of the creation of the woman is set forth in language that we can grasp. Among the remainder of creation, especially as it relates to the animal kingdom, there was not a creature that could be a help that was meet or suitable for Adam, thus He was alone, and this suggests that he was lonely. This being the case God made the woman (Eve) to remedy that situation so man would not be alone.

I want us to consider vv. 18 –20 addressing two things in this lesson; man alone and the help meet for him.

First it is stated that it was not good that the man (Adam) was alone. He was not alone in the sense that there was nothing around that he could not enjoy. He had dominion of the animals and since sin had not yet entered the world, he certainly would have been able to enjoy the animals. Even to this day, in a world of sin, men enjoy their animal friends. They serve man in many ways and are given and receive affection from them. Because of sin, and the mind that it warped, there is a great deal of “inordinate affection” toward beasts but that is “a whole ‘nuther story.” Before sin, Adam gave the creatures their names and this suggests a kind of harmony in creation. He was not alone in that sense. He was alone in the sense that the beasts were male and female, and they were a kind of a mirror image of each other, alike but different, made to complement one another. There was no such creature for Adam. The main reason that Adam was alone was that of communication. The beasts had the breath of life— *ruach*—possessed by all living creatures, but they did not have what was exclusive to mankind— *neshamah*—the breath of life that is the ability to communicate in words and symbols. Adam was alone because he had no one, like him, with whom he could communicate linguistically and get a response in words. Words are the way God communicates and sets forth the concept of faith and not sight. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. The incarnation of Christ was the divine communication from God. Christ is said to be the Word. God has given His elect faith and that faith resides entirely in what God has said in the divine canon, the Holy Scriptures. In days to come Adam will leave Eden and teach his offspring of substitution and how the only way a sinner can approach God, a blood sacrifice. He must have someone with whom to communicate with words. To not be able to communicate is the epitome of being alone. It was not good for Adam to be alone.

Secondly, the LORD God remedied this by creating from Adam, a help meet for him. The general meaning of these two words is someone who is to help Adam, who is suitable for him

and will end his being alone. The reason I emphasize that the description of the woman as two words is because somewhere along the line the words were combined, and the meaning was altered. The words were combined in the 17th century and changed what was glorious to what one author called an "etymological monstrosity." The singular word "helpmeet" means little more than assistant, which suggests a subservient role. I cannot help but think that the combination of these two words into one was the invention of religion to abuse the concept of submission to aver that man is superior to woman. The word *help* is commonly understood, but in the Hebrew can translate to partner, companion, counterpart or complement. These suggest a fulfillment of that which was lacking.

The word "meet" is more complex but is very necessary to understand. The root word in the original language means, like him, of him or his. Many balk at the concept of a man possessing a woman or a woman possessing a man, but the language of love is ever, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." The covenant of marriage between Christ and His church is "Thou becamest mine." A suitable helper is his and he is hers. The meaning of the word "help" in the verb form means to come "face to face" and is used in the sense of coming face to face to tell something, to communicate. Now Christ communicates with us through the preached Word. Some day we will see Him face to face. The noun form of the word means to see your opposite, your other half and in a sense your mirror image but with differences that make you suitable companions (2 Cor. 3:18). The believer is conformed to the image of Christ. Eve was not a tack-on but was rather what made man to be mankind. She made a single human into the human race with the possibility of producing seed after his own kind (Is. 53:10).

Thus, we have the picture of Christ and His church beginning to be illuminated. Christ, being the LORD God has need of nothing. The triune Godhead was sufficient within



Himself. However, the church was predestinated in the purpose of God for the glory of His grace to be the bride of Christ. He is her head, and she is His body, and the church is no monstrosity. She is not a body without the head, and He is not a head without a body (Eph. 1:29). She was chosen, in Christ before the foundation of the world. She is called His fullness, the fullness of Him that filleth all. She was the object of His mission of salvation. One cannot even say His name and title without including the church. He is the Lord, Lord over all, the absolute authority over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as God has given Him (the church). He is Jesus and that name assures that He shall save His people (the church) from their sins. He is Christ, the Christ, the anointed for the task of saving His people (the church). It is impossible to separate Christ from His work, it is therefore impossible to separate Christ from His church. He says of her what Adam said of Eve. She is “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.”

It was not good that man was alone. Without Eve, he was human, with Eve, he was humanity. So, the LORD God made him a help, meet for him.

# WOMAN

## Genesis 2:21-25

21, And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22, And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23, And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24, Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25, And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

This passage is the account of the creation of the companion for Adam, the creation of woman, which means “from man.” The account is a wonder and has been the source of many a volume of literature. If you read Greek philosophy, you find that the creation of woman was the downfall of man, and the woman is the flesh that hinders the spirit of man. Their idea of spirit and flesh had to do with higher planes of thought, elitism, and that man could attain a state of divinity and create a utopian society only hindered by the presence of women in the world. Many cults separate men from women, husbands from wives because the concept of marital love is a challenge to the leadership. Often the leaders take all the women as their property. Some religions have asserted that the making of the woman brought about sexual congress and that act was the original sin in the

garden and so sex was ruled out and the natural course was that over time the religion disappeared altogether. But here in the divine canon is the history of the beginning of humanity and it is beautiful in its simplicity. Man was alone and God saw that it was not good. It was God who saw that it was not good. Adam, though he saw that the beasts had mates did not ask God for a mate. This was the act of God for the benefit of the crown of his creation.

This is another first. This is the first surgical operation performed upon someone in an extremely deep state of anesthesia, accomplished by the great physician. Adam, as one man said, was placed in a coma...a deep sleep. As Adam slept, the Lord opened his flesh and removed a rib from him and with the rib and the flesh thereof He created the companion for the man, his mirror opposite and the man was no longer alone. Man was now able to produce seed after his own kind and the Lord told them to multiply and replenish the earth. This all took place on the sixth day of creation between the evening and the morning of that day. Adam was not alone for a long time. Eve was likewise made in the image of God (1:27). The illumination of the creation of woman from the side of man was always the intent of God. The incorporation of the concept of Adam being alone was for our benefit that concept of mating and breeding would differ from that of beast, and the concept of husband and wife would define that distinction. Thus, we have here the first mention of the word wife and that of marital union. This is the record of the first Adam and the creation of his wife, and it is about the last Adam and the new creation of his bride.

From the rib of the man the Lord made (“builded”) the woman. It has been said that the Lord took woman from the side of man, not from his head that she might rule over him, or from his foot that he might trample upon her, but from his side that she might be equal with him and under his harm that he might be her protector and near his heart that he might love her. These are all good thoughts and worthy of note and are

employed to assuage the abuse of the principle of submission and authority in the marital relationship. The scripture simply states that she was made a helper that was meet or suitable for him because it was not meant of his to be alone (v. 22). In this verse we have a picture of how the bride of Christ comes to Him. The Lord “brought” the woman to the man (John 6:44).

When the Lord brought Eve to Adam, the connection and relationship was instantaneous. The words of Adam are words of love and recognition that they were one being made up of two people, neither whole without the other (Eph. 1:22-23). Adam said that Eve was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh (Eph 5:30-31). She was called Woman (*Isba*) because she was taken out of man (*Isb*), their identities forever united, each contingent upon the other. Regardless of geopolitical psychopathy, that infallibly *inspired* truth remains.

In verse 24 we are introduced to another first. Before a mother and father exist, the future is set in inspired writ. Because the woman was created from man, he shall therefore leave his father and mother and cleave (cling to, stay with) his wife (first time word).

Verse 25 ends this illumination of the creation of mankind with the words that describes a world where sin has not intruded with its insidious presence. Adam and Eve were naked and were not ashamed. This simply means that they had nothing to hide and nothing to be ashamed of.

As we know this all has to do with Christ and His bride, the new creation. So we have the first Adam and the last Adam. We have two men who are in a deep sleep, one in an anesthetic coma, and the other in the deep sleep of death. We have two men with riven sides. From one a rib is taken, from the other flows water and blood. From the riven side of one, his wife is created, from the riven side of the other, His bride is created anew. Because of this, the man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, they shall be one flesh. Christ left His father’s house to create His bride and cling to her eternally,

promising to never leave her or forsake her. The result of that creation and new creation the bride and groom are naked (disclosed and pure before the light of God's holiness). And they are not ashamed (Heb. 2:11; Romans 9:33). They both are the image of God (Romans 8:29; Coll. 1:15). This is the story of this passage. Read Eph. 5:25-32.

# THE SERPENT

## Genesis 3:1

1, Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

In this verse we are introduced to a new character in the history of the creation of humanity in the world that God had made. He or it is the serpent. The word “serpent” is interpreted in many ways in the word of God. It can range from a hippopotamus, a whale, a crocodile, and a snake to a viper, and is used most commonly as an allusion to Satan or the Devil. The word comes from a root word meaning enchanter, diligent observer, diviner or one that learns by experience. The word is used to describe evil, religious evil as when the Lord called the Pharisees “vipers.” It may even have a good application as when the Lord directed His people to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” Generally, however, the word is used in the sense in which Satan operated in the enticement and temptation of Eve. It is held by most that he was the fallen Angel, Lucifer, and his deception and his work is not in the bars, bordellos, crack houses but his realm of influence is in the halls of religion. In those vaunted halls, he seduces men and women to believe that they can, by their works and will rise above their natural estate and ascend to the realm of deity. Exactly in what form he appeared to Eve is not known, though it is suggested by the punishment he received, to crawl on his belly, that he probably walked upright when speaking with Eve. He deceived Eve by enticement and enticement finds no purchase unless that there is something intrinsic to the individual that is amenable to the enticement. The old adage of the flimflam man is “you can’t

cheat an honest man.” Eve, though innocent, was mutable and within that mutability was a susceptibility to seduction and evidently a desire to have what the seducer promised. Innocence is not holiness. It is simply a state of not being exposed to evil or having not been given the opportunity to respond to it.

This verse asserts that the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field that the LORD God had made. The wording may suggest that the serpent was part of the creation of the heaven and the earth, but it all asserts that the beasts of the field which the Lord had made did not possess the subtlety of the created being. The preponderance of scripture is that the creation of the angels preceded the creation of the heavens and the earth. Thus, also suggests that many of the beasts of the field were subtle but none could rise to the subtlety of this serpent. In several translations, the indicative adjective “that” is attached to the word “serpent” in this verse, rendering him as “that serpent”; distinguishing him from all other serpents. This effectively separates the serpent here from all others. He is said to be subtle, very subtle; more subtle (shrewd, crafty, sly). He was a shrewd, crafty, and sly enchanter and seducer, obviously more subtle than Eve. This was a shrewd seduction, which eventuated in the fall of humankind into the depths of sin; ruin and depravity, a course that continues today and will till the LORD God comes again to end it once and for all. The tragedy would be unbearable were it not for the fact that the remedy was in place before this calamity ensued. It was in place in the person of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. None of this, even the presence of the serpent in the garden, falls outside the parameters of the sovereign will and purpose of the LORD God. This subtlety of Satan enticed the innocent woman. How much easier will he find to seduce us guilty creatures unless the God who created the serpent intervenes in our stead. Thank God for His saving grace.

The conversation that is recorded is very interesting. The word “yea” suggests that this was not the beginning of the

conversation, The word “yea” means “also, because, moreover or therefore.” It is a word that indicates and addition to what has been said previously. We are not privy to what preceded this part of the conversation, but we do know that it was what led up to this statement. What we do know that it was a seduction. Perhaps Eve and the serpent had spoken before. One of the meanings of the word “serpent” is diligent observer. He knew how to approach Eve perhaps because he had been diligently watching her and observe something about her that became his target of approach. Maybe he saw a trait of curiosity and approached her as a friend who possessed knowledge and understanding. Remember that his emissaries are false prophets who appear as “angels of light and ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:3, 13-15). Paul’s concern was that believers would be beguiled, and their minds would be corrupted from the simplicity (singularity) of Christ. There was simplicity in the garden. One prohibition only and it was there, in that singularity, that the serpent seduced and enticed Eve. The Gospel declares one way, one truth, one life and Satan is ever about the business of saying that there is more, there has to be more. Your will, your works, your righteousness, your obedience, or your decision must be considered in your salvation. Thus, he corrupts minds from the simplicity that is in Christ, spouting scripture for his seduction. Mark well that using scripture to justify your disobedience puts you in league with the Devil. So, here in the garden, the serpent quotes God in his seduction. “Didn’t God say that you could eat of every tree in the garden” Yes, God had said that (v. 16), but that is not all He said (v.17). Shakespeare said, “The devil can quote scripture for His purpose.” The serpent, as it were, quoted scripture, a half-truth, which is a lie. He used scripture when he sought to tempt the Lord in the wilderness and be not deceived, he will thump the Bible hard, to deceive you.

Immediately revealed is the realm of the serpent’s operation. It is religion, it is theology, and it is a philosophical approach



that convinces men and women that they have a reasonable and obligatory right and wherewithal to question God. His design is to make men and women believe that they have a moral obligation to set their mind against the mind of God as revealed in the word of God. Satan's successes are professing believers who can hear any portion of scripture and say, "I don't believe that" or "God is not like that" or "that God is not my God." They deny God while not denying God. Their mind has been corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Read text. This is the beginning of our ruin.

# SATAN'S SCHEME

## Genesis 3 1-6

1, Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2, And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3, But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4, And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5, For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6, And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Last time we looked at the serpent, Satan, and the conversation by which he began to bring the seduction of Eve to its culmination. He is a religious being and operates in that realm, seducing women, and men to look to themselves rather than to obey God. The single prohibition in the Garden was that, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they were not to eat of it upon pain of death. That tree was not evil, it was part of the

good creation and it bore good fruit. The restriction upon eating its fruit was for two reasons. First it was restricted in anticipation of the sure fall of mutable mankind. The fall was not an accident, or something that God was suddenly forced to respond or react to. He had, before anything was created or made, already chosen an innumerable company of people to save from sin, which at the time of this record, had yet to be committed. The Lamb that would accomplish this salvation was already enthroned, having been slain and by His death redeemed those God had given Him before the world began (Ecc. 3:15). Secondly the restriction, the law of Eden, was made to ensure that Adam would know that he was the creature and was responsible to obey his creator. The punishment for disobedience was death and thus the enemy of man, death, was introduced into human history. Death is the product of and the penalty for sin. Most of science and philosophy denies this fall, this sin and thus denies the sinful nature of humanity. The evolutionist holds that man came from the primordial ooze and continues to improve. The philosopher and scientist hold that if a proper environment can be established, through education, conservation and, of late, somehow controlling the climate that the world and its inhabitants would rise to new heights of excellence. This is a denial of sin. Man did not begin at the bottom of cellular existence, nor can he be educated or environmentally conditioned to improve. Man was the crown of creation. He started at the top and he fell and since that moment it's been a downhill run to oblivion and chaos. Nothing, nothing of man will improve man and we have but to look around us to know that this world is under the curse of sin. Why do people die...because sin is in the world (Romans 5:12).

Before us, in this text, is the beginning of it. It's important to note that sin did not enter the world by Eve though she surely disobeyed God. She did not fall when she disobeyed; she fell when Adam disobeyed. She was deceived; Adam was not. But the avenue by which Adam plunged the world into ruin and

brought it under the curse was his reaction to Eve and his action against God. She is not held accountable for man's sin and this because centuries later the Savior will be born of the seed of woman, without the taint of the first man by whom sin entered the world.

Satan's approach has not changed. His approach is to the woman, which is a picture, a type of the realm in which he employs his tactics, the church, the bride of Christ. What would benefit him to do his evil against those who would not be saved? The church, the pulpit, the congregation, the elect, the woman married to Christ is his target, in futile hope of diminishing the record of the success of the Savior. He will have his small successes in schisms and divisions like that which occurred at Antioch with Peter and Barnabas or sifting Peter to deny his Lord. But he will fail because the Savior has bruised his head, and in his demonic dementia, he pursues a goal that will never be realized.

He approaches men in the exact opposite of the way God approaches men. The Serpent works (As A W Pink said) from the outside in, whereas God works from the inside out. Satan appeals to the senses and the sensibilities of men. He approaches man's high esteem of their own intellect, nudging their human reason and self-interest. Once the proposition was set forth that God had said they could eat of *every* tree in the garden, Eve bought into the conversation. She added to God's words and softened the punishment that attended the disobedience (v. 3), "neither shall ye touch it"— "lest (peradventure) ye die," rather than "*surely* ye will die." Satan jumped on that vacillation. and simply denied the threat of God saying, "you won't die." He then explains to Eve why she will not die with the word "for" or "because." With the explanation that followed he successfully insinuated that God was holding back something good from Eve. He said God knew that if you eat the fruit, you will be greater, better, brighter. His approach was self-help. Your eyes will be opened, said the Serpent. He spoke of "open" eyes in the

sense of increased knowledge and greater understanding. The incentive proffered was that Eve could know what God knows and, in that sense, will be like God (v. 4). This is irresistible to human nature, even innocent nature.

The hook now firmly planted in the mouth of Eve. Her response to the serpent's seduction is founded upon carnal, natural human logic and is the revelation of the scheme of Satan (v. 5). First, she saw that the tree was good for food...she saw. The enticement was first to sight, which is the opposite of faith, of belief. The senses that attend the human being are the first avenue of Satan's approach. Covetousness is called idolatry because at its heart is the dismissal of faith. One covets what he sees but does not possess. She assessed that the fruit was "pleasant to the eyes." This spoke to the human pursuit of pleasing the flesh, the desires of the mind, things attributed to the soul. The fruit that Satan dangles before the church is the luscious, flesh pleasing fruit of human merit, the rotten fruit of self-righteousness called, in scripture called "Fruit unto death." Thirdly, she was persuaded that the tree was desired to make one wise. This appealed to her intellect, her power of reason to decide for herself what would result in the exaltation and betterment of herself. The intellect is what is called, in scripture the spirit of man (1 Cor. 2:11). From without Satan reached the woman and ruin her inward self. God begins in the inward man the results is that He changes the outward self. How did the Satan seek to tempt our Lord in the wilderness? First, he appealed to our Lord bodily senses "make these stone to be bread." Then he said, "Cast thyself down" appealing to the idea of courage, trying to seduce the Lord on His emotions, the nature of His soul. Thirdly, Satan said, "fall down and worship me" seeking to appeal to the Lord's spirit. This is the scheme of Satan and his assault on the church.

V.6. He succeeded with Eve but utterly failed with Christ. "She took of the fruit and did eat." Human logic, when applied to truth, to the word of God, will always fail. His thoughts are

not our thoughts. But apart from grace and mercy, sovereignly applied' the appeal to our nature and the application of our esteemed logic will be the mode of our operation. What follows is that Eve gave the fruit to her husband, and without any seduction, any approach by the serpent, any wiles of the Devil, it is summarily and succinctly reported, "and he did eat." This will be our next lesson...The Fall.

# THE FALL

## Genesis 3:6-7

6, And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7, And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Before us in this short passage of Holy Writ is the true and infallible account, the genuine report of the origination of the plague of humanity. Here sin enters the world; here paradise is stained, and soon the stain will be put out of paradise because it has no right nor warrant to be there. A short four-word phrase has brought down a curse on the magnificent universe and it will not be repaired but in the end must be destroyed. The damage that ensued upon the account of these four words could not be contained in a million-volume library of criminology. The record is this, "and he did eat." You and I can never begin to grasp what we, by nature, are in the sight of God unless we know and understand what happened here, in this garden, at this moment in time. The perpetrator of this crime was our federal head, our representative before the thrice-holy God, the God whose eyes are too pure to behold evil. This is Adam, the first man and all humanity is in him, in his loins ready to spring forth in a world that his acts have ruined. Tomes have been written about this episode and the depths of it have never been plumbed. The scene has been played out in artists renderings, in epic poetry, and what took place here has become proverbial in the world's

languages. Even in the law books of this land certain evidence is called the fruit of the poisonous tree. The tree was not poisonous; the act was poisonous.

Adam's act was deliberate and overt. He was not deceived as was his wife; there is no evidence that the serpent spoke to him, though the question has often been raised as to where Adam was during Eve's deception. I think that question was raised by those who think that this entire episode might have been avoided had Adam been there. No, grace and mercy are attributes yet to be exercised and there must be a sinner for those graces to be administered. There is no indication that Adam was not present during Eve's deception and since it is not recorded, it really doesn't matter in the grand scheme.

The question that often arises is why Adam took the fruit and did eat. In Romans 5 it is said that Adam was "a figure of Him that was to come", referring to Christ, the last Adam. That great chapter has to do with representative imputation (Rom. 5:18). Some have said this means that Adam was a type of Christ, and this act of Adam was an act of love, love for Eve. Since she had sinned, he willingly did the same willing to be a sinner rather than cause a difference between him and his wife or to be like his wife. To a degree the type does apply. Christ's bride was a sinner, even as Hosea was told to go and take "a wife of whoredoms" and because Christ loved His bride eternally, he was willingly made sin for her that she might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Without discounting that possibility, there are other things at play.

Eve did not exhibit shame until Adam ate of the fruit. Since Eve did not fall when she disobeyed God, could Adam have noted a change in her that did not yet exist? And she did not die. Did this give Adam pause to doubt the word of God? What is said in 2:25 evident still held true until Adam took the fruit and did eat. Only after he did eat, were they both aware of their nakedness and were ashamed. This indicates that Adam acted with a willful understanding that he was disobeying God. All sin



is willful and if love is involved it is love for self. Sin and self are synonymous. Though Adam would later blame Eve for his sin, his play at victim didn't work, and in that instance, he certainly didn't claim to do it out of love. "And he did eat."

The fall is briefly described with the description of two things. First when Adam did eat, "the eyes of them both were opened." To what were their eyes opened? Their eyes were opened "to know good and evil" (v.5). Note that the language assures us that prior to Adam eating the fruit, When Eve ate the fruit her eyes were not opened, Her eyes were opened along with Adam's when he ate the fruit. Sin entered the world and entered Eve when Adam willfully disobeyed God. Eve fell when Adam fell. Secondly, the concept of shame entered the world when Adam did eat. The knowledge of good and evil was the knowledge that they were naked, exposed, and disclosed. How could they know unless somehow they were accused? The knowledge of good and evil brought into existence a new thing...the conscience. Though it was not called the conscience in the Old Testament, that is because there was no remedy for the conscience under the old covenant. They knew they were naked, because the conscience always accuses and calls for a covering or a self-justification. Accord to the word of God in the epistle to the Romans, The Lord wrote that there was a law within all men, "their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts, the mean while accusing or excusing one another." This is the definition of Adam and Eve when confronted with their evil excused themselves and accused the other. Their nakedness had little to do with absence of garments and everything to do with the newfound banshee wailing in their bosoms. Shakespeare said, "conscience make cowards of us all." Polybius said, "There is no witness so dreadful, no accuser so terrible as the conscience that dwells in the heart of man." Paul, I think, refers to this in Romans 7 as "the law of sin and death in his bosom that when he would do good, evil is with him." Conscience accuses us and we know we are exposed, our

nakedness disclosed but conscience will never make us cry for mercy, it will only cause us to try to cover or justify our sin. The Holy Spirit will never convict the conscience of a man. He will only convict men concerning Christ. The only cure for conscience, is the death of Christ, whereby the conscience has no grounds to accuse because the believer's sins have been put away and remembered no more (Hebrews 10:1-2; 12-14).

## COVERING, HIDING

### Genesis 3:7-8

7, And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8, And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Sin has entered the world, as our natural father, or federal head and representative has disobeyed God and plunged all that proceed from his loins into utter depravity and ruin. Death has followed and that death was first natural death, revealed in the chief cause of death among humanity, fear and stress. These things begin to shut down the uncomely, but important elements of the body, and the merry heart that maketh like good medicine becomes the troubled, diseased, and wicked heart that makes for all manner of terminal maladies that result in death. There was also spiritual death. This does not mean that Adam was, before this sin, spiritually alive and then died at the point of disobedience. The spiritual death he acquired was the inability to grasp that what he did had spiritual consequences, namely any possibility of a relationship with God that was not adversarial. Adam became an enemy of God; his heart was at enmity with God, and he no longer wanted anything to do with God. Spirituality was outside the realm of his ability to discern. He was a natural man, a carnal man that could not discern the things of the Spirit because they were foolishness to him. He has gone from innocence and happiness to a state of guilt, shame, and despair. Innocence is not righteousness. In truth innocence

is the breeding ground and playground of all manner of temptation to evil. Having no experience of evil, it carries no more weight that good for the innocent. Thus, a restriction, a law may well prove more provocative to disobedience than obedience (Rom. 7:5, 8).

In these two verses we see the carnal bent of sinful man to deal with the accusation of his newly acquired conscience. He and his wife's eyes have been open and that which has been good has become evil to them. They were naked (exposed and disclosed) and they were ashamed and afraid. What must that have been like, to experience the darkness that can be felt, to realize in the mind, in the innermost being that suddenly a pall was hanging over all that had been delightful and good, to suddenly feel a necessity to cover up yourself. This is the record before us. When the knowledge of good and evil entered the heart of men, they acted in the way that is intrinsic to all carnal humanity to, by the works of their hands, cover their sin. They took leaves from a cursed but living tree, plucked them, which killed them, made a covering of that which would soon fade away, dry up and would need to be replaced continually. Was this in the mind of Isaiah, when considering his own righteousness, said, "We do all fade as a leaf and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away"? Adam's act of rebellion was an act of self-righteousness. All self-righteousness begins with the singular act of unbelief and all unbelief is refusing to believe Word of God. Unbelief believes that one's own word is more valuable than the Word of God. Unbelief believes that one must cover his own sin to be righteous. This fig leaf apron or girdle was a display of human merit and note well that it was a visible, recordable display, not for the eyes of God but for the eyes of the carnal pair. (V.8; Matt. 23:5).

As a dead leaf is bound to fade, so goes the carnal doings to achieve human merit. When the voice of God is introduced into the mix, the conscience cries, it is not enough! Hide, lest you be found out! "They heard the voice of the Lord walking in the

Garden in the cool of the day.” The first thing to note is that they heard the voice of the LORD God. What is it to hear the voice of the Lord? The Lord said that His sheep hear His voice. His voice is the preaching of the Gospel? And though the end result is that they will follow Him and receive eternal life, that is not always the initial response of the elect to the Gospel. Saul of Tarsus first heard the Gospel from Stephen, as he held the coats of those who stoned to death the first martyr for the cause of Christ. His response was to make his career the destruction and elimination of all who followed Christ. The demoniac of Gadara, when hearing of Christ ran and hid because of fear and shame and embarrassment to be in the presence of the Lord. The voice of the Lord never returns to Him void. The LORD God is Christ. This is His voice as he walks in the Garden. We know this because the next phrase is a revelation. “In the cool of the day” is an interesting phrase. If you notice, the marginal reading is “wind.” This is the meaning of the word in the original. “The cool of the day” refers to the approach of the evening when the change of temperature is often attended by the stirrings of a gentle breeze. But the wind is often applied to the Holy Spirit in the preaching of the Gospel and the new birth (John 3:7-8; Acts 2:1-4). Take the Word of the LORD God and add to it the work of the Spirit of God and you have the destruction, the fading of the fig-leaf apron of self-righteousness (Isaiah 40:6-8; 1 Peter 1:23-25).

As the works of their hands proves no covering at all, the Word of the LORD God attended by the Spirit of God having blown upon it, the fear of true discovery and full disclosure grips the soul in fear and terror. How many times have men and women heard the Gospel and it has driven them away to hide from the assembly of the saints? They hide thinking they can avoid God but the light hath shined and the darkness will not hide them (Eph. 5:13; Heb 4:12-13). “Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God.” The meaning of the word presence is “face.” They hid themselves from the face

of God. They could not face God (2 Corinthians 4:3-6). They hid themselves among the trees of the garden, but the trees are no hiding place. Nothing of this cursed earth affords a place to hide (PS. 29:4-5). The only place to hide from God is to hide in God (Ps. 32:7, 119:114; Isaiah 23:2).

# THE LORD CALLED

## Genesis 3:9

9, And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

In the passage we find Adam and Eve hiding from the Lord. They had transgressed the Law of Eden and gained an accusing conscience in their bosom. Their newly acquired accuser had caused them to be ashamed and has directed them to make an outward covering to hide their inward heart of sin (See:1-3). But when they heard the voice of the Lord in the evening breeze (picturing the preaching of the gospel with the Holy Ghost come down from heaven), they saw the insufficiency of the covering made with the work of their hands and hid from the Lord God and the truth concerning their sin. Their fig leaf apron, symbolic of personal merit and self-righteousness, faded as a leaf when the Spirit blew upon it, and their immediate reaction to the voice of the LORD God was fear and trembling. The making of that apron, to Adam, was a righteous act. Being, myself, a legalist in recovery, I remember well those many efforts in religion to cover my sin, undo my plight, and inwardly I believed that I was doing it for God, fixing my problem rather than crying for mercy. It is the lie of self-righteousness, but it fit to assuage my guilt until I heard the Gospel and found that I was yet naked and exposed for what I am. This knowledge often caused me to absent the church and hide from God. But praise His name, He seeks for His sheep until He finds Him. This is why we preach the Gospel because, at the appointed time, the sheep will hear His voice and follow Him. This is the beginning of that scenario set forth in this passage.

(v.9) The first thing to note is that the LORD God called. It was the LORD God who called out to Adam. Adam did not seek God. He was hiding in the bushes. He wanted nothing to do with God and so it is when the LORD God begins to act toward His elect. It is the LORD God who called (Jehovah Elohim) the name our God began to use when he began to interact with His creation. In creation He was named Elohim, the all-powerful, self-sufficient creator, but when He began to interact with His creation, especially as it related to the making of Adam, the name Jehovah was added noting a personal dialogue and relationship with the creature He had formed of the dust. In this capacity we see the first representation of Christ as the Savior (Matt. 1:21). The Lord God called. According to scripture, those whom God had predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, He also called. His call, though seemingly an inquiry, was in fact a confrontation. The words He spoke are recorded as "Where art thou." In the original it is one word, "Whence." This word adds more depth and color to the call and aligns perfectly with Adam's response. The word "whence" does not mean "where" but "from where" or "from what origin or source." The call could well read, "what was the cause for you hiding in the bushes" or "what brings you from bliss to shame." One writer interpreted this word, "alas for thee." Another interpreted this call as "into what miserable plight hast thou brought thyself." This call was a confrontation for Adam to own up to his transgression that brought him from innocent to sinful. This call was also a revelation of mercy. The Lord did not kill Adam immediately, nor cast him into hell.

Adam's response in verse 10 reveals that he understood what the LORD God meant when He called. If the call were, "Where", Adam would have said "I'm here in the trees." But his answer proved that he understood what the call required (Read v. 10). First Adam says that He heard the Lord's voice in the garden. This is the grand disclosure. No man knows anything of sin or that sin is even sin, until he hears the voice of the Lord



(His preached word...Isaiah 45:21). The voice of the Lord immediately revealed to Adam that his fig leaf apron was vanity and that he was naked (exposed as a sinner). Note the words of Adam, "I was afraid because I was naked." Darkness had descended on Adam, and made his innocence turn to guilt and shame (Acts 2:37). Because he was ashamed and afraid, he hid. He covered from the LORD God.

The LORD God's response to Adam's confession was a further requirement to address the cause from whence he had come. The LORD asks, "who told you that you were naked?" Here, the LORD God personifies the Law but does not blame the Law. He blames the sin on the sinner. Paul said that the law is good and holy, but he was carnal, sold under sin. "Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat"? In effect, Adam told himself when conscience began to accuse. This is proven by his actions and attitude after he had sinned; he covered himself, was afraid, ran and hid.

Adam's response to this call of God, this call of conviction, this call to admit unbelief is the flipside of the coin of self-righteousness, which is self-justification, or justification of sin. Here is the source of the rampant concept of victimization that permeates society to this day. "It's not my fault" is the psychobabble of the guilty, sinful mind. It has created the pseudo-apology that supposedly absolves men and women and keeps them from admitting guilt. Folks don't say "I did it, I'm sorry." They rather say, "If I offended someone, I apologize." The "If" negates responsibility and blames the offended for misunderstanding what was actually meant. It all began right here as an excuse or justification for sin. Adam blamed two people for his sin. He blamed God and he blamed Eve. "The woman whom thou gavest me. It's not my fault. I would have not sinned, if you had not given me this woman. He blames God for his sin, shifting blame from himself.

Eve's response to The Lord confronting her in verse 13 is the same sin-justifying, self-justifying babble. She blamed God for making the serpent who tricked her. It's not my fault. Religion ever blames the box or the bottle or the internet, society, mom and dad or the devil as mitigating factor in sin. No! Sin is the personal act of the person who sinned and nothing else. It is born of a sinful heart, a rebellion against God and the innate something that responds to temptation (James 1:13- 15). The believer confesses that it's his fault, his doing and never points the finger at someone else (David and Nathan).

It is interesting that the serpent was the only one of the three that did not blame God. He kept his mouth shut, as he knew he must. He had tempted Eve and he didn't deny it. He unwittingly was a pawn, in the glorious plan and purpose of salvation. God didn't kill Adam; He called him. And God revealed this great plan in the words that follow. (v. 14; Isaiah 65:25; Gen. 2:7; 1 Peter 5:8).

Then, the plan is revealed in v. 15. This is called the proto-evangelium, the first promise of the coming Savior. He will come not from the seed of Adam, by and through whom sin is imputed, but from the seed of woman, by and through whom sin was not imputed. Was Eve a sinner? Of course, she was. But sin was not imputed through her, but through Adam (Romans 5:12, 17-18; 1 Cor. 15:22; Gal. 4:4-5). So, the seed of woman was not tainted by Adam's sin, Christ was the seed of God, the Son of God, Immanuel, God with us, the impeccable sacrifice that bruised the serpent's head and saved the elect.

## HIS SEED, HER SEED

### Genesis 3:15

15, And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

When The Lord created the heavens and the earth, He did so in a manner that would make it continue for the time He had allotted for its existence. He assures its continuance and proliferation by creating all flora and fauna and finally humanity to reproduce seed after its own kind. This concept permeates scripture and is of paramount importance because it is essential to the Gospel. Abraham was counted righteous because he believed God concerning the promised seed. According to Galatians, that seed was Christ. The seed was to be protected. If a man was purposely injured in his groin, the punishment for injuring the man thusly was severe because he might not be able to produce seed. Tamar played the harlot with Judah and got pregnant because he did not respect the law of the firstborn concerning the seed and Judah declared her more righteous than he because she had respect for the seed. The hope of every woman in Israel was to bear children. Being barren was considered a curse from God because of the promise of our text that the seed of the woman would be the Messiah and undo the curse that Adam had brought upon his seed. When the Messiah hung on the cross, bruising the serpent's head, Isaiah declares that he saw His seed and the Lord prolonged His days and all for whom He travailed were born of God, born of incorruptible seed and He was satisfied with the product of His travail. The doctrine that encompasses the concept of "seed after its own kind", of the seed of the firstborn, of those righteous because they believe God concerning the seed, embraces and declares the

doctrine of imputation. All in Adam (his seed) died with Him. All who are in Christ, His seed, live with him.

In our text, the LORD God addresses the serpent and curses him. He also promises that the serpent will fail and will be destroyed by the seed of the woman. The use of the word “seed” in reference to woman is important. Women do not have seeds, they have ovum. This term is applied to the woman to ensure that we know that Christ (the seed) of woman was not born of any son of Adam, through whom the imputation of sin occurred. Christ was born of the seed of the Father. He is the son of God, and He was not a son of Adam. He was born of the seed of woman, born under the Law to redeem them that are under the Law. Therefore, the sin of Adam was not imputed to Christ through birth, but was imputed to Christ, on the cross, in the voluntary, vicarious act of substitution for the elect. Since this is a promise of a future event (see text) the seed also addresses, and more descriptively, the offspring rather than the manner of conception. The imputation of Adam’s sin to his progeny is here identified as producing the serpent’s seed. The imputation of Christ’s righteousness to His progeny is here identified as the Christ, the seed of woman.

This then is the description of the elect and the non-elect, all naturally the offspring of Adam, some spiritually the offspring of Christ and His accomplished salvation. We know that the serpent is the Devil, the enchanter, seducer, accuser, the practitioner of divining. What we also know of him is that his realm of operation is that of religion. His mode of operation is to cause men and women to believe that they can reach the summit of divinity. One meaning of his name puts forth the idea of “learning by experience,” which involves doing and working toward the supposedly achievable goal; to rise to divine status. Satan accomplishes this by convincing men and women that works of righteousness, achieving and recording merit, building an acceptable righteousness will fit them for eternal glory (Rom. 10:1-4). This is his religion, and it is the singular

practice of all humanity since he seduced Eve to partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is the religion into which we were all born though it may travel under countless names. Only a work of divine sovereign grace can rip a person from the religion of the serpent. This was the description our Lord gave of the salvation of the elect, (casting out the devil) (Luke 11:20-23). The salvation of elect is the spoils of the seed of woman bruising the serpent's head.

The children of God are referred to in many ways in His Word. They are call the church, the sheep, the elect, the chosen, Christ's bride, those given to Christ by the Father, the brethren, friends of God, the redeemed and the saved, to name a few. They are God's offspring (born of His Spirit through the preaching of His Gospel of whom Christ is the firstborn (Rom. 8:29; James 1:18).

The rest of humanity are the children of Satan and they do not draw pentagrams on walls or sacrifice goats in the woods, or walk around chanting "Hail, prince of darkness." No, they gather on Saturdays and Sundays, singing hymns and having religious services, reading, and studying the Bible, witnessing, soul-winning and rejoicing in the hope that what they have done and what they do amounts to the salvation of their soul. They are possessed of Satan, naturally born into his religion, in his palace and at peace; believing they have found the formula to get to heaven and inherit a mansion, walk streets of gold, catch trout as big as Moby Dick, and grow watermelons as big as Volkswagens. If they have mastered the art of false humility, they will get a little cabin in the corner of glory. Satan's successes are versed in scripture, believe that they are set for heaven and will countenance no word that says otherwise (Isa. 28:14-19). Satan's successes are the progeny of their father, his seed (John 5:39- 40; 8:40-45; 9:39-41).

These are Satan's offspring, his seed, and her seed shall bruise his head, has bruised his head when he gave His life for the soul of His offspring (Heb. 2:14-15).

# CURSED

## Genesis 3:16

16, Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Before us in this verse and that which follows for Adam is the pronouncement of the curse placed upon mankind and the universe in which they abide. Adam has sinned and has plunged all his progeny into utter ruin. Humanity is doomed to be naturally born at enmity with God and abounding in sin. Because Eve fell when Adam sinned, being the other half of humanity, she also falls under the curse that has been relegated to all humanity. Of this curse there is no natural remedy so man in nature, as he is born into this world cannot, of himself, recover from it. Doomed, dead, damned, and dying is the description of all that are born of Adam, seed after his own kind. Of them there is none that seek after God, they are all gone astray, and they are altogether filthy. Note well that these curses placed on the woman fall fast on the heels of the wondrous promise of the redeemer, the seed of woman, who will bruise the serpents head and be wounded in his heel in the process. In effect, at least chronologically, before the curse is pronounced, the promise of the remedy is already in place. Before Adam sinned, there was already the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The LORD God first addresses the woman and pronounces the curse that she must endure. This verse has been abused throughout history by religion, even to the point of offering no help to women as they give birth. I recently read of a cult out west that gave the head woman in their organization

instructions to make childbirth the most miserable experience that was possible as if it was incumbent upon her to assure that this curse was fulfilled. This is nothing new among men. Sinful, carnal men and women often take it upon themselves that which only belongs to God, especially if it involves pain. This was a kind of torture, complete with rehearsing this verse, mocking and deriding the woman in labor to make her suffer all the more. They used this verse to bludgeon the woman. The misuse of this verse of scripture has been and is misused by many to disallow and dismiss women, seeking to assign blame to Eve for Adam's transgression (Adam did it from the start). Is this verse speaking of birth pains? Can any word in this curse be translated to mean travail or pains incurred by giving birth? Is this verse about the birth process at all? The answer is NO! Travail in scripture is both natural, physical, and typical. It would be virtually impossible for a woman's body to undergo the birth of a child without pain. I've been there, seen that, and it hurt me to see the pain that my wife endured to produce our children. Though my pain was sympathetic, her pain was real and palpable. Typically, and symbolically, the travail of a woman pictures the pain and anguish of our Lord on Calvary, when in agonies and blood, when his soul was made an offering for sin, it is said of that experience that, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many for he shall bear their iniquities." The curse laid upon Eve is not the pain of travail. If there is pain it is the emotional pain of sorrow. This sorrow is applied to conception. In a world that is half-way right in its mind the knowledge of pregnancy is a joyous occasion. What then is the sorrow that might attend conception? The sorrow that is assigned to conception is the knowledge that as sweet and as beautiful as the prospect of bringing a child into the world is, there is a two-fold sorrow that comes with it. First is the sorrow that you are giving birth to a dying thing, a little human with an exact number of heart beats, and a precise number of breaths and it is born to die.

Secondly, the child born is a sinner, worthy of death as a doomed son or daughter of Adam, without any possibility of salvation unless the LORD God visits that child in grace. This is real sorrow, and I can remember the prayer that issued from my lips when my children were born. "OH, Lord, save them for the glory of thy name's sake." All children are born to die, because this is the payment due God for sin and thus, even in this, we see the glory assigned to the seed of women, a child born and a son given ...to die, in the place of His people to redeem them from the curse of the Law. Also, part of that curse assigned to the woman is that her desire would be to her husband. This would hardly be considered a curse where love existed, but the actual reading of this is that the desire of the women would be subject to the husband's approval, or he was the deciding factor as to her desire's fulfillment. This is further revealed in the next phrase, "and he shall rule over thee" You can just feel the resistance of the flesh, can't you. There is scarcely a verse in scripture that has been more wrongly applied because men and women, err not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. This curse falls under the Old Covenant and those who seek to apply it in the realm of the Spirit, have and will abuse it till the end of time. Under the New Covenant, the eternal covenant of grace, the first thing realized is that Christ has redeemed us for the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. Secondly, these words to Eve, are revealed in an entirely different light, the Light of Christ, the Light of the liberty in which Christ Jesus that has made us free from the Law off sin and death. In the New Covenant, the entire relationship of husband and wife has to do with, is a picture of the relationship between Christ and His church wherein the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her and the wife is to be in submission to her husband as the church is in submission to Christ. And these are both voluntary acts because they are individual commands. The husband is not to make his wife obey her command, nor is the wife to make the husband obey his



command. They each stand before the Lord and obedience is due to Him as to what they have each individually have been commanded to do. They will do what they are admonished to do because the love of God has been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which was given them. For the believer, the commands of the Lord are not grievous. I John 5:3 says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

For the believing woman, the sorrow of the fact that she has given birth to a dying child is replaced with the hope that God will save them and though they will die physically, there is hope that they may live eternally by the sovereign grace of God. I can say without any hesitation that my wife and I were bursting with joy when our kids were born, but that joy is not to be compared to the effulgent happiness when your child tells you that the Lord has saved them. For the believing wife, her submission to her husband is actually a response to the knowledge of what Christ has done for His bride, of which she is a part. His rule over her is a banner of love, as he sees her without spot or blemish, his love covering a multitude of sin, her righteousness shining forth as the sun. “Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee.” (Neh. 13:2; Rev. 22:3).

# NATURE CURSED, REDEEMED

## Genesis 3:17-21

17, And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18, Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19, In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

20, And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

21, Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

As we saw last time, the curse allotted to Eve was the sorrow that attends the knowledge that that which proceeded from her womb was born to die. That curse pictured and declared the payment price for sin in the world but also held the doctrine of substitution. One who would be born, the seed of woman, even the Lord Jesus Christ, would be born to die and not for Himself but for His chosen race and in dying would pay the penalty that they were due and thus redeem them for the curse of the Law, being made a curse for them.

In the passage we will consider this hour, the LORD God places the curse upon Adam and all His offspring. It is the curse of nature or carnality, inextricably tied to the cursed earth and

ending in a weary demise. Adam had sinned against God by willfully disobeying the command of God and thus had plunged the entirety of the human race into sin and guilt before the thrice Holy God. This is the sin of Adam being imputed or charged to his offspring (Romans 5 12-14). The curse placed upon Adam and his progeny for this heinous act is a treatise on the words of Job, that declares, “man born of woman is of few days and full of troubles.”

In verse 17 the LORD God gives the reason for the curse being allotted to Adam. It is always the reason for disobedience, and it is as plain and simple as can be. It is listening and obeying the wrong voice. “Because thou hast hearkened (heard, listened, obeyed) unto the voice of thy wife.” This must be seen in the sense of “rather than or instead of.” He obeyed the voice of his wife, which in truth was obeying the voice of the serpent, rather than the voice of God. God spoke from heaven to Peter on the mount of transfiguration and said, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased (satisfied, propitiated), hear ye Him.” The physical appearance of the LORD God in the garden was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather than hearkening to the voice of God, Adam had hearkened to the voice of his wife. Simply stated, he obeyed a voice other than God’s (John 5:43; Acts 4:19). This is the heart of sin, and it travels under the name of unbelief and is the manifestation of the intractability of the carnal will. The question must arise, “Who am I hearkening to, what voice am I obeying”?

Also, in these words in an interesting thing. Though there is no record of Eve doing anything more than giving Adam the fruit to eat, since the curse came because he hearkened unto her voice; there is an intimation that there was some persuasion afoot. In all probability, she rehearsed the lie of the serpent in the ears of her husband and applied human logic asserting that she had eaten and had not died, therefore the voice of the Lord had deceived them. However, harvest does not come in the season of planting but at the time of fruition.

Because Adam listened to the voice of Eve rather than the command of God, he and all that proceeded from his loins was cursed (v. 18). The Lord said, “Cursed be the ground because of you.” “You shall eat of the cursed ground, in sorrow, all your life.” There is no joy in nature, in carnality...it is simply and only a place of grief and sorrow from the cradle to the grave. I’m sure you know many who are happy in this world and that rejoice in their estate. But it is not yet harvest time and one day, not far hence, they will despise the tenor of their life and come to full realization of the curse. Thorns and thistles will attend their labor and exacerbate the prickly sorrow of leaving all they have made to someone else. The thorns and thistles are there to remind humanity that trouble always comes with the labor to get worldly gain. All the days of humanity will be spent eating of the “herb of the field.” This is a reminder that humanity as it is born into this world cannot enjoy the bountiful fruit of the garden, freely given. They cannot abide in Eden; it is the place for those who hearken to the voice of God. Fallen humanity must eat the food of beasts. Humanity, carnality must earn its keep and the wages of sin is death.

Verse 19 is a glaring declaration of the futility of life without Christ. The bookends of nature are dust and dust, the serpent’s food, and the wretched lot of fallen man. It is a proclamation that what is done in nature is just a way to end up with nothing after having labored to the point of breaking a dripping sweat, in rigorous activity to gain nothing. This is a vivid picture of man in his natural religion, all his works, all of them, all his labor all his efforts to attain righteousness end where it began; with nothing. All the labor intensive, multitasking of religion does not bring man to God, it brings him to the dirt of death. And no matter the gain, the heights that humanity might reach, the stature and esteem they might attain, it is here diminished to this one thing...he eats his bread. All his labor gets the felon his bread and water (Lk. 12:15-21). Dust is what you came from and to dust you shall return. There is no hope in nature, and

nature cannot abide in paradise. Is your hope in what you have done, are doing or will do? Then your hope is dust, just as you are.

But there is light in this passage, true light, and true hope. It will not come from the cursed man applying his efforts in the cursed earth. The curses are book ended by verse 15 and verse 20. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel...And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living." The promise of the Messiah to redeem men from the curse is reiterated in plain contrast to the sorrow and woe of the curse. The cursed is about death, the product of nature. The promise and the accomplishment are about life. Eve is the mother of the living, also interpreted as the mother of life. This does not speak of natural life but life in Christ, spiritual life. Eve will in her progeny produce Mary and Mary will be impregnated by God and that which will be born to her, the seed of woman, will be the Son of God, Immanuel, God with us, the son born, the child given, the Word made flesh. Eve, the mother of the living and all who Christ has redeemed from the curse, will have eternal, everlasting life, abundant life, and they shall never perish. "And Adam called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living".

And how shall such a wonder be realized? How can one born in sin be made to live eternally? Read v. 20. God did it by substitution. Though it is a type and picture of what would be accomplished on Calvary, the LORD God killed beasts made a covering for His sinful pair. But this word "clothed" is not the word used in scripture for atonement. It means to dress or array in clothing. The word array, according to Webster's means: "to adorn or dress in splendid or impressive attire." The word "coat" means a full-length robe (Isaiah 61:10; Luke 15:21-24; Rev. 7:13-17; 2 Cor. 5:21, I Cor. 1:30). Adam and Eve, naked and sorrowful, headed for the dust, "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, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

## CLOTHES OF SKINS

### Genesis 3:21

21, Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

This verse is the first physical action that was, in itself, the manifestation based on the promise of the woman's seed and Adam's manifestation of faith in naming his wife the mother of all living. We might draw a comparison to Abraham, when he believed God concerning the seed and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Immediately following Adam's confession concerning life based on the promise of the seed of woman, the LORD God made them clothes of skins. This is substitution, the sovereign act of accounting the death of one for the salvation of another. This substitution was typical and representative of the ultimate fulfillment of the promise, which would take place millenniums later on a lonely wooden tower, on a hill called Golgotha. The grammatical mood of the word "clothed" is in the imperfect, which denotes a thing done that will be perfected in the future, The Greek word used by our Lord on Calvary, interpreted "it is finished" is the word "perfect" This physical act of clothing Adam and Eve was, in itself, a palpable promise of the coming of the Messiah to redeem them for the curse, being made a curse for them and clothing them to cover their nakedness, their sin. In that great chapter 5 of II Corinthians, declaring reconciliation by imputation, Paul uses the language of Genesis 3:21 (See 2-4, 21).

This verse in Genesis is the first illustration of substitution, which is the heart theme and soul of the Gospel preached. I remember well the days of my youth in religion and though I knew this story by rote, I do not remember ever hearing the

word “substitution” until I first heard the Gospel of Sovereign grace. I heard often that He died for me but never that He died instead of me and the difference between those two statements was light and darkness.

Adam and Eve had died spiritually and had begun to die physically as a result of Adam’s transgression. They were dead and as good as dead. This was the payment for sin. They were not given opportunity to work off the debt, to mitigate the penalty or escape their doom. They were already dead, and on death row awaiting execution, the sentence already passed upon the guilty. What a fool’s dream to go to the graveyard and tell the entombed dust that they can do something about reviving themselves. For all practical purposes, it was too late for Adam and Eve, the gavel of judgment had fallen. Their efforts to undo their demise with a fig leaf covering and pleas of victimization by blaming someone or something else had but caused them to hide from God. If anything is to be done to remedy their ruin, it must be accomplished by something or someone outside themselves, doing for them what they could not and have proven by their actions would not do. There are only two characters, other than Adam and Eve in this scenario. There is the serpent, and it has been woefully proven that it was no help to the sinful pair on any level. Then there is the LORD God, and if anything is to be done, He must act in grace and mercy, or the human race is forever doomed. The Lord God will not save all of humanity, but He will save humanity. It has, from all eternity, been His will and intent to save out of fallen humanity an innumerable company of men and women as trophies of His grace. They are the elect, His sheep, His church, His body, His bride, His chosen and His predestinated. As the noble zoologist preserves the last pair of a rare and endangered species, he in fact, saves the species. So as the LORD God saved some out of a doomed race, he saved the race, the crown of His creation.

The way this salvation was accomplished was death because that is the penalty required for transgressing the law. So here in



the beginning of time, He, as it were, saves His fallen pair, by slaying beasts and making for them coats of skins to clothe them. The perfection of this act would be performed on the cross. But for now, He has adorned the dying duet with a robe to clothe and cover their nakedness. He has changed their estate by killing a beast on their behalf. The death of the beast was accounted as their death and the law as thus satisfied. We know that this was but a type and their sin was not actually put away because the blood of bulls and goats and lambs cannot put away sin. But in the LORD God's purpose, these slain beasts were a picture of Him who was to come who would, indeed and in fact, put away the sin of the elect by the sacrifice of self, perfecting forever those for whom the sacrifice of Himself.

This primary substitution is a revelation of the character of God. He is holy and must punish sin with death, and He is merciful in that He provides the death required with a substitute. The substitute was, by Adam and Eve, unsought, not desired, and not even considered as revealed in the previous efforts at undoing their deadly dilemma. But how could they or any sane human being arrive at such a solution to recover sinful man. It would be the acme of hubris for a sinful man to suggest that God would become a man and die in His place, pay the death that he had willfully and sinfully incurred. Such a plan could only come from the omniscient God and even saved men and women are still in awe of it and fall to the earth in worship and praise. Is it any wonder that the Gospel is utter foolishness to the world?

Substitution is first a revelation of the kinds of people that the LORD God saves. Though the coats of skins ultimately picture the pristine robe of imputed righteousness, they first make Adam and Eve to appear to be something else. They now look like beasts. Their hairless skin is cover with beastly fur. Many times in scripture, men are compared to or said to be like beasts (Ecc. 3:18; Ps. 49:12, 20; 73:22.) Substitution is a revelation sin and its consequence and penalty. And sin is never

seen more clearly that when the Lamb of God bore the sins of His people of Calvary. Don't go to the crack houses or the penitentiary to see what sin is, go to the cross and see the sin of men, the wrath of God and the penalty required and paid. By the spotless Son of God. You will see yourself as a beast, worthy to be slain.

Substitution is also the revelation of sweet, sovereign mercy and grace. When God slew these beasts, it was the act of love, mercy, and grace. This rebellious pair deserved the wrath of God for their sin. But it was the beasts that got the wrath, and the sinful pair got the adornment. God got the death He required, and Adam and Eve got the grace that they could never merit or earn. These beasts were killed by God, they had no say in the matter. But the Son of God was not killed; He voluntarily gave His life for His elect out of unconditional love. He loved us and gave Himself for us. He loved us and washed us in His blood. For God so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and this verse here in first book of scripture is the first physical revelation of that blessed death. He died and we live. Read Isaiah 53:1-6.

## OUT OF THE GARDEN

### Genesis 3:22-24

22, And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

23, Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24, So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

These verses conclude the first three chapters of Genesis. If understood, these chapters set up all that is afterward revealed in the Word of God. Everything that involves the creation, the new creation, the fall of man, the recovery of man accomplished by the substitutionary work of the Son of God, is first illuminated in these first words from heaven. What we will consider tonight is the fact that Adam's removal from the garden was essential to you and I hearing the Gospel of God's grace. He cannot remain in the garden. He must go out with the Word of Truth. This is set forth in no uncertain terms in this final passage of the third of Genesis.

Verse 22 falls fast on the heels of the declaration of sovereign substitution. So, Adam being removed from the garden must fall under the theme of grace and not wrath. Adam is not being punished; he is being delivered. The reason is plainly stated in a conversation recorded, a dialogue between the person of the trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The LORD God said, behold, the man has become as one of us (plural) to

know good and evil. This only applies to knowledge, not in any way to deity. God knows good and evil, as He is the creator of them both as instrument in His workshop to bring all things to their appointed end (Is. 45:1-5). This knowledge, with God, will and can do no harm to the God. However, that knowledge for man will always end in confusion of face and a downward plunge into depravity and ruin. According to Paul in Romans 7, our knowledge of good and evil results in the woeful cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death." How is the man considered the same as God? In what sense is this true? One man gave this analogy. "If a man stepped off an airplane wing at 20, 000 feet without a parachute, he would be up in the air like the pilot who could say, 'That man has become as one of us, to know altitude and gravity'. But there would be no power in him to maintain altitude or avoid gravity. This is the result of man's attainment of this knowledge. It will never help him and always hurt him. It will never bring him up and will always bring him down (Jer. 4:22). Therefore, God acts in mercy toward those for whom He has provided the substitute. If Adam was to remain in the garden and take a bite of the fruit of the tree of life, he would live forever in his fallen condition. The tree of life is the tree that has provided eternal life which is the experience of all men either in glory or in ruin. But God has fixed that and does so by removing Adam and many of his progeny from the possibility of being eternally damned. Grace and mercy send Adam and Eve from paradise.

V. 23. This act of mercy is revealed these words. "Therefore" the LORD God sent him from the garden. He would not go far, because the altar He describes in the next verse is where Cain and Abel offered their respective sacrifices. In effect, in type, shadow and picture, He was sent into the world. Anything outside of paradise is the world. There he would till the ground, sow the seed and God would give the increase. Note that there is no mention of the toil, and the sweat of his face involved. It is merely a statement of fact concerning what he will do in the

world (1 Cor. 3:6). The word “sent” is a word that exudes kindness and purpose. Though the word can be interpreted as dismissed or cast out, most of the definitions mean to let go, to set free or to shoot forth as the branch of a tree or vine. Did not our Lord say to His disciple, “I am, the vine and ye are the branches”?

In verse 24, we find another word use to describe Adam’s removal from the Garden East of Eden. “So, He drove out the man.” This word means to “force out.” This perhaps indicates that after Adam was to be sent out, he was reticent to leave, so it required that God drive him from the garden. Since this was done for Adam’s good, there was no anger or wrath involved in God’s action. This is rather a revelation that Adam was, indeed, chosen of God. Only in the believer do we find the two lives of the flesh and the spirit and these two are always opposed to and contrary to one another. Adam as a spiritual man was sent. Adam as a natural man had to be driven out. Is this not, so often, even always our case as believers? In the early church, the disciples had been sent into the world to preach the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. Things were going well in Jerusalem, and the disciples were well established in their comfort zone, but upon the death of Stephen, great persecution ensued, and the church was scattered into all the world. The church was sent, and the church was driven throughout Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. Adam was sent and he was driven from the garden.

Then the Lord, having removed Adam from the garden, “placed at the east of the Garden of Eden, Cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” We know that the way is Christ. He is “the way, the truth and the life.” The tree of life speaks to eternal life. The Lord said, “I am the resurrection and the life, he that believes on me shall never die.” So, this altar was not set up to keep man from eternal life but to set the absolute requirement for having eternal life, namely that the law of God be satisfied. This altar

was the place of a blood sacrifice to be offered. The word “place” means “continual dwelling.” The word in the original is the word from which we get the word “Shechinah” meaning “the brightness of God’s glory dwelling.” The Jerusalem Targum said of this phrase, “and he made the glory of his Shechinah, or glorious Majesty, to dwell of old at the east of the garden of Eden, over or above the two cherubim.” So, between the two Cherubim dwelt the abiding glory of God, represented as a flaming sword, or licking flame, which would consume the sacrifice if it was accepted as typical payment for sin. The way of the tree of life was kept by a sacrifice that paid the penalty for sin, blood/death. This was the way to life, the only way. The elements of the altar pointed to one thing, the mercy seat, where once a year the High Priest would offer the blood of the Lamb for himself and the people of Israel as a remembrance of their sin and atonement by blood. The word mercy seat means propitiation of satisfaction or appeasing God by blood/death (Ex. 25:22). So here at the east of the Garden of Eden, was the mercy seat, the propitiation, the only way to keep the way of the tree of life, the only place to commune with God, where propitiation is made (1 John 4:10). Adam was sent and driven from the garden into the world, but he was sent with a message, the message of how God had shed blood and killed beasts to cover this nakedness and that God would accept men only by a blood sacrifice. Adam was a gospel minister, a blood bought sinner with the message and testimony of God. And we know this is so because his son Abel offered the sacrifice of blood and was accepted, and Cain offered his works and was rejected. Abel offered his sacrifice by faith (Heb. 11:4). How did he have faith (Romans 10:13-17)? From whom did Abel hear the message? He heard it from the only man who had it. Genesis 1-3, the story of the fall, the cross and how God saved sinners and put His word in their mouths.

## FALLEN COUNTENANCE

### Genesis 4:1-15

1, And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

2, And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3, And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4, And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5, But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6, And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7, If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8, And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9, And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

10, And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11, And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12, When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

13, And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

14, Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

15, And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

This is the record of the first and second born of humanity and has become proverbial in common language for the crime of fratricide. One can but say "Cain and Abel" and the mind goes to the murder of a brother. Rarely, however is the subject addressed to motive and content. We will consider the act of murder in our next study. For this hour we will look at what will bring about the first murder.

Eve had been promised that her seed would be the instrument of vengeance against the seed of the serpent. There can be no doubt that her anticipation was great as she became pregnant with her first child. Not only was it the unique blessing of being a woman but with it came, to Eve's mind, the fulfillment of the promise of God. She was a believer, believing God, taking Him at His word. She had no concept that the



promise of God would be fulfilled millennia later at the nativity of Christ and His suffering on the cross. For her, the birth of Cain, her first born, her seed, was the promise fulfilled. The words spoken upon His birth and the name He was given reveal that she believed that Cain was the seed who would bruise the serpent's head. The actual wording is "I have gotten the man from the Lord." The definite article employed by Eve intimates that she believed that her first born would win the day and undo the terrible curse placed upon mankind. The name given this child was Cain, which means "possession." This also suggests she truly believed that Cain was the man, the promised seed. The prepositional phrase "from the Lord" is also significant. She believed this child was a gift of God's grace toward her (Ps. 127:3). Though this child was the product of the nuptial relationship with her husband, she attributes it to the work of the LORD God. Knowing something about human nature, I think it would be safe to say that Cain was made aware of his mother's belief revealed in Cain's eventual fatal treatment of his brother; the promise had been interpreted as entitlement (v. 1).

Then Eve became pregnant again and brought forth another son who was named Abel. His name means "breath." The root word from which we get the word breath, in the original means "vanity." It speaks of uselessness, emptiness, a vapor, and suggests that this child was of no value in comparison to Cain in the eyes of his mother. This birth may have also been a reminder of what befell humanity because of Adam's sin and the death that would come on all mankind. This is surely illuminated in the Psalms of David and the words of Solomon. Man is lighter than vanity, his life a vapor, and all is vanity... one meaning is "the dying man." In the days to come we will witness many words flowing from the mouth of Cain, words bemoaning his punishment for his dreadful deed. Those words were recorded for eternity in the inerrant word of God. Conversely, we will hear no words recorded in all of Holy Writ spoken by Abel. Yet, "He being dead yet speaketh." The words of Cain are the words

of the man who, when facing God, are words that exude entitlement. The words of Able, is the Word made flesh, the payment for the sin of the elect...blood and death before the Holy God. The words of Cain are words of works for righteousness and the unspoken words of Able are the words of faith.

Here also in verse 2 is the introduction of a new vocation. Cain followed in the footsteps of his father and was a tiller of the ground, a farmer a man of the soil, the oldest of vocations. Abel however was a “keeper of sheep.” He was a shepherd, a feeder of sheep. Both occupations are honorable and neither suggests that either is to be diminished in value. Moses was inspired to refer to Abel first in this passage, perhaps because of the regard that God had for the sacrifice of blood. The man of faith, who offered the blood of the Lamb was slain by the man of works who offered the fruits of his own labor. Sound familiar. This is another example of a theme that has been set forth in the first 3 chapters of recorded history. God divides, separates, sanctifies. How often was it said of Christ, “There was division because of Him.” Does not the King on the last day divide the sheep from the goats? It began with God dividing the darkness from the light, it continued with man and his God, then the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and in this passage works and grace.

The words “in the process off time” means at the end of days, or at the appointed time. Some have made this to be the Sabbath day but there is no reference to the Sabbath day until the law was given on Sinai, and there is no record of any one of the Lord’s children observing such a religious ritual until Sinai, it simply means that there was an appointed time when offering was to be made to God in worship. In all probability it was the time of the harvest of the first fruits since Cain brought forth the fruits of his labor and Abel, the firstling of the flock. Whatever the time, on that day the offerer was to approach the altar at the east of Eden, and place on the altar between the

cherubim where the Shechinah glory of God dwelt to keep the way of the tree of Life, his offering to God. As with any offering to God, it was first a confession of sin, a plea for mercy and thanksgiving and praise for His grace. If the offering was accepted, revealed by the flaming sword consuming the sacrifice, rising as a sweet-smelling savor to God, the offerer knew that God had highly favored him. If the offering was rejected it was revealed to be so when it was not consumed but left to rot on the altar (Malachi 2:1-3, 13). Cain and Able knew that God was to be worshipped and both had been taught of how Adam and Eve had been covered for their sin. Blood had been shed, death had been accomplished, and that by God alone. Both knew that acceptance before God was by blood and death. What prompted Cain to bring the fruits of his labor to the place of blood sacrifice can only be a matter of conjecture but at the heart was unbelief that brought about his belief that there was another way to keep the way of the tree of life. Was it his belief that he was the promised seed of woman, was it a sense of his self-worth—who knows? But the old saying stands well— “You can’t get blood out of a turnip,” and there is no fat on a turnip either. The fruit he offered came from cursed ground. I have no doubt that he brought his very best cornucopia to offer to the Lord and felt in his heart that the works of his flesh were sufficient to worship God. Nor can his sincerity be in question. Such is the sad estimate of religion, man’s religion, the serpent’s religion...God will accept my works my labors as an acceptable righteousness before Him. He will not and here, in this case He did not at the sight and time of the first recorded sacrifice. Cain offered his best. Abel brought the firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof. “The fat belongeth to the Lord” for that fat creates the sweet-smelling savor to God when consumed in the flames of His fiery justice which pictures the accepted sacrifice of Christ. And the result is declared in very plain language, “And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.” The word “respect” means to look

at, gaze upon, to regard. God looked on Abel's sacrifice and regarded it...accepted it (Heb. 11:4). As for Cain's sacrifice, God did not look at it, gaze upon it or regard it or accept it. What Cain did will ever be aligned with all that is false even as Jude wrote, "woe unto them for they have gone the way of Cain" (v. 4b, 5a). And Cain was very wroth, He was furious, burning with anger. He was mad at God for rejecting him and his sacrifice. What was the impetus for this fury? It can only be that he believed that God was wrong, that God was unrighteous. It can only be that he believed that God was obligated to accept him and his sacrifice because, after all, he was giving God his best. It can only be because he believed he was entitled to acceptance because of the works of his hands. He was mad at his brother Able, he was just a vapor and Cain was the possession, the gotten one, the promised seed of woman and Abel's sacrifice not to be compared. Abel's sacrifice was accepted because he believed God to be satisfied with a man because of the blood of another, and there surely must be more to it than that. Does religion exhibit such anger in this day? Well, just tell them that their works, their decision, their will, their religious activity, their giving, singing, study means nothing and see the twisted face for yourself. Cain's countenance fell. His face was twisted, he donned the hate face. Why... because only the blood/death of the propitiatory sacrifice satisfies God. How will you approach God? How will you worship God?

# THE WAY OF CAIN PT 1

## Genesis 4:5-8

5, But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6, And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7, If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8, And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

In Jude's epistle, after he describes false teachers saying that they were ordained of old unto condemnation, issues a indictment against them and judgment that will follow, saying, "Woe unto them that go the way of Cain." When our Lord confronted the Pharisees who claimed that Abraham was their Father, He said, "Your father is the Devil" and adds that the Devil was a "murderer from the beginning." In this passage in the first book of the Bible, the book of beginnings, we see the first true manifestation of the "seed of the serpent", the offspring of Satan. They are religious men and women who offer their best work to God and are deeply offended when they and their works and labor of righteousness are rejected and the believer in Christ alone is accepted because he has approached unto God in the sacrifice of Christ. Be not deceived; make no mistake here. Men and women who trust their own works or add their merit to that of Christ and him crucified for acceptance before God are the seed of the serpent and have gone the way. Cain stands forever

as the exemplar of the serpent's seed, following in the footsteps of his father, a murderer from the beginning.

After Cain and his offering were rejected, it is written, that his countenance fell (v. 5). This suggests that upon making his offering, before he was rejected, his countenance was lifted up, perhaps attended by a proud smile revealing his self-assurance that he was about to be accepted. For a countenance to fall it must have been otherwise prior to the fall. What follows in the next verses is the Lord confronting Cain and his response to the Lord lays out the true description of "the way of Cain."

In verse 6, the Lord confronts Cain. He asks why Cain was furious and why his face was all twisty. The Lord was not asking because He did not know the answer. He was asking to confront Cain about his sin as is made clear in the remainder of the conversation. As Cain is mentioned in the context of Jude as among those who are ordained to this condemnation, his response to being rejected was no surprise to the God who ordains all things. Why then confront him? Because that is precisely what the Word of God (the Gospel) is, a confrontation that requires a verdict and always gets a verdict (savor of life or a savor of death). Barnard used to say that when you meet Christ in the middle of the road, you're going to bow or you're going to fight. In verse 7 the Lord answers the question before Cain has opportunity to do so. The Lord's answer is the confrontation. The reason you were not accepted is because you did not do well. Certainly, he did well in his gardening. He certainly did well in his harvesting. Most assuredly he did well in the presentation of a cornucopia of his best. Lack of labor and works was not the issue. Doing well is only understood in the distinction between the sacrifices offered. To do well is to approach God with the blood/death of the lamb. To not do well is to approach God any other way, especially with the work of your hands (Prov. 15:8). The opportunity to get a lamb from Abel and offer it to the Lord was there for Cain, but he did not believe God and offered the work of his hands according to his own will and council. The

Lord declares in no uncertain terms that what Cain did, offering his best, was sin, plain and simple because it was as David said, offering not after the right order. The seed of the Serpent's very best is sin and an abomination to the Lord. Our Lord said, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter heaven." The only righteousness that accomplishes that is Christ, our righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). The last phrase of verse 7 speaks to what would have been, had Cain done well and refers to the relationship between him and his brother Abel. Had he done well, he and able would not be at odds with Abel and would have continued to enjoy the advantages of the firstborn. Now that is all gone, and Cain knows it. This is the first mention of the elder serving the younger.

Cain was incensed, furious with God and Abel (v. 8). He believed God to be unrighteous and Abel, a usurper. He was a murderer from the beginning because his heart was defiled ((Mk. 7:14-23). The Word records that Cain talked with Abel. Some versions record that he asked Abel to go with him out into the field. Jewish tradition holds that the conversation runs like this, "Cain said to Abel his brother, there is no judgment, nor Judge, nor will a good reward be given to the righteous; nor will vengeance be taken of the wicked; neither is the world created in mercy nor governed in mercy; otherwise, why is thine offering received with good will, and mine not?" It is a reasonable assumption demonstrated by Cain's actions toward God and his brother. Whatever the conversation might have been, it was a ruse to lure Abel to his death. We need not think that the conversation led to the murder. The intent of the murderer led to the conversation.

And the word is plain, "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." This is the sad truth of the heart of natural religion, the religion that is the "seed of the Serpent." In this Abel is a type of our Lord who was nailed to the cross for

telling the same truth. This is the impetus for the murder, the animosity between grace and works.

But there is a driving force for this animosity, one unspoken but clearly revealed in the carnal heart. Was Cain jealous? Indeed, he was! Was he envious of Abel acceptance? Indeed, he was! Was his heart full of hatred? Indeed, it was! But to really understand why he killed his brother; we must go to the first lie. The serpent's promise to Eve was that if she would disobey God and think for herself based on her own powers of observation (good for food, pleasant to the eyes and desired to make one wise)— she would be as God. That hubris was to be carried on in every son of Adam from then until now. Now Cain did not say he was God and neither do men say they are God. But the avenues they pursue in religion reveal that they believe they are. The fact is that if the God revealed in this book is indeed God and men think that he can do nothing unless they let Him, then they are God, and He is not. but the primary knowledge that remains in all men, even if they live the life of a profligate, is that when they come to the end of their days, they *know* life and death belong to God. That is why, at funerals, people speak of the corpse reaching their time, or that this is according to purpose. Life and death belong to God and mankind innately knows it. (Rev. 1:18). At the east of Eden God required death to satisfy his law and justice. Nothing but death will satisfy. In the field Cain required death to satisfy his delude since of justice for the perceived wrong committed against him by God. He couldn't get to God and murder Him, but he could get to Abel. He acted as if he were God and took his brother's life. In that moment, to his mind, he was God. This is the way of Cain. For a man to proclaim his own righteousness when God declares his Son to be righteousness, is to seek to crucify Christ anew. Self-righteousness is murder. It is self- deification. The way of Cain is to declare God wrong and unrighteous for accepting whom He will and prove by your actions that you will have your way. Woe unto them who go the way of Cain.



## THE WAY OF CAIN PT 2

### Genesis 4:9-12

9, And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

10, And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11, And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12, When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

Last time we saw that Cain was manifest as the seed of the Serpent, “a murderer from the beginning” and again Cain is revealed to be of that seed in that he lies when confronted about the whereabouts of his brother. Another title that our Lord gave to the serpent (Satan) was that he was “a liar and the father of lies” and now Cain proves himself to be the father’s true son. In this passage, the LORD God again confronts Cain. This time concerns the murder that he has committed. That murder is in the heart of everyone who has gone the way of Cain, who are wroth with God concerning the singular way He accepts sinners; by the blood of the substitute (1 John 3:11-12). He that hates his brother is a murderer in his heart. It is clearly evident in this conversation that Cain has no remorse concerning his slaughter of his sibling, which at the least, reveals that he considers what he did to have been the right thing (situation ethics-values clarification). We have seen that these confrontations are typical

of the Gospel. The Gospel, though ultimately good news to the elect is bad news to the rebel. But also, to the elect it is first a confrontation and a revelation of sin. As one man said, “the Gospel will mean nothing to if you do not see yourself as a sinner and are willing to admit to being whatever the Lord addresses you as.” When the Lord said to the Syrophenician that it was not meet to give the children’s bread to dogs, she declared, “I ‘m a dog, your dog.” “Whether maggot on a dunghill, worm, liar, lie, vain, lighter than vanity, lost, hopeless, helpless, impotent or infidel is the category in which the Lord places you; assume it, embrace it or perish in your sin. Cain detested any accusation laid against him and his punishment would be great.

In verse 9, the Lord confronts Cain. Again, this is not inquiry to gain information from this one who was ordained to this condemnation, but a calling out concerning the murder he had committed. “Where is Able, thy brother.” By adding the designation, “thy brother”, the Lord was adding insult to his crime. It was not some guy named Abel that he had slain but it was his brother, his blood. Cain “outright” lies to the Lord. “I know not.” Shakespeare said, “conscience makes cowards of us all.” Here conscience does what it does best. It seeks a way to cover up wrongdoing. This was Cain’s fig leaf apron and the bush he hid behind. He knew precisely where his brother was. The Serpent’s seed cannot admit the truth. This is the epitome of audacity and hubris and though we cannot hear the intonation in Cain’s voice, what he says next almost reveals the smirk on his face. “Am I my brother’s keeper.” In today’s vernacular he would say, “It’s not my job to watch him.” This is unmitigated gall. Actually, he is blaming God for His unspeakable act. He is asserting a failure in God’s providence. He is insulting God’s sovereignty just as the man in Roman’s 9 would say, “How can God find fault if He made me this way?” He was saying that it was God’s job to keep Able, not his. Like his father blamed his mother and like his mother blamed God,

the fruit has not fallen very far from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Just as that effort failed with Adam and Eve, it failed with their firstborn. The man she got from God was a murderer.

The question that our Lord asks in verse 10 is an accusation with the emphasis on “thou” rather than “what.” This is proven by the indictment issued in the Lord’s next statement, “the *voice* of thy brother’s blood *cries* unto me from the ground.” The words *voice* and *cry* denote a primal scream, a loud outcry. The blood of Able cried to be avenged. The word “bloods” is plural and may refer to what progeny Abel may have produced, but it really applies to all that are righteous in the sense of Abel’s acceptance based on the substitutionary sacrifice. Many such have paid with their life’s blood for trusting wholly in the merits of Christ. The Lord’s words to the Pharisees, those who had Satan for a father, declared the meaning of the word “bloods” in our text (Matt. 23:27-35).

Verse 11. Though the result of Cain’s crime would result in him being hunted down and slain by Abel’s friend and companion if discovered, God does not punish Cain with an eye for an eye. The concept of capital punishment did not apply at this time because there was no law concerning it. Where there is no law, sin is not imputed. That law would be instituted after the flood (Gen. 9:6). The punishment allotted to Cain sets forth, rather, the grievous condition of all that follow the way of Cain, the way that has its roots and origin in the rejection of the way of God. The life of the lost is declared in simple terms (vs. 11-12). We know that men and women who have no interest in Christ, often have great success in this world and believers should never begrudge them their happiness. David complained about the seeming happiness of the enemies of God until God revealed their end to him (Ps. 73). It is the end of a thing that matters. And the end of all those who oppose God is threefold. First, no matter what is gained in this world, it will never satisfy and will prove, in the end, mere sustenance. The food you eat,

the water you drink, whether imbibed on a yacht or in a shanty is what keeps you alive and makes it so that the pauper differs not one whit from the king except for temporary accessories. The ground is cursed for your sake and will only make for unsatisfactory survival (Job 31:38). Secondly, no matter what is gained in this world will be left behind...you can't take it with you. Thirdly this world is not a resting place, not a home. Those who follow the way of Cain are fugitives. This word, in the original, does not mean "on the lam" or "running from the law." It speaks of a state of unease. It literally means to tremble and quake and suggests a kind of paranoia that makes for no lasting peace or joy in the world; a kind of "waiting for the other shoe to drop" mentality. Also, such are vagabonds in the earth. This means to wander aimlessly, to go to and fro, to waver or to flutter. This intimates a state of dissatisfaction, a kind of innate knowledge that there must be more than this, a searching but never finding until it is too late (Lk. 16:19-31). This is the lot of those who follow the way of Cain (Jude 1:11-17). Have you a hope beyond this vale of tears. You are in this world but are you of it? (Read I John 2:15-17).

## THE WAY OF CAIN PT 3

### GENESIS 4:12-15

12, When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

13, And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

14, Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

15, And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

We have seen thus far, Cain is the object of God's dividing all things into that which represent the spiritual and that, which represents the carnal. He divided the light from the darkness, the seed of the serpent and the seed of woman, Cain and Abel and has by example designated Cain as the seed of the serpent. He is a religious man who denies the necessity of the blood of the lamb, like those vipers and hypocrites who boasted of being Abraham's seed despising Christ and desiring his death. The Lord said of them that their father was the Devil, a murderer and liar from the beginning and that they did the same works that their father did. When Jude spoke of those who were before ordained to condemnation, the first name he rendered was of those who followed the way of Cain. In this passage we will

consider the way of Cain in his response to the punishment allotted him. His response tells us much about the carnal mind in reference to the wrath of God against sin.

What our Lord basically said to Cain is that no matter what he did for the remainder of his days, it would never satisfy him, never give him joy but would only prove to be mere sustenance. No matter what temporal trinkets he may adorn his life with, he will leave them all behind, and even the bread and water that sustain his body will leave the bitter taste of the curse in his mouth. Being a vagabond and a fugitive, he will never have a lasting home and will always be looking over his shoulder waiting for the other shoe to drop. This is what he gained with the temporary sense of personal vengeance when he slew his brother.

Cain's response to God in verse 13 is that the punishment rendered is more that he can bear. This reveals the hypocrisy of the carnal mind. He had required blood to satisfy his own sense of being offended. Now, though he deserved the same, he is actually receiving the longsuffering of God. His words are a slam on the mercy of God. He is saying that he doesn't deserve this punishment, revealing that he knows nothing about sin. One interpretation of his words is "Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven." This is also a mockery of the effectual power of God's mercy as if it was insufficient to forgive. However, this is a subtle expression of works religion. He is saying that if he had no sin that he would be worthy of mercy. He is still bringing the fruits of his labor to the east of Eden, declaring that his works should have been enough. Men say things like this to sound pitiful and to garner sympathy, but it is really a declaration that God saves good people. It the same thing as saying, "when I straighten out my life, I'll go to church."

In verse 14, Cain continues what amounts to an accusation against God. He is saying, by cataloguing what the Lord had pronounced upon him, that this punishment is unrighteous and therefore God is unfair. You can almost hear the pathos. His

words must be weighed in light of the fact that he has no remorse for killing his brother in that he feels his punishment is too great. He takes no responsibility for the act that brought about his punishment. He, in essence, blames God for his woe as if he had nothing to do with it. “Why is this happening to me?” He is also saying, God, look what you’ve done to me. You’ve driven me from the face of the earth. This complaint is about the earth not providing an abundance for him, as he was a tiller of the ground, and is a subtle reminder to God that he can never again offer his best to God. The problem with carnal religion is that it always believes that it will be accepted based on works and cannot be dissuaded without a work of sovereign mercy and grace.

“From thy face I shall be hid.” Again, this is a revelation of his mind. He still holds that he should have been accepted on the basis what he had offered. Sin lies at the door. Had he confessed his sin and brought the blood of the Lamb, would he not have been accepted?

“I shall be a fugitive and vagabond in the earth.” Intimate in this declaration is that he feels that he deserves better. I wonder as I read these words that he has no regard for any life but his own. Self is the order of the day and that has not changed from that day ‘til this. Self is our enemy. Self is the opposite of love. It takes a work of sovereign grace for one to deny self and self will ever fight to keep the upper hand. Remember that denying self is not self-denial. It is refusing to allocate to *self* anything that has to do with acceptance before God.

Finally, the heart of the matter is revealed. Cain puts himself in squarely in the category of victim. This is the plague of humanity, victimization. “It shall come to pass that everyone that findeth me shall slay me” If you wonder why anger is the order of the day and paranoia is rampant in the world, and men and women have a vengeful response to any that disagree with them, it is because *self* demands to be validated and honored and always at the cost of another. Self is a murderer and will not be

kept back from satisfaction when offended. The rub is, however, that nothing here will ever satisfy because the earth is cursed. The only satisfaction that can be derived in this earth is to know Christ and Him crucified.

The response that our Lord makes to Cain is a promise of protection. The word “sevenfold” refers to Cain’s progeny. No one knows what the mark was that the Lord placed on Cain. If you read the commentaries of various theologians and Jewish writers, you’ll find manifold answers to what this mark was. The mark may have come in the form of a command to all, given after the flood (9:6). The command of God was certainly known among Cain’s progeny (4:24). Whatever it was, it worked. Men are preserved till their appointed day of death, because they are under the authority of the mediator to give eternal life to as many as God has given him. They will be used in the capacity that God has assigned them for the furtherance of the Gospel, whether they are employed as an enemy of the cross or a friend of Christ (Acts 4:24). Cain was ordained to this condemnation and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.



## CAIN WENT OUT

### Genesis 4:16-22

16, And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

17, And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

18, And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

19, And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

20, And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.

21, And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.

22, And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah.

This passage of scripture relates the expulsion of Cain from the presence of the Lord and his life and his lineage that followed. The gist of this is the representation of collective desires of the depravity of man. It is the story of humanity without God and man's efforts to remedy that void. Man was made to worship God in the way God had commanded, and Cain had sought to change that, offering to God the work of his hands rather than the blood of the sacrifice. His lack of repentance and his

ultimate charging God with his sin brought the curse of God upon him to be a vagabond and a fugitive and forced to vacate Eden to wander the earth.

Our passage begins (v. 16) declaring that “Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.” Those who have tasted the grace of God are immediately struck with the fearful gravity of this statement. Cain had conversed with God and had been directed by God concerning the way sin was atoned. He will never hear the voice again. The presence of the Lord is more than geography or proximity. There was one place where the presence of the Lord was notably evident. That place was His dwelling between the cherubim, above the altar at the East of Eden. There His presence, His Shekinah glory kept the Way of the Tree of Life. There the Gospel was kept and defended against any effort of man to gain entrance without the proper sacrifice. His presence was tied inextricably to the substitute, the sacrifice and will in time be revealed as that Blessed Sacrifice, God in human flesh. To go out from the presence is to have no sacrifice to atone for you. Cain, in this case, is the first reprobate. The reprobate is the religious man who refuses to acknowledge God as He is and knowing the judgment of God cannot refrain from his religious evil (Rom. 1:21, 28, 32). This is what going out from the presence of God means.

It is declared that he dwelt in the land of Nod that was east of Eden. This is not an actual geographical country with borders. It is simply wherever Cain placed his feet. Nod means aimless wandering. But the root word means shaking or trembling, which may have two applications. First it may refer to Cain’s state of mind. The word “fugitive” in the original means shake. That state of mind is revealed in the last phrase of verse 14. He lived a life of fear and trembling and paranoia. This is common to humanity and is revealed in how often, in scripture, our Lord told his children to “Fear not.” Religion without Christ is a fearful thing. Men think so little of the sacrifice of Christ that they walk in fear of God just waiting for Him to bring calamity

upon them. Secondly, the concept of shaking is, in scripture, the way in which God removes all things that men count on (Haggai 2:6-7; Heb. 12:26-29). Cain lived a life of seeing what he had confidence in being ripped from his grasping fingers.

Verse 17 begins the story of the progeny of Cain, those that proceeded from his loins. There need not be speculation as to where Cain found his wife because how much time has passed is not known and neither is the extent of the population. Had the origin of his wife been important to our understanding of sin and salvation, the Lord would have told us. This part of the passage is about the generation of Cain. He and his wife produced a son who he named Enoch. That name means “trained up” but we can be sure that he was not trained up in the way of God. There will be another son of the same name born of Seth whose end is marvelous. But this Enoch, who will pass off the pages of Holy Writ, never to be mentioned after this chapter, showed himself to have been trained up in the way of Cain. Cain built a city, a visible fortress on the cursed earth, a place to grow in number and gather for safety, a refuge on condemned ground. It is said that believers look for a city whose builder and maker is God. Cain believed that the collective was synonymous with success and power, a naturally speaking it is. Religion believes you can train up men and women into the kingdom of God. Spiritually it is a pipedream, the way of men who have not the presence of God seeking comfort and presumed power in a world without God (how many). He named the city after his son, Enoch.

Enoch’s progeny tells the story of the religious man, existing out of the presence of the Lord. His first son was named Irad. His name means “wild ass’s colt” (Job 11:12). Irad’s son was Mehujael. His name means, “smitten by God.” Mehujael begat Methusael. His name means, “man of God or mighty man of God.” Methusael begat Lamech. His name means, “powerful” You can almost see the progression of man’s carnal theology. From wild ass’s colt to powerful and all without the presence of

God. How readily carnal religion speaks of man as wild and smitten of God but can become a mighty man of God because he is powerful and does so by power of his own will.

Verse 19 is about Lamech's progeny. He was the first recorded bigamist, messing with the order of things. He took two wives. He was, after all, powerful (v.20). Their names were Adah, meaning, "ornament" and Zillah, meaning, "shadow." Those born of Adah and Zillah became the fathers of the nomad, the artisan, and the inventor. Jabal, whose name means steam of water was the father of those whose life meant finding water for their herds of cattle, going where the water was but never finding the water of life. Jubal, whose name also means "stream" was the father of musicians (v.21). But they never sang the songs of Zion. These were Adah's sons. Zillah bear a son and a daughter. The son's name was Tubalcain whose name means, "thou will be brought of Cain" or "son of Cain" Evidently time had sloughed off the curse attached to his name. This is indicative of carnal religion making sin to be acceptable by the proliferation of it and the lack of immediate judgment against it (Ecc. 8:11). Tubalcain was the father of those who forge metal, making weapons and such. None of these occupations are of themselves evil, but the underlying principle and intent is to make this cursed earth a place of comfort and protection without the presence of the Lord.

The daughter that Zillah bear was named Naamah. Her name means beautiful and pleasantness. Though it is only conjectured, she may be the first link to the coming flood. Some have said that she was Noah's wife; others say she was the wife of Noah's son Ham. It is interesting to consider because not too far hence, the world will be destroyed by flood and the only thing that could be considered beautiful and pleasant among humanity are those eight souls, safe in the ark riding secure upon the waves of God's wrath and judgment. The judgment fell upon the ark but not a hair was harmed of those inside. The

judgment of God fell on Christ but not a hair was harmed upon those who were in Him.

# THE DIVISION

## Genesis 4:23-26

23, And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

24, If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

25, And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

26, And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

The final verses of chapter 4 are a reminder that the division that the Lord made between light and darkness, between those who he has considered in grace and those who he has considered in wrath. Two characters emerge as the exemplars of that division. One is Lamech, the descendant of Cain who boasts of his entitlement before God and Enos, a son of Seth whose generation began to call themselves by the name of the LORD or began to identify with God as he is revealed as Savior. We have here a picture of the flesh and the Spirit, The cursed man and the blessed man or the carnal man and the spiritual man.

Lamech, we already have seen, does not care for God's order of things. He has taken two wives against the precept of the marital relationship (2:24). That relation was formed to reflect Christ and His bride, the church. Our LORD has been singularly dedicated and true to her since before the foundation

of the world. His love is centered in her and he has eyes for no other. Bigamy and polygamy are insults to the person and work of the Lord. He gave His life for His church to present her without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. His church is His mystical body, and he is her head and the two are one flesh (Eph. 1:22-23). Lamech is a son of Cain and carries on the nature of the one who produced him after his own kind. Simply stated, he is a rebel.

Concerning what Lamech said in verses 23-24 there are several views, and the wording does not lend itself to easy interpretation. The key to understanding what this is about is found in the promise of protection of Cain and the vengeance that would be applied to any who would dare to harm him (4:15). In regard to the act that perpetrated it, it must be seen as Lamech's response to being injured or hurt by someone seeking to slay or murder him. Some say that Lamech killed two men, but it was probably just one. The addition of the words a young man is more about Lamech than about the young man. Remember that Lamech's name means powerful. He is boasting that he has defended himself and slain a young man, one who is vital and strong, asserting that he is powerful indeed. His words are in poetic form in the original language and may have been a partial quote for an existing poem of the day. If that is the case, we can see that the digression of depravity has reached a point that the poets are writing about killing people and that the promise given to Cain may have declined in the descendants of Cain to the point a kind of justification for personal revenge. Lamech is speaking of self-defense, a principle that is reasonable and justified. However, it is clear that Lamech was boasting as if he was entitled to do what he did because God had promised to avenge Cain. God had put no mark of protection on Lamech, but he took the promise as his own and used it to enhance his own reputation and live up to his name and, in effect, claimed that God sanctioned his action. It is akin to the false notion of universal redemption, where religion espouses, that the promise

of salvation for the elect applies to all mankind and this puts salvation into the hands of men (Rom.8:34). It was God who promised vengeance, it was Lamech who took vengeance and used the promise to Cain to justify his actions. This is the reason for Lamech's hyperbolic expression in verse in verse 24. He is saying that he has defended the promise given to Cain to such an immense degree, that his killing of this young man was as if God had avenged him 10 times as much as Cain. This is hubris and self-aggrandizement and in no small way, self-deification. This is the course of the descendants of Cain, the headlong plunged of the seed of the serpent into utter religious depravity, men and women ordained to this condemnation. It is important to remember that the elect, by nature, are the same (Eph. 2:3).

But praise the Lord for His grace. Though the elect are by nature the children wrath, even as others, by grace they are the children of God, given eternal life and will never taste anything other than love and kindness and tender mercies from their Savior (vv. 25-26). Seth was born to Adam and Eve and the name he was given means "appointed." He was thus called because Eve saw him as another seed to replace Abel whom Cain had slain. She said that he was the appointed seed, probably referring to the promised seed that would bruise the serpent's head, even Christ. In doing so the true religion would be preserved and the promise of the Messiah would be maintained. Adam and Eve believed God concerning the seed.

To Seth there was born a son and he was named Enos. His name means "mortal man." In the Arabic translation his name means "sociable." Each interpretation is significant. By naming him "mortal man", his father was declaring that he understood the truth that sin had brought death into this world. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Also, it is a declaration that man cannot help or remedy his own situation. He had been taught, as Abel was, that the only answer to death is the substitutionary death of the blood sacrifice, which brings immortality to light. Notice that in the final phrase of verse 26, that "then began men



to call upon the name of the LORD.” This applies to the sociable aspect of the name “Enos.” The plural “men” is used here which suggests a gathering of people and suggests the first mention of public worship; men calling upon the name of the LORD. This may also read, “Then began men to call [themselves by] the name of the LORD.” Both readings apply as they speak of men identifying themselves with the LORD, worshipping Him because they belong to Him. They belong to Him because they are bought with a price. Note that the name LORD is all in upper case. This name was not used in all of creation until God began to relate to the crown of His creation, mankind. The capitalized name is Jehovah, the savior. So, in worshipping Him and identifying themselves by His name, this meant they were declaring themselves mortal, dying, dead men whose only hope was the Savior, the LORD Jehovah. Lamech did not mention God except in a cursory manner in attribution of vengeance. Enos mentioned God, in the name of the LORD, the Savior. Lamech called attention to himself and to his prowess. Enos confessed his own mortality and utter need of the Savior. This is the division that prevails in the world to this very day. Men are followers of the seed of the serpent or the seed of woman.

## BY FAITH

### Genesis 5

This chapter in the Word of God begins with Adam and ends with Noah. It is a record of the lineage of Seth, and a grandson born to him named Enoch who was the seventh generation from Adam. The division that God has declared from the beginning continues in this chapter from its beginning words. Adam was created in the image and likeness of God but lost the image and likeness when he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The remainder of humanity was born in the image of fallen Adam, his sin being imputed to them, and his nature expressed by them. Adam is said in Romans 5 to be a figure of Him who was to come, Jesus Christ. How? He was a figure of Christ in that He was the representative of those that proceeded from him, were born of him. Christ is the representative of those that proceed from Him; born of His word, by His spirit, redeemed by His blood and given eternal life...the children that God has given him. As those in Adam are spiritually dead, those in Christ are made spiritually alive. A. W. Pink also made us aware of another distinction, a phrase used only twice in the Bible. When declaring the history or the progeny of someone in scripture, God uses the term "the generations of." But in verse 1 of this chapter and in verse 1 of Matthew chapter 1, the word "book" is added— "the book of the generations of Adam" and "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ." With Adam the word generation is plural— "generations." With Christ the word generation is singular. With Adam's progeny there were many sires. With Christ's progeny that was but one sire, the everlasting Father, Jesus Christ. The third verse of Genesis chapter 5 designates that this particular generation is that of Seth. This is his lineage and though in his time men began to

call upon the name of the Lord or call themselves the people of God, Seth and all that followed in his generations were born in sin, conceived in iniquity and were depraved rebels in their carnal nature that they inherited from their father and representative head Adam. The all were condemned in Adam. The full understanding of what it meant that they called on the name of God is not known but it is clear by the time of Noah it meant little more than religion...the entire world was in rebellion against God, of which the descendants of Seth were part and parcel. I think that Seth was graced by God and viewed in Christ, but grace is not obtained by osmosis or proximity or by the will of man or the will of the flesh or by bloods (ancestry). It is obtained because, according to His will and purpose, God freely and unconditionally bestows it upon whom He will. It is His glory to do so (Ex. 33:19-20).

One such character, one such recipient of that sweet grace is a man named Enoch. He is an example of a sinner saved by grace. His story is covered in this chapter in verse 18-24. It is mysterious and wonderful language that begins as all grace is realized...by revelation. He was sixty-five years old when a son was born to him whom he named Methuselah. This is perhaps the record of the revelation of God because what he named his son declared the coming of the judgment of the world. God had revealed himself as the judge of all the earth and Enoch gave his son the name that meant, 'after his death...the deluge.' With the birth of this boy God has promised to destroy the world and when this boy dies, God will make good on his promise. The mercy of God was also revealed in the naming of this boy because God caused him to live longer than any other man who ever lived (969 years). After Methuselah was born it is said of Enoch that he "walked with God for three centuries" (vv.23-24). The phrase "walked with God" conjures up many things to the religious mind. I can't begin to tell you all that I heard in my life about walking with God but most of it had to do with doing religious things and not doing things that religion forbade. Each

new pastor had his own “to-do” list of what it meant to walk with God by which he sought to control the lives of his congregants.

How did Enoch walk with God? First, he did so in the midst of a hell bound generation (6:5). He agreed with God, justified God in His wrath against men Amos 3:3, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” The initial proof of that agreement was that he named his son what he named him. How does one agree with God? To understand this, we must see what the scriptures teach of Enoch’s walk with God. He is mentioned in the 11th chapter of Hebrews as one of the heroes of the faith (Heb. 11:5). The first two words of this verse is the definition of what it is to walk with God. To walk with God is to walk by faith, to live in this corrupt dying and doomed world believing God in spite of what you see. We walk by faith and not by sight. How did Enoch get faith? He got it the only way that it is obtained– by grace (Eph. 2:8-9). And it comes only one-way, through the preaching of the Gospel (Rom 10:13-17). One walks with God believing his Word, plain and simple. Enoch had a testimony. Before he was taken up to be with the Lord, he had this testimony, that he pleased God. This is not what he said of himself but what others testified concerning him. In light of the New Covenant, in light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit inspires Paul to write that Enoch pleased God because he believed God (v. 6). What Enoch testified in his days was based on the promise that attended the birth of Methuselah (Jude:4-16). His testimony was against those ordained of old to this condemnation, those who follow the way of Cain. By faith, he pleased God and then he was gone from the earth. In Genesis it says, “he was not for God took him.” Hebrews says, “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him.” Because of the language, we look at this in wonder and awe and well we should, but we must pause and consider that this is the story of everyone who by grace have been given faith...to every believer, the

promise of God (John 11:25-26; Rev. 20:6). The believer's death of the physical body is but the beginning of life everlasting. We shall be translated (2 Cor. 5:1-9; Coll. 3:1-4). You can put your name in the place of Enoch in Genesis and Hebrews, ye who, by faith, walk with God (1 Cor. 15:51-58).

## DEPRAVITY AND GRACE

### Genesis 6:1-8

1, And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

2, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

3, And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

4, There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

5, And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6, And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7, And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

8, But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

This is the account of humanity expanding in the earth and the carnal bent of humanity to pursue any and every thought that its mind could generate. It is not a record of man seeking to grow

in grace but a record of mankind plunging into the depths of sin and depravity. Seven generations have come into being since Adam and the population of the earth has grown exponentially. Some have put the population to be in excess of a billion people, though that cannot be proven. At any rate, the language employed indicates a profound growth in population. These verses are an account of the result of that population expansion.

This is seen in the use of the word “when” in verse 1. When mankind began to multiply, some things began to come to pass, one of which was that the availability of both sexes began to flourish. This would enhance population growth. With that growth came a disaster that would plague the world unto this very day. It is described as the sons of God taking for wives the daughters of men. Much has been conjectured about this as to who is being described as the sons of God and the daughters of men. Looking at the context of what has been stated in the previous chapter and that the entire 5th chapter speaks of the lineage of Seth, it is reasonable to assert that the sons of God were those who called themselves by the name of God or those who called on God. This does not mean that they were as Enoch, who walked with God, but were those who claimed to be the people of God ...religious men. They were religious men but their actions concerning the daughters of men suggests that their religion was nominal at best. The daughters of men were the descendents of Cain, the vagabond and fugitive in the earth, the son of Satan who was a murder like his father. What occurred by this union was the thing that God prohibited throughout scripture the mixture of truth and error, darkness and light, grace and works, the doctrine of God and the doctrines of men. No mixture is allowed— none! This is seen in Leviticus and Deuteronomy as the children of God were about to enter the promise land. God prohibited any mixture with the pagans and their gods, knowing full well that it was exactly what they would do (Deut. 22:9-11). In the New Testament, Paul

dealt with the same problem (2 Cor. 6:14-18). It all began right here, and the results were disastrous and still are.

Their actions incurred the wrath and indignation of God (v. 3). It appears that a line in the sand has been drawn and men have crossed the line. This is the Spirit declaring that he will end His longsuffering with men and the 120 years mentioned alludes to the time of the preparation of ark (1 Peter 3:20).

Also, the result of this mixture brought about men of renown, which in turn brought about the concept of celebrity and men and women following men to the point of worship. These giants were not gigantic men physically but giants of industry, religion and politics. They were men who had gigantic influence in society and their influence was heinous as it enticed men to forget God and do whatever came to their carnal minds. The difference between the sons of God and the sons of Cain was in name only. This is so today, that religion has so embrace the world that there can be no differentiation between the two. Religion worships the will of men, the power of men and what they desire they pursue with reckless abandon, caring nothing for the things of God. As the Lord God looked down from heaven among the sons of men, he saw that the vileness of His creatures had reached great depths (v.5; Ps. 14:2-3). The giants among men were not great but their wickedness was. The entire thoughts of men, the entirety of their imagination was consumed with evil. The thoughts are said to be thoughts of the heart, that innermost part of man, where man is motivated in purpose and desire (Jer. 16:9; Mark 7:20-23; Eph. 2:3). The word "continually" simply means "every day," all the time, never ending. This is you and I by nature. One might think that the severe punishment that follows would have a positive effect on the minds and hearts of men, that consumed with fear they might change and repent of their evil. But punishment or the fear of it never has brought one man to repent (Is. 1:5; Gen. 8:21). It is the goodness of God, the revelation of grace and mercy through Christ that brings men to repent.



There is repentance here but not among men (vv. 6-7). The Lord declared His intent toward men. He would destroy them because their ways had grieved him at His heart that He had made men. The mind of God is beyond human comprehension. In wrath he will destroy mankind. In mercy and grace, He will save mankind. His intent to destroy men is called repentance. Repentance is a change of mind, but we know that God does not change in character and purpose. Repentance can also be a change of action, or action directed in a different way. In providence God may direct men one way and then alter his direction or cause time and tide to serve a different purpose. For Him to cause earth to be a foundation upon which men may stand and then cause the earth to open up and swallow them is the sense in which repentance is used. Whereas the Lord has been longsuffering with men for a time, He will now act in wrath toward men.

Then, at the end of the promise of vengeance, we find the word "but." And here we see the beauty and simplicity and singularity of grace as it is opposed to sin. Sin has a thousand avenues, set forth as wickedness, evil, vile imagination, and a diseased heart; broad roads that lead to destruction. There is a way that seemeth right unto men, but the ends thereof are the ways of death. But, grace, singular and absolute is just one thing, one way, one truth and one life. Man is not involved in it, does not contribute to it, cannot cause it, and cannot prevent it. His will and his works have naught to do with it. It is found in God alone and this one man, no different in nature than those doomed to destruction, found grace in God's eyes (v. 8). He was made to differ because God, alone, made it so. Oh, how much language it took to describe sin and but one word to describe salvation. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

# THE EFFECT OF GRACE

## Genesis 6:8-9

8, But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

9, These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

When Paul, the Apostle recounted his life of being before a persecutor of the church and his apprehension on the Damascus Road by Christ, he concluded that though he was the chief of sinners and an Apostle of the Most High; he was what he was by the grace of God. He attributed everything that had happened to him, and the place he now occupied in the church to the singular fact that God had shown him unmerited favor. The Psalmist said of the Lord's work, "It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves." Grace is for sinners and no one else. Our text declares that Noah, of all the people that dwelt on earth, was the only recipient of grace. Therefore, it is evident that when the Lord revealed Himself to Noah in grace, Noah was among and like those described in verse 5. God viewed Noah in grace because He viewed Noah in Christ. He viewed Noah in Christ because He had given Noah to Christ in eternal election and had made Christ to be to Noah, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Noah was part of that very small remnant according to the election of grace. He was, because he was elected, chosen, given faith to believe God and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Heb. 11:7).

The grace of God is effectual grace. It is not stagnant. It changes men in the eyes of God and before men and though they remain in the body of this death, they stand faultless and unproveable and unblameable in the sight of God. We must

always remember that regardless of circumstance, regardless of the innumerable faults, weaknesses and frailties that seem painfully evident in ourselves and our brethren, God's elect are without sin in His eyes and how God sees a thing is how that thing is. This is the first time the word grace is found in scripture.

Verse 9 reveals how God sees Noah and likewise how He sees you, if you have tasted that He is gracious. Before God, because of the substitutionary, propitiatory work of Christ, this is the description that God gives of His saints. This account begins with the words, "These are the generations of Noah." Though this surely speaks of the offspring of Noah and the generations that follow, it also speaks to the events that follow in this man's life. These words also address a new world. The generations of Adam will end with this man and a new world will begin with him. Thus, Noah in this is a type of Christ, the just man, the perfect man, the man who walked with God...the man in whom old things passed away and behold all things became new and all things are of God. The first thing that is revealed about Noah is that he was a just man. This means that he was a justified man. The question of questions is, "How can a man be just with God" (Job 9:1-2). God described Noah just before Him. How was he just? He was just or justified because he found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Rom. 3:24). He was a just man because he believed God, "the just shall live by faith." "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7). He was just because He was justified by the blood of Christ, not by any work of righteousness that he did (Gal. 2:16). This is the first time the word "just" is found on Scripture.

Secondly, the effect of grace is that Noah was perfect in his generations. This means that he was upright, a man of virtue and rectitude among the men with which he lived. Now men may be

quick to apply their various notions of how Noah was perfect or upright before men and before God. But he differed from the rest of his generation in that he feared God and moved with fear to prepare and ark. He was made to differ by what he received from God. The difference was the He revered God, held God in great reverence, believed God, God's word and in this he walked uprightly. But there is yet another application here. Before God, Noah was actually perfect, without sin because he had been perfected in purpose by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and would be made so in time by the death of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:12-18).

Finally, the effect of grace is that Noah "walked with God." Like Enoch before him who walked with God and was not because he was translated, Noah walked with God. This simply means that in a world of unbelief, this man believed God as is seen in the fact that when God warned of the coming flood and directed Noah to build and ark for the saving of his household, in faith he built that ark. Grace alone makes a man just, make a man walk uprightly, make a man perfect and make a man walk with God. "And Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord".

# THE MAN, THE ARK

## Genesis 6:11-22

11, The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

12, And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

13, And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

14, Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

15, And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

16, A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

17, And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

18, But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

19, And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

20, Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.

21, And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

22, Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

This is the record of God's promise to destroy the earth and its inhabitants with the waters of the great flood. As to the science of the flood, many books have been written and they make for interesting reading. The problem that I have with them is their method of approach to the subject. It seems that their treatises are designed to prove the veracity of scriptures, which is placing the colt before the Conestoga. The scriptures are the inerrant Word of God and science plays no part in proving them true. To use science in this manner is to deny the only way that scriptures are understood and that is by God-given faith. Men sometimes think that science gives empirical evidence of the validity of scriptures, but the only empirical evidence is faith itself, "the substance of things hopes for, the evidence of things not seen."

The ark was an amazing vessel. It has been said that the British built their dreadnaught battleships after the dimensions of the ark. There is theme park in Kentucky that is built around a full-size ark built on the specifications given in this chapter. Archeologists have spent years looking in the mountains of Ararat for the ark, but if they found it, men would worship it like they did the brazen serpent that Hezekiah destroyed and ground to powder. I have heard remarks from people that visited

the Kentucky sight saying things like they felt closer to God when they were there. If a thing, even a thing as impressive as an ark remake, causes one to feel closer to God, there is a true possibility, or better, probability that the meaning of the ark is not even known. That great vessel is a picture and type of the only way a person can be close to God. As the poet said, "Nearer to God I cannot be, for in His Son, I am as near as He."

We will consider the typology of the Ark and of Noah in weeks to come. This hour I want us to consider some things concerning the man and the Ark. The man and the ark are both types of Christ, and the theme is singular. It is the theme of the entire of scripture, the glorious theme that permeates every word, sentence, line, and paragraph of this sacred tome. That theme is the salvation of the elect by the substitutionary, propitiatory work of Jesus Christ. It is He whom Noah represents. It is He who the Ark represents. It is He who the covenant represents. It is He who the pitch represents. The word pitch is the same word used for atonement in scripture. Noah existed for the saving of the world. The Ark was made for the saving of the world. It was one man and one ark.

There are three Arks in scripture. They are vitally connected to three men in scripture. In each situation only one man is connected to the Ark. The first Ark and the first man connected to it are here in the record of the destruction of the world and the salvation of the elect (Heb. 11:7). This one man was given an arduous task, to build this enormous vessel by himself amid a world that had no interest in or belief in what He was doing. It is said that he was a preacher of righteousness and as all preachers of righteousness they are preachers of Christ (Romans 1:16-17) or in the case of the Old Testament the preachers of one, singular and absolute way of salvation. This is God's way of salvation, His way, His salvation and is the way that the world had corrupted (v. 12). There are numerous ways to corrupt the way of God, but they are all reduced to one thing, something added to the work of Christ. That ark was salvation and there

was no other way. That man was the one elect man on the earth, and he was about to be saved by that ark. God's Way!

The second ark in scripture is found in Exodus 2:1-10. The children of Israel were in captivity to Egypt. And a new king arose in Egypt who knew not Joseph. Because the children of Israel were multiplying, the king of Egypt began to fear an uprising and sent out an edict to the midwives that aided in the birth of Israelite children. That edict to kill all the male children born. A male child was born to a son of Levi and his wife, and he was a goodly child and she hid him for three months and when he could no longer be hid, she made an ark of bulrushes, pitched it within and without with slime and pitch and floated him down the river to be found of Pharaoh's daughter who in time adopted him as her son. In that ark was a child who would become a man who would be the savior and deliverer of Israel. He was commissioned of God to deliver Israel and He did and in doing so brought about the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the bottom of the Red Sea. One man and one ark, preserved for the salvation of God's elect people. Years down the road there would be another child born, who also was under the sentence of death by another cruel king. That child was preserved in Egypt until the death of that king and that child became the one man. He was the Son of God who was both the man and the ark who would save true Israel, the elect of God, the Israel of God. He would save them from the bondage of sin and Satan and self by His perfect sacrifice to God. One man, one ark the salvation of God's people.

The third Ark is found in Exodus 25:10. It is the Ark of the Covenant. That piece of furniture was central in the atonement of the people. It a chest made of shittim wood covered in gold. Inside the cabinet was the broken law, Aaron's rod that budded and a bowl of manna. The chest was covered with a solid gold cover and upon it were two solid gold cherubim with outstretched wings. Between the wings dwelt the Shekinah glory of God (Gen. 3:24). That cover was called the mercyseat and is



interpreted in the New Testament as propitiation or satisfaction or appeasement. Under the Old Covenant, it was over the mercyseat only where God would commune with the people in a 15X15 cubicle called the Holy of Holies or the most Holy place (Exodus 25:22). That communion was not however with the people in person. It was communion with the people's representative, the High Priest. He alone met with God, communed with God where propitiation was made, where God was propitiated for the sins of His people. That only happened one time a year on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest appeared before God with the blood of the lamb to make atonement for the people. One man, one Ark and the issue was atonement by blood for the sins of the people, God's elect. Years later there would be one Great High Priest who would enter the Holy Place not made with hands, with His own blood, the blood of the Lamb of God, to propitiate God for the sins of the elect. In fact, He was the propitiation (1 John 4:10). One man, one Ark and the elect's sins are remitted (Heb. 9:11-12). One man, One Ark and salvation is accomplished.

## A MAN ALONE

### Genesis 6:14, 22

14, Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

22, Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

The Lord has employed many men in history to do a work on this earth. But generally, that work has been one man alone. Of all the men on earth, God dealt with Abraham, or Joseph, or David, or Hezekiah or Isaiah or Amos of Samson or Ehud. This was done so that each of these men would typify the singular person and work of the One Man that, by Himself, saved His people from their sins, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God and there is none other and there is none beside Him; a just God and a Savior. Noah, alone, was chosen of God in a world that was corrupt and filled with violence, a world set for destruction. He alone was given the task of building of the ark to the saving and condemning of the world. The dimensions and the particulars of the Ark are specific and no doubt the task was enormous, seemingly impossible for one man. The work itself is not catalogued. There is no record of the gathering of the wood, the use of saw or adze of mortise and tenon or planer or joiner. There is no record of the gathering sufficient pitch to cover this vessel inside and out. What is said of this task that this single man undertook is that he was commanded to do it and he did it (vv. 14, 22). How this pictures our Lord in His work on Calvary! He did the work alone. Salvation laid entirely in the

hands of this man who is God incarnate. There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. Scripture says that He, by himself, purged our sins and sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. What a task was set before Him. In order to save the innumerable company, he must live perfectly among men, without sin in order to be a suitable sacrifice to God. He must face the horror of being made sin and bear up under the wrath of God and finally give up His life, to sovereignly cease to live, to die because that is the payment for the sin of the elect. Though His act was voluntary, He called it a command from God the Father (John 10:15-18). It is recorded in glorious fashion, that he finished the work. Like with Noah, little is recorded of the actual work that took place in the saving of the elect. In fact, it remains a great secret because God cut off the light for 3 hours when he dealt with His Son for our sins. What we do know is that “according to all that the Lord had commanded Him, did He.” He was obedient even to the death of the cross. The language employed in verses 14 and 22 recording only the beginning and the end suggests a couple of things. It suggests as it was begun the end was never in doubt. The Lord declared the end from the beginning (Is. 46:9-11). As it began, it was as good as done. Christ is the beginning and the end. Secondly it suggests a short work. The Lord said of his salvation that He would make a short work in the earth (Rom. 9:28).

Noah is depicted as the great provider of sustenance, food for life of his family and all the creatures that came into the ark (6:21). Christ is the bread and water of life and he who partakes of Him will never hunger or thirst. The believer feed on the Word.

Every thing and every one came to Noah in the Ark. He was the center, the object of all the creatures including his family (Gen. 7:15-16– “him”– one man). The promise of Christ in His naming was that he would save His people from their sin. And our Lord said to a world fraught with corruption and

violence, to those who stood by in religious unbelief, the sons of God and the daughters of men, “ye have seen me and believe not, All that the Father giveth me shall come to me (one man) and him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out.” The Father said of Christ, “This is my beloved son in who I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (John 5:23).

It is recorded in Hebrews 11:7 that Noah saved his house. Christ is said in that same epistle to be the Son over His own house and the record is that He saved those whom He came to save (Is. 53:10-12). All that came to Noah in the Ark, came out of that Ark alive, saved from the wrath of God (Gen. 8:18-19; John 6:38-39; 18:8-9; Rom. 5; 8-9).

Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices to God (8:20). See; Eph. 5:2. God blessed Noah and His house (9:1). See; Eph. 1:3. God established a covenant with Noah (9:8-9, 16). See: Heb. 13:20. One man alone fulfilling the purpose of God is the salvation of His people (Heb 10:12-18).

## SALVATION'S VESSEL

### Genesis 6:14-18

14, Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

15, And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

16, A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

17, And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

18, But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

The Ark that Noah built at the command of the Lord was the singular means employed for salvation. God ordered its dimensions and preparation. Who and what was to occupy the Ark was also according to God's purpose. Immediately we see that the Ark was a picture of Christ and His accomplished salvation. He is the singular means of salvation. There is salvation in no other. He is the way, the truth, and the life and no one will come to Him except the Father draw him. We see this in that God called Noah into the Ark and no other family on the face of the earth was called. The Ark was made to

withstand the wrath of God as He destroyed the earth and the inhabitants therein and come through that judgment secure and the singular haven of Noah and his family. The Ark was not destroyed. And so it was with our Lord. He bore up under the wrath of man and the full measure of the wrath of God against sin and emerge alive and vital to finish the work of salvation with his substitutionary and propitiatory death.

The Ark was not built in reaction to falling rain. God purposed the building of the Ark long before He brought the deluge. The means of salvation was firmly in place when the wrath of God fell on the world. So, it was with the salvation of the elect. Before the world was, in what the ancients called “old eternity” the triune Godhead planned and purposed the salvation of those God chose to save and the means of their eternal deliverance. In divine predestination and election, those to be saved were numbered and represented by Christ. Ere sin ever entered this world, there was already a successful surety and substitute firmly in place as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Christ’s entry into the world was not a reaction to man’s sin, it was the remedy for sin absolutely ensconced in the will and purpose of God before Christ gathered the dust in His hand and breathed life into it.

The Ark was built for the salvation of someone. It was not built for the salvation of the world but for a very small remnant according to the election of grace. It was Noah whom God favored in grace, and he and his family alone were those who were called to salvation. Christ came into this world to save someone. He came to this world to save His people from their sins. He laid down his life for His sheep. He died for His church. He finished salvation for those whom God, the Father, had given Him. It is they who the Lord calls by His Gospel (John 6:45; Acts 2:39; Roman 8:28-30; 2 Thess. 2:13-15).

The specifics of the Ark point to and picture Christ. It was large enough for all it was intended to save. Just as God has made all things necessary for Adam’s survival and welfare before

He made Adam, the Lord filled the Ark with provisions for all who would inhabit it; all things necessary for their salvation from the wrath to come. So it is with Christ. He is salvation and He is all things necessary for the sinner's salvation.

The Ark had but one door. It was the only way to enter and the only way to go out (John 10:9). There was but one window, only one source of Light. Christ is the light of the world. His word is light. The only source of light (understanding and knowledge) of God is found in Christ, through the preaching of His Word (Ps. 119:130; Isaiah 8:20).

The Ark was a picture of redemption accomplished. The glorious vessel was pitched within and without with pitch. It was sealed inside and outside. The word "pitch" is used numerous times in the Old Testament and is translated and interpreted "atonement." The word, used in this manner, means to cover or to take away. Pitched on the outside the atonement was toward God. Pitched on the inside the atonement was toward man. This is a picture of the mediatorial sacrifice of Christ. His blood was toward God to satisfy God's Law and justice. The blood was toward man as accomplished redemption is applied by the Spirit through the Word. The one mediator between men and God is Jesus Christ.

The Ark, finally, withstood the full fury and wrath of God against sin. Noah went through that fury, safe in the Ark because the Ark took the entire wrath due divine justice. Those in Christ went through the fury of God's wrath poured out on Calvary. They were safe and secure because the wrath of God fell on Christ, not on the elect (Ps. 89:32). He didn't visit you with stripes but rather your transgression as your substitute bore them and was wounded for our transgression and with His stripes we are healed (Psalm 103:10). He has dealt with them in Christ. Safe in Salvation's vessel.

## COVENANT

### Genesis 6:17-18a

17, And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

18, But with thee will I establish my covenant;

The account of the flood is the account of salvation. It is the record of a new beginning, starting over in a new world. It parallels the creation of the world recorded in chapter 1:1-3, which is a type of the new creation. The earth, as in the fall of Adam has become without form and void. Sin has had its day of ruin and “behold the Lord will make all things new.” There and here darkness was upon the face of the deep and God moved upon the face of the waters and said let there be light. Without light there is no color so light created the rainbow, which was the token of the covenant made with man. Sinful mankind has been destroyed and the earth has been altered forever. And only that which has been touched by grace survives. Noah comes forth from the Ark and steps into a new world. So it is with salvation. Just as Jacob crossed the brook and called it Jabbok (poured out) and after wrestling with Christ crossed back over the same brook, his walk forever changed, named the brook Penuel (“I have seen the face of God”)– same brook, different sight. This new world, seen only with the eyes of faith, is a magnificent machine while every cog and gear turns for the good of those who are included in God’s eternal covenant of Grace. If we were void of the influence of the flesh and could see things a God sees them, we would not change a thing. One man said, “Since I heard the good news, I ain’t heard no bad news.”



It's a new world and it is based on the covenant made with one man.

The initiator and author of the covenant is God and we do learn well who learn that God always operates through a covenant that He alone initiates and upholds (See: Chapter 9: vv. 11, 12, 13, 15). Note well, that though all living things benefit from this covenant, the covenant was made with Noah, who had found grace in God's eyes. All living things receive benefits for Noah's sake. So it is in the salvation of the elect. The elect receive all spiritual blessing for Christ's sake.

This covenant with Noah was ratified with blood (8:20). This verse should be the beginning of chapter 9 because all that is said thereafter is conditioned upon these sacrifices offered in chapter 8. This pictures the covenant of grace ratified and put in force by the death of the sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was his blood that satisfied God so that God would remember the sins of His people no more (Heb. 9:15-17, 22; 10:16-18). Thus, these offerings were designated as burnt offerings. The burnt offering is the first offering mentioned in Leviticus and is called the Law of the burnt offering. It was an offering of worship that declared that God was satisfied with the offering of Christ as the finished work of salvation by substitution and propitiation. Hands were laid on the head of the offering as in the sin offering but whereas the laying on of the hands in the sin offering represented the transference of sin to the sacrifice, in the burnt offering, the laying on of hands represented identity with the sacrifice, oneness with the sacrifice, being in the sacrifice when it was consumed by the fires of wrath. The burnt offering was an offering of worship for what God had done. It was an offering of thanksgiving and praise that God was propitiated. It was not the high priest that sprinkled the blood at the door of the tabernacle. It was the priests, the lineage of Aaron, picturing the church, the royal priesthood of God. The sacrifice was completely consumed, and the ashes were sprinkled around the altar as a reminder that the work was finished. The fat rendered

a sweet-smelling savor to God, a phrase employed throughout scripture to proclaim that the sacrifice of Christ pleased God (Is. 53:10; Eph. 5:2). What was being declared when Noah offered these burnt offerings? It was declared that God had poured out His wrath against sin and those whom He had graced were safe because they were in the Ark...they were in Christ. This is the basis of true worship, that God has been a just God and a savior, having bought His people with His own blood, and by His covenant satisfied His justice and manifested His mercy and grace...mercy and truth had met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

The symbol of the covenant was the bow or rainbow in the cloud. The creation of the rainbow is light. Without light, color does not exist. All things absorb light of the spectrum and the light they do not absorb determines the color they are by the light they reflect. Something is blue because it absorbs red and yellow rays and reflect a combination of the rest. It is called the bow in the cloud because it occurs after the storm. Justice having been satisfied, the light shines and the covenant is revealed. Mercy soars on the wings of satisfied justice. Christ is the light of world and in Him alone is the covenant of grace revealed.

# COME THOU

## Genesis 7:1

1, And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

The account of the Genesis flood is full of Gospel import. It is the story that has been repeated since the beginning, the story of salvation by the grace of God, the old, old story. It is the story of one chosen of God, grace bestowed upon him, faith given to him and his deliverance from the wrath to come. That salvation was of God, and it is a picture of the salvation wrought by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That picture is of complete salvation presented in the form of the enormous vessel that floated upon the torrents of God's wrath in utter security. The account of that great feat begins here in verse 1.

The last part of this verse addresses God's estimation of His servant Noah. The LORD says that He has seen Noah righteous in his generation. This is an astounding statement and cannot be understood apart from God-given faith through the preaching of the Gospel. Religion jumps on this like a duck on a June bug. It is an Ah Ha moment for them as they press the false notion that Noah was seen as righteous and as a result, God showed Him grace. This is the primary error of false freewill religion. Rather than the actor, they make God a reactor to the act of men. As to Noah being righteous, the Lord has declared in plain language that there is none righteous, no not one. That means that Noah, of himself, as he was born into this world, was a condemned sinner. He was not righteous and throughout his life until God met with him in grace, he never even had a righteous thought, did a righteous deed or exhibited a meritorious

moment. But since God has seen him righteous, then he is righteous, because God is not a man that he should lie.

You who know the gospel know full well the answer to the question I am about to ask. How can God see a man born in sin to be righteous? There is but one answer and it takes many forms in scripture. First God can only see a man as righteous if that man was represented by Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. There on that sacred tower, the Lord of Glory, robed in human flesh, in a miracle of justice and grace, of mercy and truth was made to be sin for his elect. In that Holy span of time, a few short hours he bore all the sins of all His chosen and drained the cup of the God's Holy wrath dry. He drank the dregs of that wine cup dry; so much so that there was not a drop of wrath left for those for whom He suffered and died. In that moment of victorious death, God almighty saw everyone that Christ died for as righteous...they were made to be the very righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).

But the elect were unaware of that great and wondrous event. They were born as Noah was, sons of Adam, born spiritually dead and having neither inclination nor affinity for the things of God. But in time, at the appointed time, God spoke to Noah and gave him faith to believe, to believe amid a corrupt and doomed world, to take God at his Word and believe even to building a vessel that would withstand a flood— a thing unheard of! Substitution is the way God sees his people as righteous. He speaks to them through the preached gospel, and they hear it as the very voice of Christ calling His sheep. They hear His voice, and they follow Him. And as in the case of Noah, and every other one of the elect, he accounts the faith that He has given them for righteousness. And what the elect learn in the Gospel is that God had put them in Christ before the world began and had made Christ to be their righteousness, their redemption, their sanctification, and their wisdom. This is how God saw Noah as righteous.

The first part of the verse is the revelation of what the elect hears when God calls him by the Gospel. And the LORD said unto Noah, "Come thou into the ark." Note the language. He does not say Go into the ark because God is in that Ark. And when the chosen hear the Gospel, the word "come" is the word they hear. And they come because the Father has taught them (John 6:45). They come because the Father is in Christ reconciling them (2 Cor. 5:19). They come because the Lord has revealed Himself to them (Matt. 11:25-28). They come because they are thirsty and hungry (Is. 55:1; Matt. 5:6). They come because the Holy Spirit and the church tells them to come. They come because the one who has heard the Gospel tells them to come. They come because they are willing to come (Rev. 22:17; Ps. 110:3). They come because they hear the voice of the great shepherd (John 10:27). They come because the Father has given them to the Son (John 6:37). They come because the Lord has chosen them and causes them to come (Ps. 65:4; Is. 43:5-7). That Ark is Christ. "Come thou into the Ark."

## INNATE DEPRAVITY

### Genesis 6:5; 8:21

6:5, And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

8:21, And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

In these two verses, we have the clear declaration that the condition of the heart of man has not been altered one whit by the destruction of all that is. The reason for the slaughter of humanity is made clear and is certainly known. Noah and his sons and their wives knew why the Lord was going to destroy the earth and, experimentally, they had witnessed the deluge and its attendant slaughter. They had spent many days riding upon the waters of vengeance and had landed safely on the other side of God's wrath. Before they went into the Ark there were millions of men and women treading upon the dry ground of this planet. Now there was but four men and four women, the entire sum of the human race. And these eight have seen the effects of God's wrath and have likewise seen the effects of God's mercy. One would think that such an experience, such knowledge, such experimental education would reach to the heart and mind of such. Surely the experience of seeing the natural world permanently altered would, in turn, change the last vestige of humanity. But, before us in these two verses, is

the indisputable fact that the condition of man's heart remains the same. The intractable nature, inherited from Adam, the carnal mind remains resolute in its capacity for and bent toward evil. Before the flood, "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." After the flood, "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." This is the fact, the sad, utterly absolute fact. Nature cannot be changed, ever. Seeing God's wrath and His sovereign power may cause one to adjust his behavior; to out of fear of punishment, fear of censure or loss of reward, make reformation of his life. But nature, carnal nature, Adamic nature will never and cannot ever change and cannot be altered. "Who can bring a clean thing out of and unclean; not one" (Rom. 8:7-8). This is depravity. It is innate, as common to humanity as the air it breathes. God does not change man's nature when a person finds grace in His eyes. He gives him His Spirit and it is the Spirit of God, in a man, that is able to subdue the continual influence of the flesh, though that nature will not be eradicated until it is buried in the ground (Gal. 5:17).

Religion spends its energy, time and money in a vain and futile effort to alter nature, to put new clothes on the carcass, to whitewash the tomb, to clean the outside of the cup, but the dog always returns to its vomit and the pig to its wallow. Oh, religion nominally embraces the doctrine of the sinfulness of man, even to calling their view "depravity," but they deny it altogether by asserting that this depraved, dead, and sinful creature retains the capacity to invent faith out of manure and choose good when he is only capable of sin— his mind and heart consumed with thoughts of evil continually. The fact is that the depraved mind cannot begin to grasp its own depravity. It is not truly known until God, in His sovereign grace, makes a man alive to truth, by regeneration, by giving him spiritual life. Even then, that knowledge is received by faith, believed, though graciously the recipient of this grace of life is never made privy to the depth of the knowledge of his own vileness. What I do

know of my own depravity shames me to my core, and I have but caught a glimpse of it. What I do know of it drives me with all speed to the feet of the Savior.

Man, natural man, carnal man cannot perceive that he is truly depraved. We have an example of that in the word of God (2 Kings 8:1-15). "What, is thy servant a dog." He had no idea that he was a murderer, but he was, and he murdered the king. Carnal man does not know and does not believe that he is capable of such atrocity, he is not only capable; it is his natural bent and tendency.

Before the display of God's wrath there were millions that inhabited the earth. After the display of God's wrath there were but 8 souls! The judgment of God had changed geography but it did not change man's nature. So, we preach the Gospel to dead men, knowing three absolute things. First, we know that dead men can do nothing; they cannot hear; they have neither inclination nor affinity, capability nor desire to attend to the things that are said. Secondly, we know that the same Gospel is the instrument of life for those whom God has ordained to life. Thirdly we know that though God had shown grace to His elect, giving them faith to believe the Gospel, that their nature is not changed and will not change. They will be, till death comes for them, sinners saved by grace.



## EXPOSED

### Genesis 9:18-29

18, And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan.

19, These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.

20, And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:

21, And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

22, And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

23, And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24, And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

25, And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

26, And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

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

28, And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

29, And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.

In the study of the first days of the created world and the newly altered world of the days of Noah and his progeny, it is important to note that the times of events and their chronology are not always in order of occurrence. Neither is the amount of time recorded, save in the record of the life span of the fathers. How much time has passed from the exit of the Ark to the planting of a vineyard is not known, but it is apparent that some time has expired because verse 18 indicates that Canaan was already born to Ham. In fact, some say that it was Canaan that discovered the nakedness of Noah because he received the curse and not Ham. Suffice it to say that however long it took to plant a vineyard, bring it to productivity, harvest the grapes, make wine and imbibe same, was a substantial amount of time.

This account in Noah's life is a picture, another repetition of the picture of the fall. All the elements are here. The water, the Spirit and the Ark moving upon the face of the deep, the command of light to shine, the singular window through which all light come comes, gardens, tillers of the ground, the promise of the Messiah, the burnt offering, the slaying of beasts, the world made anew and the revelation of natural depravity is the story that is declared in type and picture and shadow throughout the entire Old Testament, the old, old story, the everlasting Gospel.

In this episode, it is as if the declaration in chapter 8 and verse 21, "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" is ominously illustrated. It is further an illustration that everyone who has tasted the grace of God, found grace in God's eyes, is but a breath from falling into sin, succumbing to the pleasures of the flesh. Believers are not mighty creatures. They are sinners saved by grace. As Mark, who didn't like to serve, as

Paul and his Jewish ceremonies, as Peter and Barnabas at Antioch, believers will bend to the will of the flesh and the only thing that will keep them from the full realization of ruin it is the restraining grace of God. Never mistake the restraining grace of God as indicative of your personal strength or personal righteousness.

Noah's sin, his error is the demonstration of Paul's words in Romans 7, "With my mind I serve the Law of God, with my flesh I serve the Law of sin and death." Noah has had tremendous experiences. He has seen the power and the wrath of God, the grace of God and His wondrous salvation. Surely, such a one will stand as the stalwart exemplar of great faith, great resilience, great strength, and incomparable honor. Surely, sin would not stand a chance against such a brave soldier of the cross, who has experienced the power of grace freely bestowed. Where do we find such a dedicated man, one who has obeyed God, built an ark and saved the world alive? Is he in the sanctuary in fervent prayer? Is he spending his days in meditation of the glories of his Maker? Is he out and about winning souls for Jesus? No, he is drunk, three sheets to the wind, having over-enjoyed the fruits of his labor. Drunkenness is sin and to add insult to injury he is passed out, sans raiment, buck naked (exposed) in his tent. This is Noah, the recipient of grace, a man whose sins will be remembered no more, who stands before the thrice Holy God as redeemed and righteous, holy and sanctified...a child of the Father of lights in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. This is Noah, by Christ made a king and a priest unto God, fraught with frailty, his mind void altogether of thought, lying in an alcoholic stupor. Ever let us be aware that we are incapable of keeping ourselves. Let us continually fall in the arms of mercy. Even in this sad estate, defenseless, Noah is yet the object of grace. When his son does his deed, it is God who stands for him as a defender of his honor and integrity. As weak as he is, as wrong as he has done,

he is God's child, and one cannot touch the Lord's anointed without paying the price born of engendering God's anger.

Ham's sin was to mock his father's nakedness, to make sport of the one whom God had chosen, to look down on one whom God has loved (See Matt. 18:10-11). We who have children know full well what they are and do. Sometimes *we* remind them of the fact but will countenance no one else to speak ill of them without raising our dander. God knows his children and often reminds them of what they are, but he will countenance no accusation against them by anyone, lest His anger is kindled. My mom taught me that if I had nothing nice to say about someone, to say nothing. Best learn that lesson when speaking of God's children.

There is a possibility that it was Canaan who first saw Noah's nakedness and when he told his father Ham, Ham joined him in his laughter. It was Canaan, after all, that received the curse. That curse was servitude. Many an ersatz theologian have ventured theories as to what, and to what extent that servitude or slavery meant. Since the Bible simply states it as fact and does not elaborate, maybe we should quell any notion of adding to the Word of God. If we take the words of God as prophetic, would they not fit the scheme of Israel ultimately defeating and occupying the promise Land, Canaan. This we know as fact and fact trumps theory every time.

Two things are to be learned from this account in the life of Noah. First, God's children are sinners saved by grace. Secondly God is our defense and will deal with those who oppose according to His will and according to His schedule. "Fear not little flock, it is the Father's pleasure to give you the kingdom."

## PROFANE TYRANT

### Genesis 10:8-10

8, And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

9, He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

10, And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

In this passage we are introduced to a character that is intimately tied to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the originator of the false religion that encompasses all that is against God and the religion that, in the end, will be annihilated by the word of the Lord's mouth, Babylon the Great will be brought to a sudden, violent, and bloody end. That monstrous religion that will seduce many nations of people begins here in 10th of Genesis with a single man whose name was Nimrod. His name and how he is described tells us much about his character and his pursuits. His name means valiant and rebellious. The phrase, "He began to be" means "profaned," which suggests that rather than being a great man for good, he profaned what a great man should be. The description of "a mighty one in the earth" comes from the root word meaning tyrant. Also in this description is the element of pride before the Lord. He was a valiant, proud, tyrannical, rebel. The Jewish Encyclopedia describes Nimrod as "he who made all the people rebellious against God." He is also called a mighty hunter "before the Lord." The word "before" has nothing to do with position or location or proximity but rather attitude. It means "in your face" and speaks to overt, prideful

rebellion. He was not only a hunter of beasts but was a hunter of men, by all accounts, an astute politician.

This is the man who, with his descendants, would settle in the place that would later get the name Babel. The valley of Shinar is where the tower was built and would later be where Nebuchadnezzar would erect a ninety-foot-tall gold tower where Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would refuse to worship, be cast into the fire and be saved by the Lord. What this tells us is that the religion that was founded by Nimrod, and its place of worship never ceased. His influence carries on to this day among all who would reach heaven by the works of their hands.

Nimrod was a king and a priest. The first earthly kingdom is found here in verse 10. He is a preincarnate counterfeit of the Lord, who alone is king of kings and the great high priest. His religion is well defined in chapter 11 with the building of the tower of Babel. Nimrod died and history records that his body was cut in pieces and sent to different areas of his kingdom, a practice sometime employed in the Middle East (Judges 19:29, I Sam. 11:7). Whether that record is true is not known but what is known is that Nimrod's religion did not die with him.

It was carried on and expanded and was ultimately embraced by, so called, Christianity that, to this day, carries on many of its practices and exhibits much of its symbolism. The one who propagated and enlarged Nimrod's religion was his widow. After Nimrod died, his queen, Semiramis declared that Nimrod was the sun-god. One of the names by which he was called was Baal. Sometime after Nimrod's death and his promotion to deity, Semiramis got pregnant. She told all who would hear that the sun-god had visited her and impregnated her. She bore a son and she claimed that the child born to her was the son of god, the incarnation of Nimrod. No doubt, she knew of the prophecy of Genesis 3: i5 and claimed that her son was the messiah, the seed of woman...another counterfeit. The son was named Tammuz, and his symbol was the cross, a pagan religious symbol, that long preceded the cross of Christ, but was

adapted by Christianity as a religious symbol. Also, the symbols of Tammuz were ritual fires, candles, rosary beads, halos, fish and all manner of beasts (Romans 1:21-26). The golden calf that Aaron built at the base of Sinai and named Elohim was a symbol of Tammuz and Nimrod

Also, it was not only Tammuz that was worshipped. Semiramis was also worshipped as the mother of God and was the beginning of Madonna and child. That type of the divine mother-goddess permeated the religions of the world. From Asia to Europe, to India, when the tongues were confused at Babel, Semiramis and Tammuz had different names, but she was worshipped as the mother-goddess, often pictured or in statue form as mother and child. In China, she was Shingmoo, in Ancient Germany she was Hertha, the Druids called her Virgo-Paritura, in India she was Indrani or Devaki and Chrishna and in Asia she was Cybele, and her son was Deoius, in Egypt she was Isis and her son, Horus to name a few. In scripture she is named Ashteroth, the queen of heaven and Diana of Ephesus. In Rome she became Mary and Jesus and the various statues of the mother-goddesses of other religions were renamed Mary and Jesus and given the title of Mediatrix and co-redemptrix. They are all Semiramis and Tammuz the whorish widow of Nimrod, whose religion is called the great Whore Babylon. This is Nimrod, this is his religion, doomed to destruction at the coming of Christ (Rev. 18:1-19:6)

## A CITY, A TOWER

### Genesis 11:1-4

1, And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

2, And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

3, And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

4, And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

This is the record of a city and a tower ever to be set as the example of man's rebellion against God. It is recorded in Holy Writ that men sought to build a city and a tower that would reach to heaven. This is probably hyperbole as it was common language, even as it is today, that a tall structure is said to reach the heavens (Deut. 1:28). No rational being could think such an edifice could be erected that would actually find its pinnacle in heaven. What we have in this episode is the rebellious counterfeit of the church of the Living God. The intent of Babylon was to reach God but to reach Him on the terms of man's ability and power, ingenuity, and wherewithal. In this chapter we have this city begun by men, followers of men like Nimrod and in the end of the chapter, we have another man, elect of God who will spend his life in hope, looking for a city whose builder and maker is God, the true church.



The motivation for the building of Babel is ever the motivation of natural human religion. It is twofold (vs. 4). First, it is to make a name for themselves. I remember, well back in the 70s, a full-page advertisement in the Wall Street Journal and Sentinel, bought and paid for by Jerry Fallwell's church. It promised the biggest Sunday school in the world. Today many churches claim huge numbers and affirm great and powerful political and societal influence. They are making a name for themselves. They have done mighty wonders, cast out demons, preached in the Name of Christ, yet it is iniquity and are and will be commanded to depart from Christ because He never knew them. The true church is only interested in making a name for Christ (Ps. 29:9). This is the intent, mind, and heart of the believer, to give glory to God alone in that which alone glorifies God (Ex. 33:19). To glorify God is to honor His Son in the revelation and accomplishment of all that honors the Father, the complete manifestation of His goodness, the proclamation of the Lord, showing mercy to whom He will show mercy and being gracious unto whom He will.

Secondly, more subtle but nonetheless iniquitous is the inward willingness to rebel against God's word. God had commanded the sons of Noah to multiply and replenish the earth. Their rebellion is clearly seen in the last phrase of verse 4. They sought to build this city and this tower so they would not be, "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Rebellion against God's word is the norm of the false church. They do not declare that it is their bailiwick but when confronted with the truth that Christ alone is salvation, that those whom He has saved are those who were chosen to salvation and predestinated to be conformed to the likeness of God's son— who were called by the Gospel to the obtaining of Christ's glory, and whom He called, He justified and glorified. To these, Christ was made to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption and the sinner saved played absolutely no part in any of his salvation. The city and the tower

that men build is their safeguard against the word of God (Gen. 19:17-21 “not so Lord”). “We will not have this man to reign over us”.

The building materials employed in building this city and this tower are significant. They were not the best materials, like stone and mortar. These were not readily available in the plains of Shinar. So the people must invent ways to build. They made bricks straw and mud and dried them in the sun. They gathered slime or pitch from the pits near the Euphrates for mortar, The pitch from these pits were used for many things, they served as a seal on the Ark and could be hardened and used for mortar, but extreme, prolonged heat could alter its stability. This city and this tower had no rock for its foundation but they men were determined in their commitment to build. God had made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions. The ways employed by the counterfeit church to build itself are manifold, everything from the invitation farce to banana Sunday for seeing who can bring the biggest bunch, to fill a pew day or karate for Jesus, or fleecing the poor and needy to fill its coffers with filthy lucre, all handmade bricks and mortar. But the most prominent invention is the building blocks of human merit and self-righteousness (Rom. 10:1-4). Their city and tower are built with the work and labor of the hands of men. Its end is a sad state of incompleteness. It will not prevail. Its destruction is as sure as the purpose of God and confusion is its existence (Dan. 9:7-9).

But brethren, I have good news. There is another city and another tower that is not built on a flimsy foundation not the labor of the hands of men. It is a city whose builder and maker is God; the heavenly Jerusalem that is the mother of us all. This city and tower is built upon the Rock and the foundation is the doctrine of the apostles and the prophets. Its building materials are lively stones, living stones and its mortar is the Word of God. It is a Holy city, and a Holy temple that is the habitation of the Most High (Ps. 132:13). The inhabitants of the man-made church are devils, the hold of every foul spirit and a cage

of every hateful and unclean bird. The true church is the Israel of God (Eph. 2:19-22). This city is complete (Coll. 2:9-10). This city has tower (Ps. 18:2). This city reaches to the heaven of God (Eph. 2:4-6). Read Hebrews 12:18-24.

# CONFOUNDED

## Genesis 11:1-9

1, And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

2, And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

3, And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

4, And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

5, And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6, And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

7, Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8, So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

9, Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and

from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

This is a very familiar portion of scripture. The confounding of language is of such common knowledge that where it took place has become proverbial. To this day when folks talk in a manner that is confused or ridiculous, we call it babble. There is even a new teaching program on the market whereby one learns a new language and its trademark name is Babel. When I first heard of the program, I thought it was poor marketing, but I realized that few know the meaning of what happened at Babel so the record of it had taken on the concept of lore or legend. It had become something that only referred to language. But there is much more here, not the least of which is God's sovereign manipulation of his creatures. The sons of Noah were to disperse and possess the new world. But they had rebelled, not in open rebellion but in the sense of desiring safety and comfort they had stayed put, enjoying the idea of cities and society. They all spoke the same language, and everyone could freely communicate with each other. Why leave and venture into the unknown? Language held them together (v.1). But God will have them separate and move to the utter parts of the earth. So, the exaltation of Nimrod and the establishment of his kingdom, the people communicating about his might and influence revealed the sacred scheme to populate the entire earth. By bringing the world, as it were, to one place with a singular frame of mind and a singular goal, coupled with the frenzy of following a cult leader who had told them that they were going to, by their will and power and merit, reach God; the fulfillment of God's purpose ensued. At this point, at the height of their religious zeal, the people suddenly cannot understand one another. They speak with the language miraculously placed in their brain and it is gibberish to the ears of those they speak to. The only thing to do is keep speaking until you find someone who can speak your language, upon which, you will search for others like yourself, and communities and societies will begin to form and separate

unto themselves. Thus, the earth is populated. It is language that both gathers and separates societies. For a society or community to form and function, the necessity of communication, of a singular language is absolute.

As all things in the Old Testament, there is a spiritual meaning to the natural occurrences recorded. And this occurrence is enormous. Its ramifications are in force this very hour. The inhabitants of Babel, though now speaking in different tongues, do not differ in their religion. Whatever corner of the earth that they would eventually inhabit, they would yet believe that can reach God, reach heaven by their will and the work of their hands. They carried Babylon with them wherever they went. Their tongues are confused but their religion is established. Regardless of their differences, they have an internal mindset, an intrinsic heart's desire— eternal life; heaven, nirvana, reincarnation, utopia; all achieved by making oneself better, presentable, and suitable for God to accept. Religion is the common carnal language of the universe.

But out of this catholic cacophony (catholic meaning universal), scripture declares that out of every tongue, nation, tribe and people, God had chosen a number whom He will save, pluck, as it were, as firebrands from the burning, an innumerable company of Babylon's inhabitants. One by one, He will call them saying "come out of her my people and be not partakers of her fornication." And they shall come (John 6:37, 45; 10:26-29; Is.43:5-7).

How will they come? They will come because they have been given ears for a new language. A language that only they and their fellow elect can hear and understand. It is the first thing God does for them, giving them life through language, through words, new words (Zeph.3:9; John 5:25). They will be of one language (Heb. 1:1-2). That language is good news, good tidings of good things, words that publish peace and salvation that say to God's people, "thy God reigneth." They find that they are not even a participant in their salvation. That it is the act of

sovereign God alone. If they travel to the utter parts of the earth, though they may find themselves hearing natural words they cannot understand, they will find family and unity with those who are of like precious faith, because they speak precisely the same heavenly tongue. I was told this week that the book I wrote on Galatians is being translated into some languages in India. I'm sure I could not read it with understanding, but I am likewise sure that if I ever meet one of the brethren who embrace the truth therein, that we would be of one tongue and be of one consent. That language is the Gospel, Christ and Him crucified. It is the voice of our Savior, heard in our ears and heart.

But here is the rub. The language that the Lord has given His people, the language that He speaks is a foreign language. Look at Psalm 2:1-4. The word "derision" in verse 4 means to speak to them in a foreign language, a language they cannot understand. Everyone knows that when someone speaks to you in a foreign language to you or in proximity, the paranoid human mind thinks that you are the subject of conversation, and you feel a kind of derision. The language of God and His people is foreign to the world. Babel cannot understand the Gospel, it derides them, and they respond in hate (John 15:19). We speak this foreign language, the vernacular of heaven and the world and its carnal, natural religion think us fools. They cannot understand (1 Cor. 2:14-16). He confounded the language at Babel but suffered men to keep their religion, because He had purposed to bring His people to one language, "abounding toward them in all wisdom and prudence", giving them an "unction from the Holy One and they know all things." Yet they, themselves are "judged by no man" and "the world knows them not because they knew Him not." (Read 1 Peter::6).

# JUST WORDS

## Genesis 11:1-9

1, And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

2, And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

3, And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

4, And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

5, And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6, And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

7, Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8, So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

9, Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and



from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Many years ago, there was a famous lawyer that went to hear a preacher and after the message met the preacher at the door of the church. The lawyer said to the preacher, "I've a book in my library that has that sermon you just preached in it word for word." The preacher was taken aback because he had, just the night before, written that sermon himself and he told the lawyer, "I'd like to see that book." The lawyer took the preacher home with him and upon entering his library went to a shelf, took off a large volume and handed it to the preacher. It was a dictionary. The preacher thought the lawyer was playing a joke until the lawyer looked at the preacher and said, "your sermon was just words preacher, just words." The problem with the lawyer was that he heard words and was able to define the words he heard but those words made up a language and the language made up by the words was beyond the lawyers' ability to understand. The Bible is book, a book filled with words, words from God himself. To many they are just words— they can be defined, as to tense, voice, and syntax but these words from a language and to all but those who have been made spiritual life, that language is beyond their ability to grasp. Language defines, distinguishes, and unites a people but not always for good. No natural or carnal language has ever or will ever unite a people for the cause of God and truth. I read a statistic back in the last century. Statistics declare that of the world's 6,800 languages between one-half and seventy percent of them would be extinct by the turn of the century. The statistic was used to support the idea that the world, in the not too distant future, would be of one language. Language is important. How important? Back in the late 90s there was a story in the papers about a Hungarian man that had come home. What made this story significant was that he had spent the last 50 years, since WWII in fact, in a Siberian labor camp. In that place he was considered a lunatic. For 50 years he had been disregarded and thought to be a mad

man. The guards at the prison were Russian and did not speak Hungarian. They thought the man was speaking gibberish and all the while he was merely speaking a language that they did not understand. For half a century, this poor soul resided in a small cell, isolated from the world in the frigid Siberian tundra and isolated from those around him by the language that he spoke. In the 90's, after perestroika and glasnost, things loosened up a little in the former Soviet Union. A doctor was sent to this Siberian outpost to check on the health of the prisoners. That day was a blessed day for this sad Hungarian. The doctor that came to his prison was Hungarian and understood the "gibberish" of that prisoner. The doctor was not only Hungarian but from the same dialectical region of the prisoner. He heard the man's story, and when it was related to his superiors, the prisoner was set free. I wonder what light entered that cell when that poor man, doubly imprisoned first with iron bars and razor wire and much greater, imprisoned behind the impenetrable walls of the inability to communicate. What a moment that must have been when the doctor understood the gibberish of this prisoner. In that moment, though still in the bondage of man-made bars, language had made him to mount on eagle's wings and soar the stratosphere of freedom. His mind was loosed, and his heart was free. A short while later he was released from that prison and was returned home because his physician spoke words he understood and understood words he spoke. Language communicated set him free. In our text is the record of the breakdown of human language, rather the breaking down of human language because it is the Lord who confused the languages (read 10:8-0; 11:1-9). This is where language barriers were established by God, which resulted in the disbursement of humanity to the four corners of the earth. The disbursed congregated in mass with those of like language, with those with whom they could communicate. Borders were established and nation rose from the dust; cultures, and commerce were established. Everything changed, except for

one thing. Though the inhabitants left Babel, they carried the religion of Babel with them. Babel is Babylon, the mother of Christ-less religion. It is the religion of human merit, manifest in collective effort, an incorporation of politics and religion to bring about a state where men by their power and will can build their way to heaven itself (v. 4). It is motivated by the power of man to insure the exaltation of man (v.4). It is designed to increase numbers, and control men by political, sociological, and religious influence. Fallen humanity is joined together, even across language barriers, in a single enterprise of self-deification to erect a man-made way to heaven. Unrestrained it wields great influence (v. 6). But it is restrained, its efforts at power to employ the faculties of its depraved cerebral cortex to manufacture a justification, sanctification and righteousness that will satisfy God, is thwarted by the true and living God and the means that he uses is language. He dispersed humanity by confounding their language and put them in a state of eternal and futile struggle to build their way to heaven. He has destroyed the end by bring His people to a singular language. He who destroyed the pipe dreams of human religion by confusing tongues, has instituted true religion by returning His people to a common language (Zeph. 3:9). This language unites His people and separates them from all other languages. His language is the Gospel of sovereign grace in Christ. In fact, Christ is the language of God (Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:1-2; 8:31-32). This is the Christ, God's dear Son and He is the divine communiqué, the heavenly edict, the language of the Spirit. He is the Christ, to whom God has given all, by whom God created all things, who is the outshining effulgence, the blinding brightness of God's glory, the express image, the image of the invisible God, yea very God Himself, the Christ that upholds all things by the Word of His power, originating, terminating, subjugating all that is...the Christ who by Himself, just Him , only Him... treading the winepress alone, purged our sin...yes purged, put away, annihilated, eliminated, did in, removed, remitted,

liquidated, decimated, exterminated, propitiated and expiated our sin (blessed generic declaration)...our sin, all of it, all of them. The mountain of them brought down, the crookedness of them mad straight, the scarlet and crimson of them made white as snow. Having done the wonderful, having succeeded in the humanly impossible, having finished the works, he sat down, entered into His rest...as an old lion, and who shall rouse Him up, stir Him up, molest his earned repose, entice Him, bribe Him, change Him? He sits in majestic inimitable glory! His mission is accomplished— fete o' complee! This is the language of God, and as language unites, it also divides (1 Cor. 2:14-15; Ps. 2:1-4— derision). Everyone here either understands this language or the language of Babel. Is this language or are you catching a word here and there but not understanding. When you hear this language does it make it seem that you are one the outside looking in, a stranger to those who hang their souls on the words spoken. This is the power of the language of God (Rom. 1:16-18; 2 Cor. 2:14-16). I pray God to give you ears to here, to create in you and insatiable hunger and thirst for Christ...Hear His word, His language— “And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever— I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, for I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Christ said, “I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” “Behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect and precious, and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.”

...we are bound to give thanks always 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 in the truth; whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but it is not given unto them...ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things...so then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God...the Lord giveth the hearing ear and the seeing eye...blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear...how is it Lord, that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not to the world...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...my words, they are spirit and they are life...who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed, whom shall he teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine... them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breast, for precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little, for with stammering lips and another tongue will I speak to this people, for I will turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent (Acts 2:3-13...these all heard one thing in their own language... they heard the language of God. vv. 22-36.

# ABRAM

## Genesis 11:27-32

27, Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.

28, And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.

29, And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

30, But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31, And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

32, And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

Most of the remainder of chapter 11 is devoted to the genealogy of Shem, the first born of Noah and the man who began the lineage that would produce Abram and, in time, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Abram's father was Terah. He and his family settled in Mesopotamia in a place called Ur, which was in the land of the Chaldeans (Acts 7:2,4). Terah decided to move his family to the land of Canaan, so they all packed up and headed out but stopped in the land of Haran. There, Terah died and at the time Abram was called of God to go to a place that God would show him, he dwelt in Haran.

Three prominent characters, characters that would play significant roles in the canon of scriptural history are introduced in these verses. All three of these characters are the elect of God and each are pictures of the manifold grace of God. Abram, later named Abraham, would stand forever as the Father of the faithful. He occupies an honored place throughout the Word of God. He would be the first of whom it was said "he believed God and it was imputed to his as righteousness." The doctrine of imputation and its inextricable union with faith begins with Abraham. When the Lord inspires men to describe Himself, He is described as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Isaac and Jacob were the son and grandson of Abraham. These three men form an important theme in the theology of salvation. Abraham was called to live for promise, to look for a city that he would only see by faith; His children are believers in Christ and are called heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:29). He was given no set of laws, nor was he told to work for the realization of the promise. He kept no Sabbath, knew nothing of a priesthood, had no written word. He was called by the Living Word and he believed God (Romans 4:1-8).

Isaac was a born by the will, power, and spirit of God, not by natural generation. He was a child of promise and the seed of the called of God. He had a half-brother named Ishmael, born of the power of the flesh and the Lord would not allow the son of the spirit and the son of the flesh to dwell together and the son of the flesh was cast out. These two became a picture and example of the contrariness of the flesh against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh (Gal. 4:27-31; 5:17). Jacob will stand forever as the example of electing love and the kind of people that God has chosen to salvation and the indisputable truth that God does not love everyone and His electing love is unconditional (Romans 9:10-12).

The second character revealed is Sarai, later named Sarah, who is picture of the church, the free woman, the New Jerusalem that is above, the mother of us all. She, of herself is

barren, having no capability of bringing forth children. But like Hannah of old, it was the Lord that shut up her womb that he might open it and all glory for the offspring of the union would redound to the glory to God alone. If she applies to the flesh to have a child, that child born will not be allowed to abide with the child born of God's power. She may have doubts, even laugh at the promised children being born to her, but even if she does not believe, God abideth faithful and will not allow His word to fail. It is her union with Christ and by His Spirit, through His word, she shall bring fruit, fruit unto life and that fruit will remain. The word we have of her in this passage is, "Sarai was barren; she had no child." But that is not the end of her story, only the beginning, for later, after God visited her, it is said of her, "... Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband."

Finally, we are introduced to Lot. He will stand forever as a picture of the justified sinner, the sinner saved by grace whom God knows how to deliver from temptation (2 Pet. 2:6-9). Though he was righteous in Christ, justified by blood and by grace, the thing that is reported of him is that though he was vexed in his soul, he was tempted to stay and must be delivered by the hand of God. Lot loves cities and felt safe there behind their walls. The world offers a tempting safety and only God can deliver us from its temptation. These are the characters that will occupy our studies for some time to come.



# DEATH

## Genesis 11:31-12:1

31, And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

32, And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

1, Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

These verses account for the call to Abram to leave his homeland and, by faith venture to a land that the Lord would show him. The destination is mentioned in 11:31 but not in 12:1. This gives rise to the idea that Abram may have been called twice to go out from his homeland, once in Ur and then again in Haran. However, the call is not mentioned in the 11th chapter and makes the journey more of an historical account, a simple statement of facts and the record in 12:1 is an illumination of the account that declares God to be the reason behind the sojourn. Both Ur and Haran are in Mesopotamia so it might have been that God called Abram twice to leave; first in Ur and then in Haran after the death of his father, Terah. As is often the case, the New Testament account of an historical account that took place on the Old Testament is the full exposition of the record. We have such an exposition in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 7, when Stephen disputed with the accusers among the Jews (see vs. 2:4). According to Stephen, remembering that these words are recorded by inspiration, the series of events followed this

scenario. Abram was called of God to leave the Ur of Chaldees and venture to a Land that he had not seen and would not set foot upon. He obeyed the call and took his family with him. His journey was interrupted, and he stayed for a time in Mesopotamia but in the area of Haran. Why he stalled in his journey is not revealed but the physical condition of his father, which ended his life, may have played in his decision to stay there. At any rate, Abram did not leave Haran and take up the journey again until the death of his father. We will look at this from another angle next time but for tonight we will consider that Abram was stalled in his journey until after the death of his Father.

This reveals something true about how the effects of the ties with the flesh often can and do stymie us in our sojourn here and that only the death of those ties allows us to move forward. Or Lord spoke of these things in the parable of the sower describing them as the heat of trials, the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. Other things also serve to hinder as Paul clearly sets forth in Galatians and Colossians. There he called the flesh bondage, and a continual, intractable opposing enemy of the Spirit, which prevents us from doing what we would, vain philosophy and the elements of the world. Paul, in the epistle to the Romans, stated this as a fact of the believer's life, saying, "with my mind I serve the law of God but with my flesh I serve the law of sin and death." Other vagaries of the flesh like fear of censure, loss of reputation and pressure from peers caused Peter and Barnabas to leave the fellowship of believers, saved by grace, and join the ranks of the legal, works for salvation crew of Judaizers whose sole desire was to destroy liberty and instate bondage. Whatever the reason that made Abram stop his journey, we know that it was the death of his father that resulted in his taking up the journey again.

We need not think that we have overcome the influence of the ties of this world. It is our lot to be at war with ourselves until we occupy the grave (2 Cor. 10:3-5). What a violent and

bloody war is engaged when we take all our imaginations and high things in our heads, that always play into false notions of salvation and are always against what we know of God and must acknowledge about God and cast them down by acknowledging that our salvation from beginning to end is entirely based on the obedience of Christ. This is the afflicting of our soul. Our only obedience is bringing all things to the obedience of Christ. And what was the acme, the epitome and the paramount act of His obedience (Phil. 2:8; John 19:30). It was His magnificent, successful, substitutionary, propitiatory, justice satisfying death.

This, dear brothers and sisters, is what it will take for us to continue on the sojourn. The ties of the flesh will inhibit us, stall us and only the death of the flesh will invigorate us to continue (Romans 8:1-4). The death of Christ is the death we apply to for the death of the flesh. This is what it means to reckon the old man to be dead, to reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive unto God. Death sets us back on the journey (Coll. 3:1-4). This is the high aim and aspiration of the believer and the tenor of his life (Gal. 6:14-16; Heb. 12:1-2). Read text; 11:32-12:1.

## BLESSED IN ABRAHAM

### Genesis 12:1-3

1, Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2, And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3, And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

What we have before us is the Gospel, the wondrous story of all spiritual blessings flowing from one person. The person in the text is Abram, the father of the faithful. It is his lineage that is tied to the salvation of the elect throughout the Old and New Testaments. Abram is a man who believed God concerning the seed and it was accounted to him for righteousness. His physical seed was Isaac, who was born by the power of God and not the power of the flesh. In Isaac the seed of Christ is called. Isaac's seed was Jacob, ever the picture the sinner saved by grace and the exemplar of the eternal election of grace and the distinguishing love of God. God, His prophets, and His Apostles were inspired to describe the heavenly Father as the God of Abraham, Isaac and of Jacob.

There is no doubt that in the physical realm of the earth, the promises that God gave Abram in these verses refers to the Jewish nation that will proceed from the loins of this great man. But as all things that are set forth on the Old Testament, there is another side to the story, a side that can only be known and

understood by the regenerated sinner, made alive to God and to the things of the Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel.

The Lord said to Abraham, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." The words all nations refer generally to the fact that all nations are not residing in Hell though they deserve to be, because God has put all men on the realm of the mediator's sovereign rule as he has given Christ authority over all men. However specifically refers to the elect, believers throughout history (Acts 3:25; Rev. 5:9-10). It also and primarily refers to Christ and all who are in Him (Gal. 3:16; Eph. 1:3). When The LORD God said this to Abram, He was preaching the Gospel (Gal. 3:8). The Gospel is the succinct declaration that the blessings of God are only found in one person, Jesus Christ the Lord. It is He alone, by His perfect sacrifice, that secured the blessing that attend eternal salvation, justification sanctification and righteousness. Like Anna, the prophetess of old, pointed those who were looking for redemption in Israel to Jesus alone, the seed of Abraham.

The Lord also told Abram the manner in which all nations or kindred shall be blessed in him. Those that blessed him would be blessed and those that cursed him would be cursed. Again, the blessing and the cursings belong to men's attitude and estimation of one man, the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ. How does one bless Christ? He does so by believing Him and loving Him (Gal. 3:7, 9; Rev. 12:11). How does one curse Christ, by unbelief and lack of love for Him (Isaiah 45:24c; John 5:23; 1 Cor. 16:22). Abram's call and obedience pictured the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 22:18; Phil. 2:8-10).

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed".

# THE GOD OF GLORY

## Genesis 12:1; Acts 7:2

Gen. 12:1, Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

Acts 7:2, And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

In the second chapter of Genesis, God begins to refer to Himself in a different manner. In the act of creation, he referred to Himself as God, but as he began to interact with His creation, especially as it related to the crown of His creation—Man, He referred to Himself as LORD God. In creation He is Elohim; in interaction He is Jehovah. This name relates to what the Bible teaches about the salvation of the elect. It is Jehovah that is the just Good and the Savior. Specific aspects of that accomplished salvation are attached to the name Jehovah 10 times in scripture. Jehovah-Hoseenu: “The Lord our Maker”, Jehovah-Jireh: “The Lord will provide”, Jehovah-Rapha, “The Lord that healeth thee”, Jehovah-Nissi, “The Lord our banner”, Jehovah-shalom-“The Lord our peace, Jehovah-Raah- “The Lord my shepherd”, Jehovah-Tsidkeneu- “The Lord our righteousness”, Jehovah-Shammah- “The Lord is there”, Jehovah-Jesus, The Lord that will save.” The Lord our maker has provided Himself a Lamb, with his stripes we are healed, He is the banner of love over us, by the blood of His cross, He has made peace, reconciling us to God, He is our good and great shepherd, He is our righteousness, He is there, never leaving us nor forsaking us, He has and will save us. There is no other

name so sweet. In Stephen's great sermon, that cost him his life, he brought all these great titles and put them into one all-consuming nomenclature. Stephen, by inspiration, calls Jehovah, "The God of glory." There you have it, expressed in precise specificity, His salvation is His glory and all of salvation redounds to his glory alone, the glory that He will not share with another. Who is the God of glory? It is none other than Jehovah-Jesus, for in Him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Who is the God of glory? He is the king of glory (Ps. 24; Zeph 3:17). He will make His goodness pass before thee, He will proclaim the name of the Lord, He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, He will be gracious unto whom He will be gracious and whom He will, He will harden. He is King of kings and Lord of lords, the LORD God omnipotent reigneth...He is the God of glory.

Moses wrote that the Lord spoke to Abram. Stephen declared that the Lord God appeared to Abraham. This is not semantics; this means that Abraham had a face to face with the LORD. This is called a Christophany, a preincarnate manifestation of Christ. The God of glory appeared to Abraham. The LORD's appearing is a prominent theme throughout the Bible and is referred to several times in the New Testament. They cover appearances from the incarnation to the cross to the imminent return of the Savior.

When Paul spoke of finishing his course, having fought the good fight, he said there was crown of righteousness that the Lord would give him and not only him but all who loved the Lord's appearing (2 Tim. 4:8). Peter spoke of the same (1 Pet. 1:7; 5:4). The children of God love the Lord's appearing.

They rejoice in the glorious fact that He appeared in this world to save them by His blood. He appeared to put away sin (Heb. 9:26; 1 John 3:5).

His kindness and love appeared to His people, saving them and revealing his eternal purpose through the preaching of the Gospel (2 Tim. 1:9-10, Titus 3:3-5).

His people rejoice that His intercession for them did not end with the cross (Heb. 9:24 –now-for us).

His people rejoice to know that when He appears again He will deal the final blow to sin and death (1 Tim. 4:1).

His appearing is the believer's hope that the believer is looking for (Titus 2:13).

His appearing is the believer's final glorification (Heb. 9:28; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:1-2).

The God of glory hath appeared to Abraham. Read Ps. 90:16.



## CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

### Genesis 12:1-3

1, Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2, And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3, And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

This call of Abraham to leave his country and follow God's promise is a treatise on the grace of God. This pictures the eternal covenant, the covenant of grace that brought our Savior to this world. Here was a man, called of God and sent into a hostile world to become a great nation, to be blessed and to be a blessing. He will also be the hinge pin for blessing and cursing. With him, there was no law given to keep or break. The singular law of Eden had been transgressed and Abram, as a son of Adam, was born a guilty transgressor. But had been a recipient of God's grace revealed in the fact that he had faith, believed God (Eph. 2:8-9). He received nothing by the work of his hands (Romans 4:1-8). There was no condition placed on any promise that God made to Him. He was not a Jew. The law of Sinai was almost five centuries hence. It is not recorded that he ever kept a Sabbath or was given a set of rules to follow whereby he would receive the blessing of God. The covenant under which he traveled was not conditional; it was a covenant of grace and promise. What he had, he had received, and he did not boast as if he had not received it. He was an Arabic man chosen, elect,

sent, blessed and blessing. He was a sinner saved by grace and his call and promise is a picture of Christ and His church.

No type of the Old Testament is a full or completely accurate portrayal of the substance. Abraham was a type of Christ, not in descendency from Adam and being born a sinner, but in his call and the promise he received. Likewise, he is a picture of the church in the world.

V.1. Christ was sent from His familiar home, where His father dwelt, into a world that He had not seen with the eyes of a flesh and blood human being. He was sent. This was the language of Christ in His earthly ministry (John 6:37-38). He said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." Likewise, he said to His church, "As the Father has sent me, so send I you." The church is commanded to go into all the world (a world that hates them and their Lord) and preach the Gospel. At the moment of faith, the world becomes a strange land, a land that cannot receive them or their message and do not know them (John 14:17; 1 John 3:1). They look for a city whose builder and maker is God. They are chosen, called, sent, and blessed with all spiritual blessings and their message will always be successful (Is. 55:11; 2 Cor. 2:14-17).

In verse 2, the Lord promises 6 things to Abraham and these promises are likewise to the church (2 Cor. 1:20). First, the Lord promises to make him a great nation. As to Abraham, this historically points to Israel but as to Christ it points to God's Israel, the church, the body of Christ. How great is that nation? It is a kingdom without end, an innumerable company of saints, more that conquerors through Christ, the praise of the glory of God's grace, the Lord's army against whom the gates of hell shall not prevail, the bride of Christ, eternal and everlasting, the reason that the world still exists is how great she is.

Secondly the Lord promised that He would bless Abraham. And he blessed Him greatly. He gave him faith and accounted it unto him for righteousness when Abraham believed God concerning the seed. He blessed him with the vision of the

future and the success of his people in Christ (Abraham saw my day and was glad). But he blessed Christ and His church more. Christ as, the man, was given faith without measure. He was the savior. He was blessed to glorify God fully, in justice and grace, by His blood. The church is blessed with complete salvation, the ministry of the Gospel and the care and feeding of the flock of God.

Thirdly, the Lord promised that he would make his name great. And so he has. Abraham is the father of the faithful. God often refers to Himself as the God of Abraham. But the name of Christ Jesus is indeed the great name, so great, in fact, that there is no other name, under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. At that name, every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord. His name shall be called "The LORD our righteousness" (Jer. 23:5-6). And this is the great name given to His church (Jer. 33:15-16).

Fourthly, The Lord said that Abraham would be a blessing. And a blessing he was to all whom he encountered. He freely gave, was kind generous and gracious as we will see in this study in days to come. But Abraham does not compare to the blessing that Christ is (Matt. 1:21; Eph. 1:3, Rom. 8:32-39). Likewise, the church is a blessing to those whom God has added to her number. The world will continue as long as the church inhabits the earth and not a moment longer.

Fifthly, The Lord put all who met with or knew of Abraham into one of two categories, cursed or blessed according to their attitude toward Abraham. "I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee." What think ye of Christ? All that believe him shall not be confounded or ashamed. He that believes on Christ has everlasting life. All that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed and he that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed when the Lord comes. Those that curse the church will be avenged quickly by God in vengeance and wrath.

Finally, the Lord promised Abraham that in him all the families of the earth be blessed. The words “in him” excluded all who have no interest in him. But all who have interest in Abraham, every family that has such interest are blessed; some with temporal blessings (Ishmael, 10 great nations), some (the elect) with all spiritual blessings (Gal. 3:6-14, 29). If you believe, if you are saved by God’s grace, these promises are yours.

## FAITH AND FAITHFUL

### Genesis 12:4-20

4, So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5, And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

6, And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7, And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

8, And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

9, And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

10, And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.

11, And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

12, Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

13, Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

14, And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

15, The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

16, And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

17, And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.

18, And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?

19, Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.

20, And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

This episode in the ordered life of Abraham is a story containing many life lessons, lessons that all saints learn in their sojourn in Egypt, commonly referred to as the school of hard knocks. Egypt was a powerful and privileged nation. Its leaders and rulers ruled with absolute sway taking what they wanted, legally being entitled to it because none could stop them and because

the Pharaoh's word was law. This was revealed in the actions of Pharaoh toward Sarah.

Abraham obeyed God and set out on the journey toward the land that the Lord would show him. Though Abraham did not know, that land was Canaan. Normally, Canaan was a very fertile land, the Land of Promise, the land of milk and honey, but when Abraham arrived, there was famine in the land. This is the first and primary lesson that the saint learns in the wasteland of the world, as he looks for the city whose builder and maker is God. In truth, the saint is, at present, in the promise land. He is in Immanuel's land, the world that his gracious sovereign reigns over, but the lesson he learns is that with the abundance of grace there will also be an abundance of trials (Mk. 10:29-30). Lying religion paints a rosy picture of health, wealth and a Lexus, a world of no more troubles but they are forgers of lies. Abraham was a man of faith. The word "sojourn" (v.10) shows us that he viewed this trip to Egypt to be temporary. He wasn't planning on an extended stay. But the sure thing that attends faith is trial. Here in the promise land, it is a time of famine, a painful, gracious gift of sovereign purpose. Granted, it is unpleasant, and sometimes, as with Abraham, we must make friends with evil mammon, every trial has an expiration date and when patience (the result of tribulation) has had its perfect work, then the believer will be perfect, entire and have need of nothing (James 1:4) There is no famine in Egypt and if Abraham eat, it will be in the land of the strangers that we must dine. This is not an indictment against Abraham's faith but rather an indication that he indeed has faith. The world is of itself not evil, but it can be abused in an evil manner, and it can also be used for the good of the Lord's people (1 Cor. 7:21).

But once he enters Egypt Abraham does not act in faith, but as is often the case, the child of God will resort to the flesh to solve a perceived problem and it is always revealed to be about self. Abraham asked Sarah to lie about being his wife, the patriarch suborning perjury, not for her sake. He knew full well

that when she did this, Pharaoh would claim her, to be his own wife. Abraham was thinking of himself, his welfare, and his life when he asked Sarah to lie (v. 13). The flesh is very subtle and sinister. The gist of Abraham's request was to make Sarah feel as if she was his savior in this dilemma (read 13 again; "my soul shall live because of thee"). Scripture declares that faith worketh by love and it is evident that Abraham's love, in this case, is love of self. Remember, this is the father of the faithful, and think not that your faith would fare better in a similar situation. In the midst of trials, the believer often applies to the reasonings of his or her own flesh for the answer (Rom. 7:25). Also, there is another revelation in Abraham's action. He was not trusting the Lord to control the situation. Since the Lord's plan involved testing and trial, perhaps he thought that there was a way to help the Lord achieve His purpose. He would invent a way to assure that he would be protected so he could assure that what God had commanded would be accomplished. If we are honest, we all must say that this is our life as a child of God, thinking that somehow, we play a part in the outcome. Abraham was a man of faith but the lesson that we will all learn with every trial and tribulation is that our faith is not what will get us through.

When Abraham's plans and plots and schemes come apart at the seams, as they always will, it was not his faith but the faithfulness of the Lord God that rules and wins the day. Paul told Timothy that, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (Ps. 89:30-34). Abraham will end up where he is supposed to, not because he has faith, but his God is faithful (v. 20). When mighty Pharaoh thought to take what he could not have, the Lord plagued him and his house with plagues. What those plagues were is not revealed, but suffice it to say, they did the job. Pharaoh was a sovereign in his nation, his word is law, what he desired was his to claim but the mighty sovereign's power is derived. There is no true power but that which is from above and Pharaoh's sovereignty turn to sniveling in the presence of the Almighty. This Pharaoh is but a mere



pawn, employed at the Lord's pleasure to try the faith of God's choice child (Rom. 9).

Remember well, dear ones, if you have faith, thank God...it is a gift of God, lest any man should boast. But don't think to rely on your faith but lean on Him who gave it. He abideth faithful, always (Prov. 3:5).

## SAME DIFFERENCE

### Genesis 13:1-3

1, And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

2, And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

3, And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;

This is the account of the separation of Abraham and Lot, and it does not occur because of some animosity between these two brethren. Abraham and Lot loved one another, and this is born out in the Word of God. Both men were very wealthy and had an abundance of goods, gold, and livestock. A problem has arisen between the cattle herdsman concerning over-grazing the area. Their herds had so increased that the land they were sharing could not bear them. To add insult to injury, there were Canaanites and Perizzites also in the mix, occupying some of the grazing land. Seeing the strife between the herdsman was about to go south, Abraham calls for Lot that the two might reach an agreement so a solution could be arrived at that would end the strife before it got worse. Abraham's solution was very magnanimous, and indicative of the heart touched by grace (Phil. 2:1-4). Some might fault Lot and assume that he was taking advantage of the situation by choosing the well-watered plains of Jordan that mimicked the Garden of Eden. There is no indication that the lands that Abraham were left with after Lot's choice were any less inhabitable or desirable for the herds of Abraham. In fact, the language of the latter part of the chapter

indicates that Abraham was promised great things. This incident is plain and understandable in its presentation. It is matter of fact. But the beauty of scripture is its depth.

Before the printing press was invented, books were rare and expensive things. They were handwritten, often taking many years to complete. The authors were brilliant men who knew that for the book to be worth the price it must stand the test of time, read for the life of the owner and passed on to the next generations. The text and the context of the script must, upon reading, be able to challenge, inspire, and intrigue the mind to dig deeper and define metaphor, parable, and syntax. Thus, a book was a lifelong companion, ever old and ever new.

The Bible is the best book and has intrigued minds, changed minds and hearts, and revealed new worlds for 3500 years and continues to do so. It must be read at face value, but it must also be read and reread because a plain and simple and easily understood account will prove a metaphor or an allegory having a much deeper meaning, the physical facts presenting a spiritual truth (Gal. 4:2-24).

The facts of this story are plain and are indicative of the character of the child of God revealed in both Abraham and Lot. Both men were, according to scripture, righteous before God. They were not righteous in and of themselves, for such righteousness does not exist and cannot exist in the realm of men, save for the one man who was God incarnate. If they are righteous before God, it is because God has made them so by the making Christ to be sin for them. It is this way and this way only that one is righteous before God (1 Cor. 1:30).

These men were faced with choices. We know that the steps of the good man are ordered of the Lord and though a man deviseth his way, it is the Lord that direct his steps. We also know that there is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. So, a man's choices fall soundly within the realm of God of God's sovereignty. As in the case of Joseph and his brothers, what they did to Joseph, they

meant for evil, but God meant it for good to save much people alive. In this account, Abraham chose to leave the choice to Lot, knowing full well that the outcome was according to God's will.

Lot chose what any of us would choose, given such a scenario, the best place, what we want and what we desire. What we do not know and cannot know is the outcome of our choices save that ultimately, for the believer, it will be good. However, what takes place between the choice and the final outcome may be fraught with many trials. Abraham left the outcome to God, but he had many trials in His life. Lot chose his way, but the Lord directed His steps into many pitfalls.

Lot's choices reveal much about the humanity and frailty of the believer. He chose what was best for him as anyone would. There is nothing wrong with that. However, in his choice we see the direction of the Lord in teaching His children about the end of all things temporal (1 John 2:15-17). Righteous Lot planted his roots in that which would pass away (vv. 10-12). The safety and convenience of cities, the walls and towers that afforded protection is a most reasonable choice. None of us are nomads living in tents. But Sodom is made to destroy and the direction that Lot pitched his tents would prove kindling for fire and brimstone (Illus. Ants and locust wood). The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly. Barnard use to say, "Don't hold on to the world so tight that the Lord will have to break your fingers to make you let it go. Lot's choices were his and the Lord directed his steps, as He did Abraham's. Two men, saints, righteous before God and two of all the things that work for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose. This book, this blessed tome is, indeed a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

## WHEN WE SEE

### Genesis 13:14-18

14, And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

15, For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

16, And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

17, Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

18, Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

In this passage the Lord shows Abram all that is his and renews the promise concerning his seed. That seed, of course, has historical significance, referring to the nation of Israel, the sons of Jacob. The spiritual significance is that it speaks of Isaac and of Christ, the Messiah, in whom all the seed of Abraham will be saved. Note well that this covenant precedes the covenant handed down at Sinai, which was given because of transgression (Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:18-19). The covenant with Abram was about blessing for the seed and not cursing because it addressed the blessings afforded the elect because they are in Abram's primary seed, which is Christ (Gal. 3:16; Eph 1:3). The language of the promise and the resulting attitude of Abraham teaches a lesson

about looking to and seeing Christ. Sight is a singular sense and though things in our periphery are visible they are not a matter of focus. The eye looks at one thing. The Lord spoke of the double eye as evil and the single eye as filling the body with light. The significance of that is that Abram saw what the Lord had prepared for him “after” that Lot was separated from him. After the conflict was settled then Abram could see the promise of the seed. This is an important lesson to those who must deal with the calamity of the world on a day-to-day basis. So much can enter our vision that we cannot see the Lord. Where there is no vision, the people perish, so says the Word of God. When our Lord gave the parable of the sower and the seed, He spoke of the heat of trial and the cares of the world as choking out the seed. On a community level, the community of the brethren, the truth that the presence of conflict is seen as inhibiting the joy and peace of our salvation. The manifold conflicts in Corinth prompted Paul to rebuke that church on every hand and the chief rebuke was “I determined not to know anything among you save Christ and Him crucified.” The schisms and divisions that plagued Corinth were born of a false notion that one can see two things or that vision can be fixed on two things at the same time. They claimed a vertical view fixed on things above, but their eyes were fixed in a horizontal view on things of the earth. The end was division, confusion, self-promotion, and self-righteousness. To the Hebrews Paul admonished the believers to set aside the in that easily beset them by looking unto Jesus. To the Philippians he admonished the believer to have the mind of Christ and to do nothing through strife or for vain glory. To the Galatians he marveled that they were so some moved away from Christ to another Gospel, which was no gospel but a poisonous perversion. In every case there was the double eye, and the result was evil. In every believer there is conflict, the flesh and the spirit, and only when we are able to see Christ alone will be able to see the blessings afforded in that view and the flesh will be subdued.

But more than that, the greater conflict that prevented the elect from seeing what God had promised, was sin. Sin had blinded our eyes anesthetized our minds and hearts and unless that conflict was removed the elect would live on in utter oblivion. But Christ has settled the conflict by bearing the sin of the elect in His own body, putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross, thereby reconciling us to God. It is finished, the battle is over, though in our weakness we often give effort to the fray. The prophet was told to comfort the people, speaking to their heart, saying your warfare is accomplished; your iniquity is pardoned because you have received at the Lord's hand double for all your sins. And after the conflict is settled, when Lot is separated from Abram, we can see what the Lord has freely given. "Lift up thine eyes" see the land of milk and honey, the feast of fat things, the wine on the lees, well refined, see the grapes of Eschol, the fatted calf, the unspeakable gift and with Him freely being given all things that pertain to godliness and life. Lift up thine eyes and see that all things are your and you are Christ's and Christ is God's...you are given all spiritual blessings, life eternal, righteousness, sanctification, wisdom, faith, repentance, and joy unspeakable and full of glory.

And your response is to come to Mamre (strength) and to Hebron (association, communion). Here we worship in praise and thanksgiving, with a single eye on the Lord and what He has done for us. After the conflict is settled is when we see and when we see, we worship.

# ALL THE GOODS

## Genesis 14:1-16

1, And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations;

2, That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

3, All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea.

4, Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5, And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,

6, And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness.

7, And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar.

8, And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;



9, With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five.

10, And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain.

11, And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

12, And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

13, And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.

14, And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

15, And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

16, And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

This is the record of the first war found in scripture. The war is waged between five pagan kings and four other pagan kings. Of the four kings, two were the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah. These two and the two that were with them were soundly defeated and fled to the mountains. There was collateral damage. Lot who had settled in Sodom was captured by the five kings, the leader of which was the grandson of Nimrod. He was

Amraphel, king of Shinar, which was Babylon. Lot, his household and all his possession were the spoils collected by the king of Shinar. What has Babylon stolen from the brethren? A fellow escaped captivity and found his way to Abram, here called Abram, the Hebrew. This is the first time the term Hebrew is used in scripture. The next time the term is used in was used as an indictment against Joseph. When Joseph refused to sleep with Potiphar's wife, she said he was a Hebrew sent to mock the people and her lies put him in prison. Perhaps this designation was applied to Abram in the sense of the meaning of the word, "one from beyond" as Abram did not dwell nearby. It might however refer to the God that Abram openly worshipped in a land of many idols. At any rate, it was a distinction, Abram was not like everyone else, and it was known.

This is the story of salvation, the deliverance of the captive and in this case the deliverance of a saint who has become a captive of the world. Whether it is the initial encounter with Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel and regeneration by the Spirit or the continual episode where the believer is delivered for the trials of life of the cares of the world or even when a believer falls into sin; the same thing is an absolute necessity...he must be saved, or he will perish (2 Cor. 1:10). Peter had to be saved from himself numerous times. He had to be saved at Antioch and out of the jail in Philippi; Paul had to be saved at Lystra; David from King Saul, the hatred of his son, and after Bathsheba. In the church in the last day— all saints are in need of salvation. Welcome to your life.

Lot has pitched his tent toward Sodom. He had looked for the safety of the city, the walls being a kind of sanctuary. Though he was a saint, a man who God referred to as "righteous Lot", he was a sinner saved by grace and one who had invested too much confidence in the world. It is a sad truth, but the fact is that our flesh often succumbs to the cares of the world. Too often we find ourselves trying to serve two masters and in every case the believer will find that himself a captive and when he

seeks to survey what he has in this world he will find that what he has invested in is gone. If it is not gone materially, it will count for nothing and less than nothing when the soul is afflicted, and we find ourselves captive. Lot is captive by the very thing that he has counted. This is the sinner/saint, and he must be saved by grace again.

Abram the father of the faithful, the Hebrew, is set forth in this passage as the savior. Lot can do nothing; all is lost. If he is to be saved, if what he has lost is to be recovered there must be one who is able to deliver him. Abram, with 318 servants trained in husbandry, agriculture, and the art of war, go out against 5 kings that are bathing in the glory of the recent victory and Abram carries the day. He not only saves Lot, but the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah receive benefits of the salvation that was intended for Lot. So it is in this world. The Lord came to save his sheep and save them He has and will. The Father has put all things in His hand, given him authority over all flesh that he would give eternal life to as many as the Lord has given Him. The rain falls for them. The sun shines for them and the world receives great benefits because they are in it.

The record is plain (v.16). Nothing is left undone. He brought back all goods and his brother Lot and the women. This is salvation, this is deliverance. There is no stone left unturned, no enemy that can stand, the banner hung in the heavens is that “ye are complete in Him” (1 Sam. 30:18-19; Romans 5:15, 17).

# THE VICTOR VISITED

## Genesis 14:17-24

17, And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

18, And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

19, And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

20, And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

21, And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22, And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

23, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

24, Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

Abram has returned from the battle with the five kings victorious. He has recovered all that was lost, rescued Lot and his household and has possession of the spoils of war. The king

of Sodom, who has not joined the battle but rather hid in the mountains now appears to get back some of the stuff he abandoned when he cowered from the fight. Sodom and her sister city Gomorrah are synonymous with sin, perversion, and intransigent religion throughout the Word of God. In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, Sodom is aligned with Egypt as symbolic of legal religion that is guilty of the blood of the saints (Rev. 11:8).

It is noteworthy that the king of Sodom shows up when he does and asks what he asks. We will look at that in more detail in the next lesson but suffice it to say that the religion of the world feels entitled to take part of any victory that comes along. The king of Sodom did not fight, did not engage did not assist and did not cooperate in the victory but still claims some of the spoils. Everything that Abram won was rightfully and solely his, according to the rules of war. Is this not a picture of religion who observes the salvation of sinners and yet claims to have a part in something with which they had nothing to do. It is Christ alone who has won the battle. He, the mighty conqueror, has applied for help from no one, has paid the debt, by himself put away the enemy and any who claim to have a part in the victory or would act entitled to the spoils of it know nothing of the grace of God. Such are but sodomites.

As the king of Sodom approaches Abram, another comes to Abram first. Abram is met by a man whose name and title is Melchisedec. This person is named in only two other books in all of scripture. He is named in Psalms and in Hebrews and though rarely mentioned, is a person of significant importance. His lineage is not known though both Jewish and Christian theologians have speculated on it. The book of Hebrews said he had neither mother nor father, neither beginning nor ending of days. He is, according to scripture, a specific type of the Lord Jesus Christ relating particularly to the eternal high priesthood of Christ as opposed to the temporal priesthood of Levi. Melchisedec is a king and a priest. He is the king of Salem,

which makes him king of peace. His name means “King of righteousness.” He is king of righteousness, king of peace and the priest of the Most High God (v.18). Each of these titles belong solely to our Lord, Jesus Christ (Is, 9:6; Jer. 23:6; Zech. 6:12-13).

He came to Abram with refreshments. He gave Abram bread and wine. He comforted the weary soul, fresh from the battle. There is a twofold reference here. First our Lord comforts His people in their trials as their great High Priest (Heb. 2:14-18). Secondly the bread and wine are a picture of the Lord’s Table, the taking of which gives comfort to the souls of the elect as it rehearses the full and complete accomplishment and remembrance of their salvation. This is important because Abram, as do all who have overcome the enemy, experienced the glory of the victory, need to be reminded that the victory is not theirs but the Lord’s. Melchisedec blessed Abram. How did he bless Abram? Did he bless him with health, wealth, and a shiny new chariot? Abram already had all that. Melchisedec blessed Abram with words! Melchisedec blessed Abram with understanding. Melchisedec blessed Abram with preparation of what was to come.

The words employed to bless Abram were words that put things in their proper order. Think of the scene. Abram sits victorious, having recovered all. How would you be feeling about yourself if this was your case. You and I would need reminding of some things. You and I would be in need of a blessing. If I might paraphrase Melchisedec and put his words in more of a modern vernacular, this is what we would need to hear. You and I belong to God (of Him). God owns everything. God is to be glorified because it was He who won the battle and put the victory in your hands. And this was a preparatory blessing of words. The king of Sodom is about to ask for the people that Abram rescued. Abram might have replied, “you get nothing because you did nothing but hide.” But Abram has been given the blessing of understanding and his reply is to repeat what He

has been blessed with (vv. 21-24). I'll keep what was already mine, and you can have the rest because the God of glory possesses all, and I belong to Him. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.

# TITHES TO MELCHISEDEC

## Genesis 14:20

20, And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Melchizedek, whose name means “king of righteousness and king of peace” is a priest of the Most High God. These offices and titles can only be truly and actually applied to one person, the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Melchisedec is a very unique and singular character, first mentioned in Genesis when he appeared to Abraham after the slaughter of the five kings, then in Psalm 110 where he is first connected to Christ, then in Hebrews he is mentioned in chapter 5:6, 10 and in the last verse of chapter 6 and in chapter 7. There is a great deal of conjecture about this Melchisedec. Some think that he was a son of Shem. Others think that he a Canaanite priest and king in the lineage of Ham. Some hold that he was an angel appearing in the form of a man. Many assert that he was the Christ, a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ, which seems to fit how he is presented in the word of God. Many who hold this view, thinking they are defending the glory of Christ, balk at the phrase “after the order of Melchisedec.” This chafes some because Christ, being God, being the beginning, the Alpha, disallows the possibility of Him being in the order of anyone because that would suggest that Christ was made like unto someone else. If the subject were the singularity of Christ in his deity, then this would be a reasonable and sound argument. However, the way Melchisedec is presented in scripture is that of the priest of the Most High God, and that representation is in opposition to the Levitical priesthood. Christ then, in that context, is after the order of Melchisedec in kind. His priesthood was not the same kind as

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that of Levi. The epistle to the Hebrews proves that it was a better priesthood, a priesthood that the priesthood of Levi did not and could not accomplish. This is the wonder of the Word of God. Its agreement, its continuity, its singularity in setting forth Christ in His offices and His work is its power. So here in Genesis 14, with the employment of a single little phrase we see the dissolution of the old covenant before neither the Old nor New Covenant is even revealed in the word. That phrase is found in the last line of verse 20, "and he (Abram) gave him (Melchisedec) tithes of all." To understand this, we must find its illumination in Hebrews 7:1-11, where Christ is shown to be the Great High Priest the result of which declared the dissolution of the Old Covenant, it being subservient to the New. One might ask why God even gave the Old Covenant if it was destined to be dissolved. Paul said, in answer to that question, The Law (old covenant) was added because of transgression. Simply stated, the elect must be taught that by the works of the law (the old covenant) shall no flesh be justified ere they can glory in salvation by grace alone (the New Covenant).

Since the High Priest was the central figure in the old covenant economy, it is here that the first fusillade must be launched. When Levi is shown to be inferior to Christ then the entire structure of the old covenant is likewise seen to be inferior. Paul introduces the superiority of Christ, by declaring that Melchisedec "blessed" Abraham (v. 1). In the remainder of this passage, the writer teaches us what it means to say that Melchisedec blessed Abraham. To understand this, blessing bestowed, is to see the preeminence of Christ.

The first comparison or contrast between the priesthood of Melchisedec and that of Levi is that Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec. Abraham was the Father of the Hebrews and held in high esteem by all. He was recipient of the covenant of promise, which pictures the covenant of Grace of which Christ was the mediator. Melchisedec receiving tithes of Abraham is a revelation of the greatness of this High Priest. To show this fact,

Paul, addresses the uniqueness of this High Priest (v 3). This description is amazing and certainly points to the glory of Christ. Remember, however, that the writer is asserting a particular point. The uniqueness described is in the capacity of priest of the Most High God. There was never but one other priest that could be described as Melchisedec is. This could in no way apply to Levi or any other priest of his lineage. Levi was dead as well as all the rest of the priesthood. Their lineage was meticulously catalogued in the Old Testament and so was the place where they were buried. The language employed to describe Melchisedec's priesthood speaks in terms of eternity. Whether this is a declaration of a Christophany is not important to the context except as it reveals the true Person pictured by Melchisedec. Paul is teaching that the priesthood of Christ, unlike the priesthood of Levi, was eternal and that by reference to Genesis 14:20.

The greatness of this Melchisedec is seen in the fact that the priesthood of the Old Testament paid tithes to him when Abraham gave him a tenth of the spoils. Tithes, according to the future law of Sinai, belonged to the Levitical priesthood. They were given for the support of the ministry of the tabernacle. This was according to the law of Sinai (vv. 4-5). At the time that Abraham paid tribute to Melchisedec, the tribes of Israel did not exist. Moses had not yet appeared on the scene and the law, including the law of the tithe, had not been handed down from Sinai. Melchisedec could not have been a descendant of Levi, or of that priesthood, yet he blessed Abraham who had received the promises (v.6). This is no small thing. If Abraham received blessings from Melchisedec then Melchisedec is greater than Abraham (v. 7). Think of the impact of this statement on the Hebrew mind. This is a profound statement but is yet not the place where the writer is headed.

Verse 8 is a plain reference to Christ. The phrase "it is witnessed that he liveth", is a direct reference to Ps. 110:4(5:6). The writer is so fixed on the subject of the preeminence of

Christ that Melchisedec seems intrinsically interchangeable with him. The reference is, however, to the difference between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Christ, the former being temporal and the latter being eternal.

The superiority of Christ is seen in vv.9-10. Though this passage is a beautiful example of imputation, the message is plain. Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec because he was in the loins of Abraham showing that before Levi, before Aaron, there was an eternal and superior and successful High Priest, even Jesus Christ. The proof of this is that the Levitical priesthood paid homage and tithes to Melchisedec. The priesthood of Aaron was subservient to that of Christ. Verse 11 reveals that Christ as our High Priest accomplished perfection, a thing that the Levitical could not do and was not designed to do (10:1-2). If it had been able to perfect the comers, then another priesthood would have been redundant. The fact is that the Aaronic priesthood was redundant, not in the sense of uselessness, but in the sense that, for centuries it repeatedly pointed to an already existent, eternal priesthood, the priesthood of Christ pictured by Melchisedec. "And he gave him tithes of all."

# HE BELIEVED IN THE LORD

## Genesis 15:1-6

1, After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

2, And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

3, And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4, And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5, And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6, And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

This passage of scripture carries with it a weight and gravity that resounds and permeates the remainder of the Word of God. Centuries prior to this the Lord had made a threatening promise to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The Lord had promised the serpent, the same that had deceived Eve, that from the woman would proceed a seed and her seed would bruise the serpents head and the serpent would bruise the seed of woman's heel (Gen. 3:15). This is called the protoevangelium, the first spoken and recorded promise of the Messiah. From that day forth, every woman in Israel desired an opened womb that she

might bear the promised savior. That seed is held in paramount importance throughout the word of God. That promise was realized and executed on the cross of Calvary. That woman was a virgin named Mary. That seed was Jesus, named thusly because He would save His people from their sins. In this passage we see the necessity of the vital connection that seed and Abram that will define every child of Abram that is born and born again into this world. The import of this passage is palpable to every believer.

The passage begins with the Word of the LORD coming to Abram in a vision. The Word came to him and not vice versa. That Word was Christ. The Word came in promise and consolation. Abram had just returned from a victorious battle and the Word informs him as to why he had received no injury in the battles he had engaged, "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield." The word "shield" comes from the root word meaning defend, covering and surrounded. Satan complained to God, concerning Job, that he could not be touched because God had Job "hedged about." Solomon said of the Lord's children, "Thy daughter is a garden enclosed." Isaiah said of the Lord's people, "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper." Secondly, the LORD told Abram, the man who had just refused to take even shoelace from the spoils of victory, "I am thy exceeding great reward." Let men speak of stars in their crowns or little cabins in the corner of glory. The believer has the Lord as his exceeding great reward.

Verses 2-3 concerns the promise that God made to Abram (12:2; 13:16). Abram is advanced in age and knows that soon he will go the way of all flesh. Knowing this, he asks of God in what way this promise will be kept. As far as he can see, the only way that the promise can be kept is if his servant, Eliezer, who was born in his house would be considered his heir and begin the fulfillment of the promise. God does not rely on the flesh to fulfill His promise and He assures Abram of that fact (v. 4).

God told Abram that Eliezer would not be his heir, but the seed would proceed from the union of he and his wife Sara.

Then the Lord took Abram out his tent to look up at the heavens (V. 5). Abram could not number the stars, nor could he number the multitude that would make up his seed. "So shall thy seed be" (17:4-5). A singular seed that is many. It is a wonder called the church, the body of Christ over which He is the head, an innumerable company that is Abram's seed (Gal. 3:16, 29).

In verse 6 we see a phrase that is often repeated in the word of God. "He (Abram) believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Considering this great and powerful statement, it is important to ask a question. The question is "When?" When was Abram's belief counted to him for righteousness? Abram's life was catalogue of belief, faith in God. He exhibited faith when he left His country at God's command for a country he knew not. He exhibited faith when he left Lot to choose the best country for himself. He exhibited faith when he sent Ishmael out from his house. He exhibited faith when he was willing to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering to the Lord. In none of these instances was his faith said to be accounted to him for righteousness. This is important because in this day of turmoil, the life upending tumult, that has made us all alter our existences, put on masks, assuming the hermit's lifestyle, obsessively cleaning and being socially distant, in this day we hear a great deal about prayer and faith. It is good that folk are calling on God. They are exhibiting faith but that will not be accounted to them for righteousness. When is faith accounted for righteousness? Abram's faith was counted to him for righteousness when he believed in the LORD concerning the Seed. Faith's saving object is Jesus Christ and in He alone is the righteousness of God revealed. One may believe God is great and He is. One may believe that God is sovereign and in control and He is. One may believe that there is nothing too hard for God and that is so. One may even believe that God can save,

and he can. But the manner and means of that salvation is singular, and absolute, and countenances no other. It is Jesus Christ alone for salvation, justification, sanctification, and righteousness. It is here and only here that faith is accounted for righteousness. The preached Gospel alone is the singular source of this revelation. So says the word of God (Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 3:6-9; 13-14; Rom. 4:1-8, 16-25; 10:4:-10). Abram believed in the LORD, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

## ABRAM AND THE RESURRECTION

### Genesis 15:5-7

5, And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6, And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

7, And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

This wonderful occasion in the life of Abram, wherein he believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness, is seen throughout scripture as the manner in which the Lord informs His people that they are righteous in His sight based on the person and work of the seed, Jesus Christ. Faith, that blessed gift from God, comes singularly as it did with Abram, by hearing the Word of the LORD (15:1; Rom. 10:17). Faith is intrinsically and absolutely bound to the preaching of the Gospel, through which life and faith are bestowed by the will of God, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." It is in the Gospel only that the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. It is incumbent, yea, absolutely necessary for a preacher to be singularly dedicated to the one message upon which faith flies, Christ and His crucified (1 Cor. 9:16). This is the Word of the Lord, which informed Abram of his Seed, His son and his heir and brought faith to his bosom. Immediately upon declaring that Abram was righteous through faith, our Lord, likewise declared the source of that faith (v. 7). If you have faith, you



were not born with it, you did not generate it or work it up. It was given to you as a gift though the sovereign grace of God. “And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.”

I had intended to go further into the chapter tonight but as we have just passed the day when the world of Christendom and professing Christianity celebrate the resurrection of Christ, I remembered that Abram was tied to the resurrection, and it was tied to word of the Lord concerning his Seed and his inheritance. (Rom. 4:16-25). The resurrection is applied to every major truth in the word of God and here in Romans it is tied to the moment when God caused Abram to star-gaze and made him the promise of a son and a seed and an heir. We see also that this incident applies to every believer, “And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.”

In the two passages we see several things, all-applying to the resurrection. The primary theme of the resurrection is the miracle of going from death to life. Abram’s body though now dead, believed the transition from death to life imperceptible to the eye but revealed in faith. It is a wonder. As Abram looked to the heavens and knew he could not number the stars and the word of the Lord came to him and he believed. Can anything so eternal be so astoundingly simple? Is this not resurrection from the dead? Was not this the case of every believer, dead in trespasses and sins? Was it not in a moment, in the blink of an eye that the gospel found purchase in our newly made, enlivened hearts and we believed? One moment we were dead unbelievers and the next we believed...marvelous grace birthing faith that is counted to us for righteousness, and it is the Lord that brought us out to bring us in and that by His gospel (Eph. 2:4-10; Col 2:13). (Heard the gospel so many times...W.R. Crews)

Abram desired a son, a seed, and an heir. As we saw last week that seed is Christ. He is the Son and the heir and in Him we are heirs according to promise. The singular seed that encompasses many, envelopes us according to the purpose of God in electing grace (1 Pet. 1:2-3). Jesus Christ is declared to be that seed, that Son by the resurrection of the dead (Rom. 1:4). Abram received the promised when the Son of God came forth from the grave having slain the sovereigns of sin and death. The Lord has put all things in the hands of Christ (John 3:35). He has done so that Christ would give eternal life to as many as God has given Him. He is heir of all things (Heb. 1:1-2). And we are heirs with Him (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 3:29). Like the prodigal son of old we arrive at the father's house in grave clothes, but the father dresses us in the garments of salvation and gives us a seat at the table. What grace is shed abroad in the heart of a dead sinner that would have him accepted in such a grand and glorious fashion? This all happened, in time, on that night underneath the star-lit heavens when God gave Abram faith to believe the word concerning the seed. It may not have been a starry night, but when the Word of the Lord came to you, you believed, and the Lord counted it unto you for righteousness. You received the Son the heir; you received the promise, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us".

## INHERITANCE ASSURANCE

### Genesis 15:7-11

7, And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

8, And he said, LORD God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

9, And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

10, And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

11, And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

This passage is about God giving Abram assurance of the inheritance that he has been promised. The believer has assurance, full assurance. That terminology is referred to in three ways in the New Testament; full assurance of faith, full assurance of hope and full assurance of knowledge. The believer is partaker of the covenant blessing of which one is being predestinated to that inheritance according to Ephesians 1 “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” That covenant was ratified in blood upon the death of Christ and all who were named in that will and testament were given possession of that predestined inheritance. This passage envelops all the elements of that

assurance given to the believer and displayed in picture and type of God the Savior, the means by which assurance is secured, and the singular basis upon which it stands.

After God has described Himself as Abram's sovereign deliverer and gave that promise of the inheritance (v. 7), Abram has a question for the LORD (v. 8). Abram does not ask this question out of lack of faith or of doubt toward God. This question is asked for the benefit of future ages of men and women, children of God who sometimes do not feel the comfort of assurance. Assurance is an enigma to religion. If you look for it, it will not be found. If you look to Christ, it is ever present. It has nothing to do with feelings, nor is it ever based on circumstance, nor is it ever discovered in self-reflection. Assurance is not in the believer, it is outside the believer, enthroned at the right hand of the Father, having purged our sins. We see this is the answer that God gives Abram when he inquires of God as to how he will know that he will receive the inheritance.

God did not make promises of renewed virility in Abram and Sara. He did not speak of the miracle of the birth of Isaac. He did not enter Abram's heart and make him feel assured. He did not etch it on stone as He did on Sinai with the Ten Commandments. He did not ascribe it on papyrus with the pen of a ready writer. He did not align the planets to give Abram astrological confidence. He answered the query as He always has and always will answer. He told Abram to bring Him the sacrifice (v. 9).

In the matter of assurance, this is the only place where the proverbial rubber hits the road. The offering is for God, toward God. The LORD said "Take me" or "bring unto me" the sacrifice. The beasts named in the offering represent the clean animals that Noah took on the Ark, animals fit for sacrifice. This is pre-Sinai where the beasts were to be in their first year of life. These were in their third year of life, in full maturity and vigor. They represent the burnt offering by which law and justice is

satisfied, the sin offering, which pictures imputation or transference of sin to the substitute and the peace offering which pictures praise and thanksgiving for accomplished atonement, salvation, and reconciliation. These were the sacrifices that were to be offered, taken to God and the record is that this is the offering that Abram “took” to God, revealing the only way he was assured of the inheritance (v. 10a). What God ordained, what God required, Abram took to God. Abram did not bring his righteousness, his merit, his works, or his will. He brought the sacrifice. As the old hymn says, “Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.” This is the singular manner by which God is approached and the only foundation of faith and assurance— nothing but the blood. “Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin”.

Oh, how religion seeks to add to this plain and simple and singular equation. They speak of evidence, of recordable works, of keeping the law of comparative behavior, “trusting in themselves that they are righteous and despising others.” They have invented aisles to walk and baptisms, ABC confessions, simple plans and Roman roads, duties and regulations and all manner of pious activities to be seen of men. They speak of their being more than Christ. They speak of their being something other than Christ. But the singular and absolute tenet, ordained by God...bring the sacrifice, His sacrifice, His spotless Lamb. Sola Christi, Christ alone is the only thing to bring to God and the only basis for assurance. When you look to Christ you have assurance. When you look anywhere else assurance evaporates like a vapor in the ether. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I am crucified unto the world.” Abram said what is my assurance. God said bring me the sacrifice. Abram said, “whereby shall I know?” God said, “Take me a sacrifice.”

Verse 11 relates that once the sacrifices were laid out, the fowls, the vultures, the buzzards, the kites, and the carrion crows showed up to devour the sacrifice. The Lord said, “For

wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” When they appear, Abram drove them away. Herein is the life of the believer to a great extent...driving off the fowls. The believer has only to recall his or her personal experience upon declaring that Christ alone is his entire salvation, beginning in election in old eternity and culminating in blissful glory at the sight of Christ. Upon declaring that all of his salvation is of God and that he had no part in it at all, that his hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness, the fowls of free will, the vultures of universal atonement, the buzzards of personal merit and the carrion crows of evidence for salvation will seek to tear apart the sacrifice. The believer drives them away with the Gospel. Paul said, “I am set for the defense of the Gospel.” Jude exhorted the believer “to earnestly contend for the faith, one delivered to the saints.” “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” This is the only way the fowls are driven away. The sacrifice is the only basis for assurance (2 Tim. 4:1-4). “I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified”

## DARKNESS AND LIGHT

### Genesis 15:12-21

12, And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

13, And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

14, And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

15, And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

16, But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

17, And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

18, In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

19, The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

20, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,

21, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

In this passage of scripture, we are once again confronted with the singular theme of scripture into which all the manifold subjects of Holy Writ are enfolded. That permeating subject is the salvation of the elect by the perfect and successful sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God. Blood atonement and death propitiation is the only means by which God is just to justify wretched sinners. Principle to understanding the necessity of that sacrifice is that it was the blood of the covenant, the covenant of grace, the eternal covenant ratified by the blood of the sovereign substitute, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. In our last study we saw that sacrifice picture in the numerous beasts slain and placed together on the altar before God at His command. We saw also, Abram fighting off the vultures that would devour the carcasses, picturing the believer standing for defense of the Gospel.

Historically, this episode is prophecy of Israel, the physical seed or progeny of Abram going into captivity in Egypt. This prophesy comes about as a *deep sleep* comes upon Abram— the same language employed to describe when Eve was made from a rib of Adam. It was the LORD that put Abram in this state to teach him the manner of the performance of the covenant salvation. From the beginning, the entirety of creation is seen in the concept of going from darkness to light (Gen. 1...darkness, let there be light. Evening and morning, lights in the dark skies). So it is with the salvation of the Lord's people, "The people that dwell in darkness have seen a great light." All of these elements are present in this record. Also in this historical account, the Word of God comes in play while Abram is in a deep sleep, an in the horror of great darkness. The word from the Lord is the word of captivity and deliverance and the final overcoming the enemy and the presence of the glory of God. Note well, that the entire process, from start to finish is according to God's purpose and predestinated providence that controls every element and every being in the consummation of this great plan.



The scriptures were given for our understanding to the end that we would believe on Christ and believing we would have eternal life. In what state is the sinner when he first hears the word of God? He is in darkness, in a deep sleep as it were, a state of being unconscious, dead in trespasses and sin, insensible and insensitive. God has put him to sleep and, in that state, has begun to reveal the horror of that great darkness, even as the darkness that befell Egypt, a darkness that could be *felt*. In the midst of that darkness comes the word of God and it is a word of promise, a prophesy of what is to come.

False religion paints a rosy picture of the child of God, a picture of health wealth and happiness. The promise of salvation is real and sure and with it comes the promise of tribulation and trial and various captivities from which each requires deliverance at the sovereign hand of God. Salvation has become such a common word that its meaning is lost to the multitudes who claim it. It means nothing if it is not preceded with a state of captivity from which the captive cannot better his estate. If my choice or my decision can end my captivity, then I am not a captive at all. No, the salvation of the elect is the promise of a final glorious deliverance preceded with many deliverances throughout their lives as they sojourn in a land that is not their own (vv. 13-15; Mark 10:29-30; 2 Cor. 1:10). But even amid this world of woe, the believer comes out of captivity with more that he had before. He has more understanding his salvation, more knowledge of his own impotence, more grasp of the ability of his God to deliver, more joy, more peace, more realization of his access into the grace wherein he stands and more awareness that God has never left him or forsaken him. He will go to his grave in peace and live every day of his life that the Lord has ordained for him.

Just as sure that his salvation is absolute, so also is the absolute sureness that the enemies of the Lord's people will be judged. This is the theme since the Seed was first promised (seed of woman shall bruise the head of the serpent). If your captivity

is to result in deliverance, it is necessary that he or that which holds you captive must be defeated and destroyed (v. 14a; LK. 11:21-22).

Salvation was accomplished on Calvary. Through the ages since, the sheep have been called and have come to Christ. But they remain here in this world, though not of it for a time. What time? They remain until the Lord has brought the enemy to it full capacity and full iniquity. This is revealed in the rise of Babylon the Great Whore; the grand scheme of salvation is the glorification of the elected in Christ and the final destruction of all that oppose Christ. In that great day, when the iniquity of the Amorites is full, a word from Christ, as a mighty unstoppable sword of fire and vengeance will consume Babylon and her armies of fowl birds to the praise and Glory of God's Grace (Rev. 19:1-6).

And behold when the sun goes down, at the end of the day the theme will be rehearsed for eternity as the everlasting Gospel is preached. Behold a smoking furnace, the affliction that attend the children of grace and a burning lamp, the Shekinah glory of God in the midst and the word of the Lord comes once again assuring the believer that his salvation. His promise is born of an eternal covenant in the which all God's elect receive every benefit that Christ has purchased for them including all that their enemies have though to possess (vv. 18-21; Is. 48:10; Dan. 3:23-25).

## SARAH AND HAGAR

### Genesis 16:1-6

1, Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

2, And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

3, And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

4, And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

5, And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

6, But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

This passage begins a theme that carries with it one of the most important subjects of Holy Writ. Historically it is a study in the frailty of the flesh. Spiritually it is the unwrapping of the concept of the two covenants, Sinai, which gendereth to bondage and Jerusalem above, who is free, and the mother of all believers represented here by Hagar and Sarai.

The key to understating this passage historically is found in the last phrase of verse 2, "And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarah." This is the same Abram who believed God concerning the seed and it was accounted to him for righteousness, the same man who obeyed the Lord with the sacrifices and defended the sacrifices against the vultures that would devour them. This is a man of faith, the father of the faithful, a man who hears the voice of the Lord God and is now hearkening to the voice of his wife. There is nothing wrong with listening to your wife unless your wife is asking you to help in the accomplishment of God's promise by applying to the flesh. The Lord had promised Abram and Sarai a son, an heir, to born of their union. But Sarai was impatient, and her actions expressed the most difficult thing about our faith. That difficult thing is waiting on the Lord. It is no wonder that we are so often admonished in Scripture to do so. If we are honest, this is the area that we, sadly, most often seek to accomplish in the flesh. We, many times, spend our life coming up with ideas to hasten the work of providence. Each of those efforts are doomed to failure because providence is a set course, ordained of God and will come to pass according to his purpose. In the end, though we have made, numerous and varied efforts in the flesh, we find that we have yet waited on God, because he has seen to it, graciously, by thwarting every one of our feeble efforts. The trial of faith will always produce patience because we will have to finally wait on God to bring what he has purposed for us to its appointed and timely end. Would to God that we might learn from previous experience, but our flesh will never learn. And so it was with Sarai (vv. 1-2). And so it was with Abram (V. 2a).

The result of this endeavor of the flesh was a painful realization that such efforts always end in pain and anguish. Hagar was Egyptian, a revelation to us who have the entire word of God. Egypt is synonymous with bondage in the theology of Scripture. Hagar may have been one born in Abram's house or may have been one of the things gifted to Abram by Pharaoh, in

chapter 12:16. Once Hagar conceived, she, according to the word of God, despised Sarai. This word "despised" means to consider lightly, to disregard or to hold as valueless. This is no small thing since Hagar was actually the property of Sarai, the problem was that she gave Hagar to Abram to wife. But is this not the way the legalist looks at the believer. Does not the believer sometimes apply to the law as do Peter and Barnabas at Antioch. The legalist claims ample proof, pregnant evidence to be seen of men, that they are the children of God (Lk. 18:11-12). The believer claims no evidence and can produce no evidence that he is the child of God save for the faith that God has graciously given him (Heb. 11:1). To the legalist, the believer is a barren womb to be held in light esteem.

And Sarai, though a child of God, was yet a daughter of Adam and when troubles attended her way, she shifted the blame away from herself to her husband (v. 5, 3:12-13). Our sin is our own, and there is nothing outside ourselves that can bear the blame for. She didn't believe God concerning the promise. This was manifested in her refusal to wait on God and her willingness to believe that she had a function in the accomplishment of God's promise and purpose. God has promised salvation and has purposed its accomplishment for his elect, His sheep, His church, through predestination and election and propitiatory substitution. Yet natural, carnal religion, while not denying the promise in word, deny it in deed by inserting themselves in the purposed process exerting their will or their decision and they hold those who rely entirely on the will and purpose of God for their salvation, to be lightly esteemed.

But Abram was not buying Sarai's accusation. This was not his idea; it was hers and she would have to be the one to deal with it. Though, Abram's response was reasonable, it was not altogether right. The issue was not polygamy, as that was one of the things God winked at during this time. Abram, the man of faith, knew that Sarai's desire was to fulfill the promise by the

power of his flesh and not to trust God for the fruition promised. He was not entirely without blame even though he had not initiated the debacle. We must always be careful because the law is enticing to the flesh, holding out promises of blessing if we will but do this or that. But the end is bondage. Abram, regardless of what Sarai would do with Hagar, was bound by marriage to Hagar and the child born of that union would ever be an enemy of the child born of promise (Dead works-Romans 7). So Sarai made life difficult for Hagar and she fled for Sarai's presence. This is the historical account.

And this account, true and recorded is about something else altogether. In this we see the wonderful providence of God. In the actions of Sarai and Hagar toward each other, unbeknownst to them, they were playing specific parts in a theological scenario, an allegory that would prove to inform the elect of the grand and glorious scheme of salvation by grace and not the law. An allegory is a literary, dramatic, or pictorial device in which characters and events stand for abstract ideas, principles, or forces, so that the literal sense has or suggests a parallel, deeper symbolic sense (Pilgrim's progress). Shakespeare said the world is a stage and we are all but actors playing our parts. It was his literary effort at explaining predestination, but he was a bit late in his enterprise. The Lord had already said it in the 4th chapter of Paul's letter to the Galatians (turn there). Read vv. 22-31. This says it all and we'll look at it more in-depth next time. Suffice it to say, that this recorded history is about those who are under that new covenant in the which we all are born free.

## THE LORD AND HAGAR

### Genesis 16:7-16

7, And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

8, And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

9, And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

10, And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

11, And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

12, And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

13, And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?

14, Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

15, And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.

16, And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

In this passage is the record of Hagar fleeing the presence of Sarai, and as she has encamped by a fountain, she is visited by the Angel of the Lord, a title often attributed to the Lord Jesus himself. Knowing that, according to scripture, she is a type and picture of the covenant of works handed down at Sinai, some may wonder why the Lord visited her with such kindness and mercy. The Law of Moses is against the elect of God as clearly revealed in the New Testament, but it is only so in light of the revelation of Covenant of grace. It is only by the revelation of the covenant of grace that we see that the Law served a specific purpose. That purpose is seen in the chronology of revelation. The Law was first written in stone, to reveal the sin that was taking place at the base of Sinai. Then came the revelation of the ceremony that consisted primarily of numerous sacrifices, mostly involving blood and death, showing that the Law revealed sin and the ceremony revealed the remedy for sin, the sacrificial death of a substitute. The Law is just, holy, and good, given by God, but it is void of any remedy for sin. It was added because of transgression, and it entered that sin might abound and appear exceeding sinful. So, when the Lord visited Hagar, He was visiting His own. She was Abram's wife, a member of his household and therefore a recipient of the graces bestowed on that house. She was not a pariah, except in the eyes of Sarai. She belonged in the household of Abram. It is important as we consider the historical aspect of an account in scripture that we seek to find its spiritual significance. In this case the significance is not only the animosity between Sarai and Hagar, which reveal the opposition of the two covenants but also it will be the distinction between the respective products of their wombs. This is defined by the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (Rom. 8; 5-8). That is yet to come in the scripture but sheds important light on this encounter of the Lord and Hagar.



Because of the anger of Sarai, Hagar had fled her presence (v. 6). The place where she is found of the Angel of the Lord is a fountain near Shur. This indicates that she, being an Egyptian, was probably headed home to Egypt. But it is not the appointed time for her to leave Abram's house nor the service of Sarai. That time will come but not until the fruit of her womb is about 14 years old. For now, she must return. The Angel of the Lord, even Jesus, the Christ visits her in her sorrow (V. 8). Who she is and her station in life is known to the Lord. He calls her by name and reveals her estate. He does not address her as one who used to be Sarai's handmaid but as one who is *still* Sarai's handmaid. This fact was also known of Hagar as she refers to Sarai as her mistress. This is important because of what He says to her next.

In verse 9 The Angel of the LORD tells Hagar to return to her mistress and submit to her. As this applies to the two covenants, this sets forth the OC as a servant of the NC. The epistle to the Hebrews declares this truth plainly and answers the question that Paul posed in Galatians, "What then serveth the Law." Hagar will serve Sarai until the child of promise is born. The Law will serve until the seed of woman is born, who by His appearance and death will take away the OC and establish the NC. Historically, Hagar's return to Sarai, to submit to her will not be a pleasant experience. The Lord's used the word "Submit" and the meaning is that word is suffering or affliction. The Law suffers affliction by grace. It is said, in the Epistle to the Colossians that it was nailed to the cross in open display of defeat (Col. 2:14:15).

In verses 10 and 11 the Angel of the LORD promises the He will multiply her seed. Who could make such a person promise but God Himself? Her "seed" refers to her son and his progeny and the great multitude that will exist in God's world to afflict the children of Abraham, those who are believers in Christ (Gal. 4:29). The Lord gives Hagar the name of the son to be born to her. There were only 5 others in scripture whose

names were established before they were born; Isaac, in whose seed the elect are called, Moses, the deliverer and leader of God's people and the scribe of the first 5 books of the Bible, Solomon, the son of David, the wise king, preacher, Josiah, the young king who found the books of the law and reestablished the Passover feast and was taken from this world so he would not have to see the destruction of Israel, and finally, The Messiah, Jesus who would save His people from their sins.

Ishmael was thus named because the Lord had heard Hagar in her affliction (vv. 15-16). She was visited in mercy and the child of her womb would be the consummate rebel (V. 12). This is the description of those who oppose God and will eventuate in the world religion of Babylon the Great. The word "wild" suggests a wilderness dweller rather than temperament. Ishmael's descendant's temperament is described in his being against everybody. Ultimately this is realized in their hatred for the believer.

Verse 12 puts Hagar in the same number of all those who call on the name of the LORD. She calls on His name upon the realization that He has visited her and comforted her in her affliction. Is this not always the course of salvation? He visits His people in this affliction and henceforth they call upon Him, rejoicing in the fact that He has seen them. "Christ has regarded my helpless estate." The Lord has visited His people in giving them bread. The place where this encounter occurred was afterward called Beerlahairoi, which means "The well of him that liveth and seeth me." He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Ps 22:24 "For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard." Isa 63:9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old".

## A COVENANT WITHIN

### Genesis 17:1-8

1, And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2, And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3, And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5, Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6, And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7, And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8, And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

This is the record of God establishing a covenant with Abram, as it were, a covenant within the covenant He had already made with Abraham when He sent him out of the Ur of the Chaldees, and the covenant He established with him concerning the seed

upon which occasion the Lord accounted the faith of Abram for righteousness. In truth, the covenant established in this passage is a further revelation of the elements of the original promise that Abram would be the father of many nations. In this covenant the seed of Abram will be given a token that will identify and distinguish them from all others that were not descendants of Abram. The covenant established is circumcision. We will look at this in more detail next time as it plays a significant part in the teaching of the New Testament and the truth about how sinners are saved.

This passage begins with the LORD appearing to Abram, some 13 years after the birth of Ishmael (V. 1). The LORD reveals himself as the Almighty God. This is significant in that the one speaking with Abram was Jesus Christ. God is invisible Spirit, the unseen. Christ is God manifest in the flesh, seeable and is the image of the invisible God. In Christ, the fullness of the God dwells bodily. This was Christ, the LORD, speaking to Abram and His deity is absolutely declared. The deity of Christ, the fact that He is God is central and absolute in the salvation of the elect. If He is not God, then salvation is not possible. Since He is God (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) the salvation of the elect is sure. He is the Almighty God, and what He puts His hand to will be accomplished perfectly, and His purpose cannot be frustrated or thwarted. Because He is who He is, He is worthy of all obedience. He commands Abram to walk before Him and be perfect. Abram already walked with God, so this was a command to continue in an upright and sincere and obedient manner. The only way that this is possible is for Abram to be viewed in Christ as one of the elect for whom Christ has been made to be his righteousness. The only way to obey God perfectly is to bring all we are and do, to the obedience of Christ, for all we are and do to stand wholly in Christ. It is the obedience of Christ that God has accepted and we, in Him, are counted as obedient (2 Cor. 10:5; John 3; 21; Ecc. 9:7).

In verse 2, the Lord renews or rather reveals another aspect of the covenant. The promise is the same as before as it relates to Abram being the father of many nations. But the language here, in the original, suggests that the extent of the promise was greater (exceedingly). This promise was perhaps expanded because Abram harbored a desire that the promise would be fulfilled in Ishmael, that he would be substituted for the seed to be born of Sarah's womb (v. 18).

In verse 3, we see the posture of all those who meet God. We live in a day when religion speaks of God in such disrespectful terms that the thought of falling face-first in the dust in His presence is laughable. Religion speaks as if God were bowing down to me, desiring to be accepted of them, being unable to perform without their consent. But the word reveals no such behavior among those who have met with the Lord in this Bible. We find sinners and saints alike taking up headquarters in the dust when they see Christ. He is the king enthroned, the Lord over all, showing mercy and grace to whom He pleases. Abram responds as do all that meet the sovereign. The Lord rehearses His covenant with his bowed and humbled servant (v.4).

In verse 5 the Lord changes Abram's name to Abraham. The LORD adds the letter "h" to his name. Many scholars believe that this speaks to the multiplicity of the nations that will proceed for Abraham and Sarai, whose name will be changed to Sarah. That letter "H" stands unique in language. When described as a letter of the alphabet we pronounce the letter. But when used in a word, it differs from all other letters spoken. All other letters are formed with manipulation of tongue, lips teeth. The letter "H" however is breathed. It is the letter used to express the *neshamah* or "breath of life" that was given only to humanity. All other creatures had "*ruach*"—breath, animate life. But to the man that Christ made from the clay of the earth, he breathed the breath of life, the sound of life and vitality— the letter "H" is the description of that life— it is

breath. When employed in words, it is breathed. When the Ephraimites refused to say Shibboleth leaving out the “H” and said “Sibboleth,” 42,000 died (Jud. 12:4-6). Why? They refused the breath of life. The Lord’s reason for renaming Abraham was that He had made (done deal) Abraham the father of many nations. In verse 6, the promise is exceeding fruitfulness. This was a precursor to the fact that Abraham and Sarah, by the power of God’s Spirit would have a son born of their union as husband and wife. How important was this “h.” It speaks of vitality that can only come from God. Look at Romans 4:17-21.

The sweetest part of the promise is found in verses 7-8. The covenant that God made with Abraham and His seed, all those called in Isaac, those who are Christ’s and therefore Abraham’s seed and heirs according to promise, you who believe the Gospel, God says to you, “I will be your God.” Blessed grace this! What weapon formed against us shall prosper if this be our estate? If God be for us who can be against us? See. Jeremiah 32:38-41). “I will be their God.” Dear ones, pitch your tent here and drive the stakes deep and refuse to be moved to the right or to the left.

# A TOKEN

## Genesis 17:9-14

9, And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

10, This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

11, And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

12, And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

13, He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

14, And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

This portion of Scripture introduces the first mention of a practice that will be a matter of extreme consideration in the declaration of the Gospel. In the days that will follow, this practice will become a matter of law and will be unlawfully employed to determine whether or not a believer is accepted before God. The practice of circumcision was given to Abraham as a token of the covenant that God had made with him. The LORD, not man, instituted this practice. Several things are

important to note about circumcision. First, it was given as a distinctive mark of separation. It made the followers of God to be different, physically, from those who did not follow the Lord. It had nothing to do with acceptance before God, because it was a mere token, practiced among those who were already in a covenant relationship with God. Though it was a physical practice, it was not necessarily an obvious one, once the operation had concluded. There is no indication that the sons of Abraham went about dropping their laundry to display that which distinguished them from those who were not sons of Abraham. Likewise, the practice was not ever expressed as a basis for fellowship such as “show me yours, and I’ll show you mine.” It was accomplished on the eighth day after a male child’s birth and was given for every son of Abraham and those males that resided in his house. It thus was a personal token, not seen, therefore pictured an already existing faith and righteous standing before God. Circumcision made no one righteous. It was given to the man who God had given faith and accounted that granted faith for righteousness (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:6-12). Also, circumcision was not given as an edict of law. The Law of Moses, given at Sinai, would incorporate circumcision, but it preceded that Law, by centuries. It was a token. That word means a sign or distinguishing mark. The root word means an agreement or consent. Circumcision meant that Abraham consented to and was in agreement with God. This indicated that, by circumcision, Abraham revealed that he agreed with God, believed God, and therefore walked with God because two cannot walk together except they be agreed. As the Old Testament was the Gospel in type, picture, and shadow, so circumcision was a picture of some spiritual truth or truths. First as it was a physical act that resulted in the shedding of blood it carried with it the concept of suffering and sacrifice. Combined with the fact of rending the flesh from the body, I picture putting away sin. Of course, this pictured the work of Christ in the salvation of the elect. It also pictured the mortification of the



flesh by the Spirit of God. Combine this with the fact that once it was done, it was not displayed, it typified a work performed on the heart of man and not the flesh (Deut. 10:16, Rom. 2:28-29). Circumcision was never a matter of law. It is only mentioned once in Exodus and Leviticus (expositions of the Law– not on Sinai) and was mentioned twice in Deuteronomy, in the 30 days that preceded entry into the promised land. Both these mentions in Deuteronomy are very informative (Deut. 10:16, 30:6– matter of the heart). The word circumcision is mentioned once in Exodus when Zipporah, Moses' wife called him a bloody husband because of the circumcision. It was not spoken again until the New Testament. The word “circumcise” and “circumcised” only gets cursory mention in the Old Testament but is prominent in the New Testament because of the matter of grace or works for salvation.

Also, the women in Abraham's lineage and Sarah, his wife were not circumcised. Yet they were members of the descendants of Abraham. Like the woman with the issue of blood in the New Testament was said to be a daughter of Abraham. They picture the church, who as the bride of Christ could not be circumcised but were members of the body as they were married to Christ, one with Christ, none of His bone and flesh of His flesh (Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16).

Finally, circumcision became the battleground of the Gospel of Grace in the New Testament and is true to this day. When the Gospel was taken to the gentiles, the uncircumcised, and they were received as children of God, the Jews fought against them with the doctrine of circumcision. Circumcision to the Judaizers was synonymous with keeping the law for righteousness and the Jews required the gentiles to be circumcised as an evidence of salvation. But the Apostle refused, and the battle ensued. The epistles to the Romans, Galatians and Colossians deal heavily with this conflict. It was the issue confronted in the first recorded Bible Conference in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-11). There, Peter set for the truth but the battle did

not die and yet is engaged every time that the Gospel is preached (Gal. 6:12-16).

## DIVINE ELECTION

### Genesis 17:15-22

15, And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.

16, And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

17, Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

18, And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

19, And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

20, And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

21, But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

22, And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

This passage sets forth the principle of the election of grace and is defined in the words that God employs to describe the futures of Isaac and Ishmael. As we have seen thus far, the LORD has continually rehearsed the covenant that He made with Abraham when He called him out of Ur. In each rehearsal, the Lord had revealed some additional aspect that He had not previously declared. In doing so, the Lord was describing in more depth the extent and meaning of that covenant. The covenant made with Abram was indicative of the eternal covenant of grace. That covenant eventuated in the full salvation of the people that God had chosen to save. That salvation was accomplished by the substitutionary, propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

This passage begins with God changing Sarai's name to Sarah, adding the "h" that spoke of the *neshamah* or breath of life that is only attributed to humanity and addresses the trait of human logic, intellect, reason, and responsive language. In this instant, as it was with the letter being added to Abram's name, it more than likely referred to God's gracious act of making the old saints able to reproduce and bear a child. I say this because of context. Immediately following the announcement of the name change, the topic addressed was fatherhood and motherhood (vv. 5-6, 15-16).

Abraham's response appeared at first to be a very natural and reasonable response to the notion that decrepit bodies long passed reproductive powers could produce a child (v. 17). He fell on his face and laughed at the thought of such a thing. What is recorded is the thoughts of Abraham's heart. Then in verse 18, we see that the thoughts of Abraham's heart are truly revealed with the words of his mouth. Abraham had enjoyed his son Ishmael for 14 years and loved the boy. I'm sure that all the father and son activities were an integral part of their life (hunting, fishing, telling tales). Abraham, regardless of the covenant promise, wanted the product of his flesh to inherit the promise. The plea was sincere, and I'm sure spoken out of love for Ishmael, but within that love that was born of the flesh was

the discounting of the truth that the child of God walks by faith and not by sight. Abraham could see Ishmael but concerning the child of promise, Abraham must believe. Faith is anathema and foolishness to the flesh. So, Abraham's response was to believe what his eyes could see rather than what God had promised. The father of the faithful is as frail as all who follow him in faith. We can all agree with the sentiment of the disciples when they cried, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." Our faith is all too often found a victim to our circumstance.

The remainder of the words of our LORD to Abraham are a reiteration of the promise, spoken in the form of a rebuke. This is not obvious until we come to verse 22. It is recorded that the Lord "left off talking" with Abraham and ascended from his presence. The words "left off talking" in the original can mean put an end to the words. Taken with the fact that the Lord, went up or ascended rather than walking away, suggests that what Abraham saw revealed that what has been said was not a matter of debate, but a word as sure as heaven itself. It was as if the Lord was saying, "I've said all I'm gonna say about it."

In response to Abraham's plea for Ishmael to be the son of promise, the Lord does not reason with Abraham. He simply and powerfully states that that is not going to happen. "Sarah, thy wife, shall bear thee a son, indeed" (v. 19). Not only that, you shall name him Isaac. Abraham laughed at the promise in verse 17, and the Lord told him to name his promised son Isaac, which means "to laugh." Isaac can also mean "to mock." The name of the promised son is a rebuke to the flesh. There is an old Jewish proverb that says, "I made my plans and God laughed." The Lord declared that He would make his covenant with Isaac and his seed after him. That name will become indicative of the distinction between natural and spiritual election (Rom. 9:6-9). In fact, the twin sons born of Isaac and Rebecca will forever describe God's purpose in electing grace (Rom. 9:10-16).

You see, Abraham had two seeds, one born of his flesh, one to be born by the Spirit of God. This is indicative of two principles that reside in every child of God. One is natural, nature, flesh, that which proceeds from union with our father Adam. The other is the Spirit, Christ, our life, that proceeds from our union with God our heavenly Father. Verse 20 speaks of Abraham's seed according to the flesh. God promises Abraham that He will bless Ishmael. This was a kindness to Abraham, who loved his son. There are two spiritual truths taught in the action. First, God orders the lives of those who will never know God savingly. We often think that God is not involved in the life of His enemies, but it is not in man to direct his steps. The Lord orders his steps. The enemies of the Lord are part and parcel of His purpose in the salvation of His elect. They are used, employed, manipulated, gathered and God working all thing together for good to them love God, to them that are called according to His purpose (Acts 4:25-28). Secondly, The Lord preserves your flesh, not only your skin and bone, but that natural, carnal aspect of your rebellious existence until you have served your purpose and the day of your appointed death arrives. That which is in the believer that will ever rebel against God is controlled, preserved, and restrained and even prospered. In us are Ishmael and Isaac.

Verse 21 settles the issue, once and forever. In reference to the blessing of Ishmael in verse 20, the Lord begins the next sentence with the word "but." This means that what follows in verse 21 is in opposition to the words of verse 20. Ishmael will be blessed, but the Lord will not make His covenant with him. Ishmael will beget 12 princes and be a great nation, but "my covenant will I establish with Isaac." Isaac is mine elect— Ishmael is not. It don't get no plainer than that. It is the Lord. He has done great things. To Him be glory, forever and ever!

## ENTERTAINING STRANGERS

### Genesis 18:1-8

1, And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

2, And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

3, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:

4, Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

5, And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

6, And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.

7, And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

8, And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

This chapter begins with a visit from the LORD. The visit was probably due to the fact that Abraham had obeyed the LORD in circumcising himself and his household in keeping the token of the covenant that the LORD had made with him (17:23-27).

This appearance was in Mamre where Abraham had made an altar to the LORD and had pitched camp. The text suggests that the LORD was with him and when he looked up, he saw three men standing nearby. With the use of the word “Lo” it is suggested that it was an immediate and unexpected manifestation, a surprise. The two men were angels, the angels that would go to Sodom and Gomorrah to rescue Lot (19:1).

Often, the Bible gives the facts of an occurrence but does not elaborate on the details when it addresses an historical event. The appearance of the LORD and the two angels speak to the same event and time frame rather than it being separate events. This is strengthened by the account that Abraham rushed out to meet them and by the way he addressed them (v. 2-3).

When Abraham went out to meet them, he followed the hospitality protocol of the East. Showing kindness to strangers is a tenet of Christianity as stated by Paul in Hebrews 13:2 “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” He was probably referring to this instance when he wrote those words.

Abraham went out to these men and bowed himself toward the ground. This could be accounted as worship, but it is more than likely the common practice of the region and would equate to the handshake of our society. Referring to one of them as “My Lord” was also a common way of greeting a stranger. The word Lord is “Adonai” not Jehovah and though this is also a way to address our Savior, it was likewise a way to attribute to someone the right to refuse the request he was about to make. Here the word “Lord” speaks to a filial courtesy. The courtesy that he showed these men is recorded in this passage. First, he demanded nothing, laid no traps or snares but rather held them in high esteem and asked them to tarry with him if they were inclined to do so, “if now I have found favor in thy sight.”

He called for water to wash their feet. Another common practice was to wash and cool the feet from walking in sandals or barefoot in the sand. He besought them to sit in the shade.



He brought them food, cakes, killed and dressed and cooked a tender and good calf. He brought forth the meal along with butter and milk. Then it is recorded that he stood by them as they ate, in effect, ministering to them because they were his welcome guests. Certainly, we may here learn a great deal about hospitality

But more than that, there is here a picture of what we do when we meet to preach the Gospel of Christ. We invite men to come and dine if they are so inclined. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." We don't know if they are hungry or if they will agree or refuse. The Lord knows them that are his and his people shall be willing in the day of his power. We do not command men, set traps or snares for them, or employ the psychological chicanery of the inventions of men. Whether they eat or not is not up to us. We who declare the Gospel have no part in the outcome. We don't have a dog in that hunt, a horse in that race or a monkey in that circus. We plant and water, but the Lord gives the increase. The Lord, however, does not invite, he closes all doors but Himself and his words are ultimatum (Deut. 30:19; Matt. 11:25-27). He calls his sheep and leaves the goats in unbelief (John 10:26-30).

What we do is simple and singular. We set the table with what has already been prepared. There is water to wash the feet. Our Lord washes his disciples' feet. There is shade to cool the body. Christ is, "an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." There is bread made of fine flour, cakes baked on the hearth. Christ is the bread of life, the manna from heaven and if one eats this bread, he will never die. We have meat, the paschal lamb, and the lamb of the burnt offering (Ex. 12:8-10). Christ is the Passover slain for us. We have butter and milk, the sincere mild of the Word. Oh, what a feast we have set when we preach the Gospel! It is a feast of fat things and wine on the lees and well refined. We cannot make you hungry or thirsty. We cannot even know if you are hungry

or thirsty. Only you can know that about yourself. But the table is set, the feast is made ready, and we bid you come and dine.

“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. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

And what do we do? Do we make a little aisle that you walk to the table? Do we have a simple plan whereby you appropriate the food? Do we grab you by the arm and drag you to the table? Do we tell you a heart-wrenching story to make you hungry, or sing numerous verses of some hymn that religion has distinguished as an “invitation” hymn? Do we pressure you psychologically by having others “come down front”? Do we lie to you and tell you there is an altar in front of the pulpit where you can lay your sins down? No, we stand by, under the tree and see what happens. Under the shade of the tree of life, we stand to minister the Gospel, to serve the feast. To wait the table and nothing else, save to rejoice if you sit and eat. Read text, then Is. 58:6-11.

# THOU DIDST LAUGH

## Genesis 18:9-15

9, And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

10, And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.

11, Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

12, Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

13, And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

14, Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

15, Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

After Abraham had prepared and served the feast for the three men, they asked where Sarah, his wife, was (v.1). They are about to repeat the promise of her bringing forth a son, with whom the LORD will establish His covenant. What ensues is the declaration of the promise and Sarah's response (vv. 10-12).

The words of the men in verse 10 are very interesting. We saw that in the last chapter Abram and Sarai had received new names. The letter “H” has been added to their names signifying the *neshamah*, or life and ability given to humanity. Though this was a common attribute to all humanity, and Abraham and Sarah already had it as part of the human creature, the meaning of it was deeper than with the rest of humanity. It being added to their names at this stage in life addressed the promise of necessary vitality for the pregnancy that would soon be her lot (v. 9; Romans 4:9). The promise was the revitalization of her womb, to be able to conceive, support and sustain a child, she being a century old. It will take divine intervention, a miracle of grace, for this to take place, because there is an eternal covenant to be established with this future child according to the purpose of God, who does all things after the council of his will. The men, as they speak to Abraham about this wondrous thing, refer to this amazing occurrence as “the appointed time of life.” Precisely what this refers to is not expressed and commentators speculate on many things pertaining to it.

We rely on context to determine the meaning of text. The context suggests that at the appointed time Sarah’s womb will be enlivened, her menses will return, and the ovum that will be miraculously awakened or created, will attach to the living wall, and grow within her for the nine-month gestation period. The child born will forever speak to the issue of life eternal, eternal election and secure, covenant salvation, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” The child will be Abraham’s promised seed, Isaac’s seed, the Lord’s seed, which He will see as His soul is made and offering for sin (Isaiah 53:10-12, Heb. 2:16).

The phrase “the appointed time of life” is also indicative of regeneration or the new birth, which is life from the dead. This wonder is a work of the Spirit accomplished through the preached word and equates to hearing the voice of Christ (John 5:24-25; Rom. 10:13-17; Eph 2:1). The hearing of the Gospel was the implanting of the seed of life (Ezek. 16:1-6).

The record that is before us is that when Sarah heard the conversation between the LORD and Abraham that she laughed within herself. Her laughter was probably a snicker attended by the thought that the words of the LORD were preposterous. If it were stated in modern vernacular, it would probably read that she giggled while saying in her mind, “yeah, right.” She had the same reaction that Abraham had when he heard the same promise (17:17). This is unbelief and though it appears to be a thing dismissed by the Lord, or perhaps one of those times that the LORD said He winked at, it is nonetheless unbelief and has a singular element that is expressed in all unbelief. Ultimately all unbelief has to do with the declaration of the Word, the Gospel, which is the record of God successfully saving His elect by the substitutionary, propitiatory death of Jesus Christ alone. Though Abraham and Sarah will be vessels employed in the birth of Isaac, his actual existence can only be attributed to the sovereign work of God. So it is with the spiritual birth of every believer. Men are used to preach the Gospel, but no aspect of the new birth can be attributed to the preacher. He preaches to every creature, and some believe, and some don't. Those who believe do so only because God has, by grace, given them faith to believe the reports that they have been given ears to hear. Where then and how is unbelief manifested. It is ever the practice of unbelief to look at what God has promised to perform and decide that it cannot be performed because they are not able to accomplish it. They look at surrounding circumstance and in the case with Abraham and Sarah, the inability of their aged bodies to perform and decide that the promise is not possible. But the promise never involved their ability, or even addressed it. It was to be the work of Almighty God, not theirs. Lying at the heart of unbelief is that God cannot do what He promised without our help. They thought the promise could only be fulfilled if they had part in the accomplishment of it. This is the blatant falsehood of carnal belief, which is unbelief. God cannot do anything with our

consent or help. How often do men speak of putting feet to their prayers? How often have pulpiteers proclaimed that the only hands God hands, feet, mouth, eyes, etc. are yours? How often do men regurgitate for the vaulted halls of various vomitoriums, “God’s hands are tied– God can’t do anything until you let Him– God wants this or that but it’s up to you.” This is unbelief, manifest in our text with laughing doubt. Mark well that the laughter exudes from the father of the faithful, the first man of whom it is said, “he believed the LORD and it was accounted to him for righteousness” and to Sarah, the mother of many nations, called in Galatians the mother of all believers. Think not that the nature of unbelief has left your bosom. To only believe, to believe only is impossible, save by the work of Almighty God. So the answer to unbelief is always the same (v. 14a). “Is anything too hard for the LORD?”

Also note the manner in which the unbelief was handled by the LORD. It was a mild rebuke, not taking the pair to the woodshed for a sound lashing (Read v 15). See Psalm 103:10-14.

## FOR LOT'S SAKE

### Genesis 18:16-33

16, And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

17, And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

18, Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

19, For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

20, And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

21, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

22, And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

23, And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

24, Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

25, That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26, And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27, And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:

28, Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

29, And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

30, And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

31, And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

32, And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

33, And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

This is the account of the angels of the Lord leaving the Lord and Abraham and going to Sodom and Gomorrah to destroy it.



The two cities had come to be known for their depravity and perversion and their memory stands as such to this day. Their names have become almost proverbial in the vernacular of this day to mean the epitome of wickedness. In a short while the great cities will be nothing but ashes on the plain and remembered forever as recipients of the fire of God's vengeance. Sodom was Lot's hometown. He lived there with his wife and four daughters, having chosen the safety and community of city life as opposed to that of his uncle Abraham who was content to live in tents outside the cities. But city life, even with all its societal and economic advantages, turned out to be not all it was cracked up to be.

After the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah, the two angels departed toward Sodom and Gomorrah to bring about their destruction. After Abraham accompanied the three to the outskirts of the city, he was left with the LORD. Before the angels left toward Sodom there is a conversation between them and the LORD. The conversation is about hiding from Abraham the intended destruction of Sodom. The language seems to indicate a reticence on the Lord's part to reveal to Abraham what He is about to do (V. 17). But this is not the case. The manner of the question was a common tool of language. It is a question asked when an affirmative is designed and intended. An example would be, "Do men gather grapes from thorns?" This is actually a statement that men do not gather grapes from thorns. The Lord is asserting that He will not hide this from Abraham and the reasons are that He has made a covenant with him, that Abraham will do that which is honoring to God in his life and because Sodom and Gomorrah fall within the boundaries of the land promised to Abraham. Though it is the glory of the Lord to conceal a thing, he is open with His own (vv. 18-19; Ps. 25:14; John 15:15). The conversation between the LORD and Abraham in the latter part of this chapter assures us that the LORD did make known to Abraham His intent toward Sodom.

The reason for the destruction is seen in verse 20. The sin of the two cities is grievous and there is a cry (against the sin) that has reached the portals of heaven. Most likely that cry was not audible, but The LORD heard the cry of Lot's soul. Lot may seem like an enigma. Could he not have just left that place and found peace living like His uncle? Yes, he could but he didn't. He was a frail human being and has been since we were first introduced to him, it was his desire to be city folk. Even when he knew that the cities would be destroyed with fire and brimstone and was commanded to flee for his life, he still wanted the city life (19:17-20). What is true of Lot, knowing his frailty and urban proclivities, is found in II Peter. Peter was setting forth that the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. For an example of the godly that God has delivered, he was inspired to use Lot (2 Peter 2:6-8). Lot is described as just (v. 7), or one who is justified by grace and the blood of Christ. He is called righteous (v. 8) or is one to whom Christ has been made his righteousness. Also, the description of how he felt about what was going on in his beloved city was most likely the cry heard in heaven. He was vexed with their filthy conversation and his soul was vexed every day with their unlawful deeds. Before we label Lot as the consummate compromiser, let us remember the world in which we abide and the vexation of our own souls as we watch it plunge farther and farther into beak darkness. Sodom will be destroyed as will this world when its iniquity is full and the last of the sheep are delivered by Him who knows how to do it. In our text, in verse 21, the LORD tells Abraham that He will go down and see whether the cry that He heard from the city presented a right cause for their intended destruction. He is the LORD and already knew the answer but for Abraham's sake He said this to assure Abraham that His judgment would be a just one. Whether He actually went down is not reported and the necessity of such a sojourn did not exist.

Abraham, knowing that the cities are about to be doomed begins a most unusual and interesting conversation with the Lord. It appears to be a negotiation even though the outcome has already been determined. Abraham was a skilled negotiator. His goal was his last number, but he started high. His point of negotiation was that the Lord of all the earth would do what is right (v. 25) and it would not be right to destroy the righteous while destroying the wicked (V. 23). Abraham was not arguing that it was not right to destroy the wicked. But his interest was in sparing his nephew Lot and his family. Abraham, by his diminishing negotiations, reveals that he knows that there is probably not ten righteous ones in those cities, but holds out hope that Lot and his family may account for such a number. The Lord is extremely patient with his servant for two reasons. First, He loves Abraham. Secondly, He knows there is only one righteous man in the total population of those two locales. Lot's wife will soon be a condiment and his daughters will prove incestuous little tarts. There were not fifty, there were not ten, there was just one and that would be well documented in the next chapter. Once again, we are confronted with the truth of salvation. The destruction of the enemy always attends the salvation, the deliverance of the elect. Abraham's negotiations will prove futile, The LORD leaves off talking with him, he goes back to his place and the Lord goes about the business of rescuing Lot and annihilating the wicked. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished".

# INSATIABLE

## Genesis 19:1-11

1, And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

2, And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

3, And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

4, But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

5, And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

6, And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him,

7, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly.

8, Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

9, And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.

10, But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.

11, And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

This passage is troubling to the mind on many levels. It is made clear why the city of Sodom lent its name to acts of sexual perversion. What the men of Sodom desired couldn't be questioned. It was painfully obvious. There is no room for political correctness here as to the fact that the LORD addresses these actions as insidious sin. Nor can there be any doubt as to why Lot's soul was vexed daily as an inhabitant of this city. The obvious sin of some of the inhabitants of this city is declared in Romans 1 as that which immediately precedes reprobation— an estate from which no possibility of recovery or salvation exists. Also, in that chapter of Romans, it is clear that those who are guilty of this sin not only continue in them but take pleasure in them knowing that God will judge them with death (Rom. 1:20-32). It is likewise clear, as stated in 2 Peter, that the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. Also, this passage when truly considered, flows from the heart and mind of him who first rebelled against God and whatever element brings this sin to the fore finds its roots in the mother of all sin, unbelief, and refusal to acknowledge God as He is. Though we may be appalled by the bent of the men of this city, the source of that sin resides in the bosom of every son or daughter born of Adam. What we are, by nature, troubles our mind and our soul. What we could be, save for the restraining power of God, scares us to the depths of our being.

Lot was a resident of this city and lest we condemn him for remaining there, let us take note of the society that we inhabit and do so with much resistance. The two angels in the form of men came to Sodom. Though Lot did not know it, they came on a rescue mission. They came to deliver the godly out of temptation. In vv.1-3 we see the discourse between Lot and the two men. When Lot saw them, he showed them hospitality just as Abraham did. He gave water to wash their feet and prepared them a meal and welcomed them into their home. Why the men initially refused his hospitality is not stated. It seems odd but often the Lord gives men leave to reveal themselves and Lot acquitted himself well.

After the men entered Lot's house, the men of the city showed up, and not just a few (v. 4). We are not privy to the activities of that city in prior years but the number that surrounded Lot's house suggest that regardless of the former character of the city, this appears (to coin a prevalent phrase) to be the new normal. The desires or rather lusts of these men are blatantly revealed in their demand toward Lot. They wanted to "know" them. They did not want to know who they were, or where they were from or what business that had in coming to the city. They were after sex and made no pretense about it. We know this is the case by the offer that Lot made to them in verse 8. They lived up to the name of the city in which they resided and their intractability in pursuit of their perverted interest was used as an example by Isaiah (Is. 3:9). They would not be denied, and Lot knew it.

Lot went out to them, shutting the door behind him and shutting in his two guests. He besought that the men would not act so wickedly. The bargain he tried to strike with the men of that city is astounding by any reasonable standard of decency (vv.6-8). However, some things may be discerned in his actions. First, this offer had to do with the protection afforded his guests because of the absolute doctrine of hospitality on the East (v.8d). Secondly, it probably had to do with the honor that Lot

attributed to his guests. Thirdly, we get some sense of the value that was attributed to women in the East. Even today, in the Middle East many cultures value women as property, even of less value than their beasts. Whatever the reason, the value of Lot's daughter's virginity, to Lot, was esteemed less than the moral integrity of his guests.

In verse 9, by the response of the men of Sodom to Lot's accusations and pleading, we see that Lot, though a just and righteous had no positive influence on his neighbors. In fact, it appears that they despised him and counted him a stranger..."not from around here." They were willing to do him in to satiate their lusts. Lot's two guests opened the door, jerked Lot inside as a firebrand plucked from the burning (v. 10). To end the assault on the door, the two men blinded the eyes of the men of Sodom (v. 11a). But that tactic didn't work. It never will. The last phrase of verse 11 stands as the definitive and astounding example of the insidious and Insatiable nature of sin (James 1:13-15). Only death will end sin. Now blinded and full of lust they moved with outstretched hands reaching out in the darkness, worn out and weary, seeking to find the door, to slake their thirst for sin. Only death, yours or that of the sovereign substitute will put an end to sin. We are all blind, by nature, and will likewise weary ourselves to satiate or lusts unless we are put to death or have been put in Christ for him to have suffered the death we most heartily deserve (Eph. 2:1-5). Thank God that He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. The days of Sodom and Gomorrah are numbered because God had shortened the days for the elect's sake.

# THE LORD BEING MERCIFUL

## Genesis 19; 12-16

12, And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

13, For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

14, And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

15, And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

16, And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

This is the account of the angels of the LORD, by force, rescuing Lot from the cities that they are about to decimate. Lot and his family truly fit the scriptural description of some who are saved “as firebrands plucked from the burning.” This description applies to those elect who have too greatly invested themselves in the world and must be wrenched away from it with a providential crowbar. The grasp of the world takes many forms and may hold the brethren, us, by fear of loss, fear of censure,



peer pressure or sense of safety and make it so that the Lord will have to jerk us up by the nape of our neck to get us to let go. Lot was a believer, as righteous and justified man by God's declaration. Think not that that we are immune to the elements of the world. We have but to read the Gospels and the epistles and hear the manifold warnings and admonitions to know that the enticement of the world is part and parcel with our existence as we sojourn here being spiritual yet plagued with the vagaries of the flesh. The epistles were not written to lost men or to profligates but rather to blood bought sinners, saved by grace. Thus, as we read the scriptures we must always seek to put ourselves in the shoes and mindset of those who are sinners who are recipients of and in continual need of God's mercies. We are Simon Peter denying the Lord. We are Saul holding the coats of those that stoned Stephen breathing out threatening against the church, despising that way. We are David, lusting, lying, and murdering. We are Lot, holding so tenaciously to the world that the Lord must forcibly rip us from its grasp.

In verse 12, the angels inquire of Lot concerning the family that he has with him in Sodom. They were inside the house as the men of Sodom were outside, like a horde of zombies, wearing themselves out, driven by their insatiable perverted lust to find a way inside that house. Time was of the essence. The city is doomed and will be destroyed (v. 13). Lot had two sons-in-law that had married his daughters. Their names or heritage are not mentioned but they were most likely inhabitants of Sodom and not of the lineage of Abraham. When Lot, believing the warning of the angels, urged the sons-in-law to flee for their life because the Lord was going to destroy the city, the record of their response is telling. To them, "he seemed as one who mocked." They thought he was joking, jesting, toying with them. I suppose that a lot can be read into their response but sufficient to say, that when the Lord was brought into the conversation, it carried no weight with these men (v.14). Of course, they could not see the vexation of Lot's soul over the

wickedness of that place, but as is often the case with the believer living in a perverted world, being silent is no strange thing. One dear departed brother said, “Oh how difficult it often is to hold up the banner of Christ in the midst of a God-hating world”.

But judgment is coming, and that right soon. It is time to make haste. As the dawn broke, the angels spoke in urgent terms. Where they stood would momentarily be ashes and smoking cinders. Devastation looms ominously like the sword of Damocles over this place. If Lot and his wife and his two daughters tarry, they will be consumed with the punishment of this seat of iniquity (v. 15).

The first phrase of verse 16 is as telling a phrase as can be written concerning the frailty of human flesh. It does not begin with the conjunction “but” as if to report an anomaly or an opposition to the norm. It begins with the conjunction “and” asserting that this is a matter of course, a common response. The common response to the knowledge that all you possess, even with the threat of loss of life, humanity will linger (1 John 2:15-17). The measure of the value of our stuff is our reaction to the possibility of losing it. Lot lingered. Be ye thankful that it is not so with the LORD. “Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” “For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.” Lot lingered but the LORD did not!

The angles grabbed the family by the hands and brought them forth and set them without the city. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation and though they may linger, He will deliver them.

The reason that the Lord will deliver his people is found in third phrase of verse 16. Inserted in the middle of the incident is the resounding reason why Lot and his family were, as it were,

dragged out of their house and their beloved city to safety. It is stated as a matter of course, a singular absolute— “the Lord being merciful.” It does not say the Lord was merciful though He, no doubt, was. It does not say the Lord was being merciful, though He most assuredly was. This is a statement of fact about the character and attribute of the Lord that is paramount to His glory. Being merciful is His *state of being*. If the Lord shows up in reference to His elect, *being* merciful, He shows up *being merciful*. He delights in mercy. Being merciful, as He always is, he saves His people. As dear Naomi heard and was glad, “The Lord has visited His people in giving them bread.” This is forever the way that the LORD visits His people. (Ex. 33:19-20). One might ask, what is the Lord doing and the answer will always be the same...He is being merciful because he “being merciful,” will not be otherwise. This being his glorious attribute, that will not change (Mal. 3:6). Jeremiah lamenting his woes and the troubles and pains that attended his life was brought to remember a very important truth that was mirrored in the words of Malachi (Lamentations 3:21-22; Ps. 100:5). Read verse 16. (Ps. 89:1). Lot lingered. The Lord, being merciful, did not linger.

# INSIGNIFICANT

## Genesis 19:17-25

17, And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

18, And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:

19, Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:

20, Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

21, And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

22, Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

23, The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

24, Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

25, And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

The angels have snatched Lot, his wife and his two daughters from the jaws of death. The cities wherein the family had sought refuge are about to be consumed with the fire of God's wrath. Blessed is the man for whom God, alone, is his refuge. This world passes away, soon the cities are to be swallowed up in the conflagration that will melt all things with a fervent heat. The believer knows this. In his heart he knows it to be so but the fact that the Bible is replete with warnings and admonitions to avoid love for the world because of its brevity and insignificance and its intrinsic enmity against God and His elect. The reason that the warnings are continuous is displayed for us in this report of Lot's desire, even in the face of the sure destruction of all that he possesses. The frailty and the longings of the flesh are as real as our breath and just as fleeting, but real nonetheless.

We, as believers have escaped the wrath to come. Being made alive to God, we even look for the hastening of that day when God will make all things new. We can, in our hearts, say with John, "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus." But Lot, that righteous and just man, shows us that the battle that we fight within yet rages and even though delivered, the plea of the flesh is to yet find safety in the false refuge of the world (vv. 17-20).

In verse 18 we see Lot's initial response to fleeing to the mountains. From his mouth is uttered 3 words that ought never cross the lips of a believer— "Not so Lord." The world utters such words all the time and the Lord laughs at their calamity and mocks when their fear cometh (Ps. 2). What mercy is that that a maggot of the earth should speak to his maker, his sovereign in such a manner and yet be the recipient of so great salvation. They cried, "We will not have this man reign over us," and the Lord will have them in derision. Peter thus cried when the Lord was preparing him to take the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10:9-14). Just as Peter ultimately ended up in the house of

the Gentile, So Lot will be suffered to enter Zoar, but when wrath falls on Sodom and Gomorrah he will fear and do what he was commanded in the first place. The Lord exercises dominion over His universe and does according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. Lot's plea is found in verse 19. It is an interesting bit of the flesh. He as much as says to the Lord, that since he has shown grace, and displayed mercy, that He should continue to do so. David said, "Lord, keep me from presumptuous sin." Can it be that a blood bought sinner, saved by grace and shown manifold mercies, could take such munificence for granted? Indeed, we can. The root of such a notion is unbelief. The mountains were what God had designated as safe haven. Lot declared them to be unsafe (19c).

Lot has an alternative scenario. Think on that for a moment. Is Lot's desire greater than God's provision? The thing to be considered is this. Is Lot's desire different than God's provision? Can two walk together except they be agreed? Yet as disagreeable as unbelief is, where sin doth abound, grace doth much more abound. When we do not believe, the Lord yet abideth faithful. The Lord shows mercy to Lot and grants his request offered in unbelief. The Lord knows that soon his desire will vanish like a vapor.

The words of the final part of his request reveal that the flesh likes to bargain with a reasonable alternative. The cities that are to be destroyed are big cities. As if to say that their size is the source of God's anger against them and not their sin, Lot puts forth the argument that the city he desires to go to is a little one. He repeats that description twice, the second time seeking the angel's agreement, "Is it not a little one." Surely there must be degrees of unbelief. The city he desires is called Zoar. It can mean "little" or "small" but essentially it means "insignificant." This is Lot's estimation of seeking that which God has not commanded. It is like what men would call a little white lie. It is unbelief and is not insignificant. It is worthy of death and is only

forgiven by grace and mercy. Love suffereth long and God's longsuffering is our salvation. Lot sees the insignificant thing as his salvation (v. 20c). Much like men believe their insignificant will is their salvation.

The Lord grants Lot's desire. Notice how it is granted. The Lord does not say "I have accepted your desire." He says, I have accepted thee, concerning this thing. The desire was not acceptable, but the man was accepted in the beloved. He bids Lot to haste to the city, because nothing can be done until the elect are safe. So it is in the end of the world. It will remain until all the elect are safe and only that which cannot be shaken shall remain.

## BRIMSTONE AND FIRE

### Genesis 19:23-28

23, The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

24, Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

25, And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

26, But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

27, And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:

28, And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

This is the record of the final destruction of the cities of the plain. It did not take place until Lot had been rescued from the cities and had entered Zoar. This is indicative of the final judgment of the world that will not take place until the last one of God's elect are brought to union with Christ. This is described in Romans 11 with the words "and so all Israel be saved", all Israel being the Israel of God, the church of the Living God. Every judgment that is executed in the Scriptures is a picture of that great and final day when the Lord will return with His people, all present and accounted for and will rain fire down from heaven against the great Whore Babylon and her



perverted and polluted masses (Coll. 3:1-4). It is in that context that our Lord answers the Pharisees concerning the end of days. Some of the things declared in this passage have become proverbial in the language of the day. For example, if a preacher preaches about hell and judgment and does so with some zeal and conviction, he is called a fire and brimstone preacher. If one is seen to put his hand to the plow and turn back, the phrase “remember Lot’s wife” is employed.

The words of our context present an excellent picture of the return of the Lord. It will not be preceded with a plethora of obvious occurrences that will allow men to map out a chart that will reveal the day and time. The Lord said that that day will not come with observation or by outward shew but when the cry of the day is peace and safety or when everything is just normal and men have put that terrible day out of their minds, refusing to believe that God will judge the world, it will come (2 Peter 3). And so it was on that fateful day, the sun rose, and the cities of the plain began their day (v. 23, 27-28) Blinded by their lust, wearying themselves to find Lot’s door, another dawn has broken. Lot has entered Zoar and its just another day in the neighborhood.

Verse 24 begins with the word “Then.” This is an important little word. It means that something takes place only after something else has occurred and intimates that what takes place was waiting, dependent upon and even anticipating the previous occurrence. Lot entered Zoar. The elect has been delivered... then and only then is the wrath of God manifested. The record before us is that the LORD rained fire and brimstone from heaven or as one writer put it “hell from heaven” descended on Sodom and Gomorrah. The cities of the plain were destroyed in an instant as is suggested by what Abraham saw early that morning (v. 28). It was just another day and then there was nothing. The sun had risen, and hell had descended. Sodom and Gomorrah were vaporized and destined to become the

proverbial definition of sexual perversion and debauchery until this very day.

In verse 26, we have a miraculous conversion. An old preacher friend of mine, now at home with the LORD, said conversion is a change of kingdoms. Nebuchadnezzar was changed from the kingdom of man to the kingdom of animal and then changed back to the kingdom of man. Every one of the elect is changed from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son. Lot's wife was changed from the kingdom of man to the kingdom of mineral, from woman to condiment. This conversion is a very important as it is employed by our Lord concerning His return. In this the meaning of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is unveiled (Luke 17:20-33 exp).

In verse 32 our Lord said, "remember Lot's wife." This reveals the significance of that conversion. It relates to the final judgment just as it did in Peter's second epistle (2 Pet. 2:6-9). The warning concerning Lot's wife is about being aware that the Lord can return any moment. Nothing withholds His return. Don't fix your eyes on this world. Don't look at the daily news to try to discern what events might reveal the day of His coming. Look to Christ and in looking to Him; you'll be looking for Him (1 Thes. 5:1-8; Titus 2:11-14). Even so, come Lord Jesus.

## LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS

### Genesis 19:29-38

29, And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

30, And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

31, And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:

32, Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

33, And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

34, And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

35, And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

36, Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

37, And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day.

38, And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

This passage of scripture, this lurid report is a reminder that God does not hide or sugarcoat the sinful bent of his children when He, even for a moment, lifts His restraining hand. Though Lot's behavior and that of his daughters is entirely suspect and no excuse can be put forward for their behavior, many commentators have put forth suggestions that might cause some to excuse them. We cannot know the mind of Lot and His daughters at this time, but it is impossible not to try to come some conclusion about it. It was incest. It was wicked. It was wrong. And yet, as all things do, it served the purpose of God and will in the final estimation redound to the praise of His name. Scripture declares that the wrath of man shall praise God, and the rest He will restrain.

This report begins with Lot being forced to obey God. We don't like to think of obedience in this way but often God manipulates time, tide, and circumstance to destroy every other choice but Him. He shuts men up to only one course that if not taken will result in destruction. Our Lord said that His Father had hid the Gospel from the wise and prudent and revealed it unto babes, that no man can know God except Christ reveal Him. Then He said, "come unto me," and we know that statement was made for the ears of the babes (revealed it unto babes). He effectively closed all access to Him except for the babes. In our text, the LORD had commanded Lot to flee to the mountains. Lot had begged the LORD to allow him to go to the "little city" of Zoar. The Lord allowed it and then set their world on fire. Fearing that Zoar would be destroyed in the conflagration, Lot fled to the mountains. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Reluctant or not, the Lord's own

will obey Him. Many who first hear the Gospel find themselves resisting it. But when the Spirit of the Lord plants the truth in the heart that He has enlivened, they will come. They will be willing in the day of His power. The happy end of the elect is never in doubt.

What follows is a disturbing episode, an episode that reveals much about the iniquity of our flesh. Having been delivered from the flaming judgment poured out on the cities of the plain, Lot gets drunk. Sound familiar (Gen. 9:20-21), Noah who found grace in the eyes of God, a just man, perfect in his generations, a man who walked with God; Lot, a just and righteous man whose soul was vexed daily with the iniquity of the city that he inhabited, both are found 3 sheets to the wind (1 Cor. 10:12). Don't make the mistake of trusting your own integrity...it will not support you. Only God's restraining power to override your flesh will keep you. Ever be thankful for His grace.

The reasons that the daughters give for their incestuous behavior are given in the context (vv. 31-32). Commentators have put forth much speculation, and they all have some logical resonance. Some say that the daughters believed that the Lord had destroyed the world by fire, and they alone were left to replenish it. Some have averred that they, like all of God's female children since Eve, believed that the Messiah might be born from their womb (Gen. 3:15). Others stated that their illicit desires were about preserving the family line. Calvin said they were sinners acting as such. Whatever the reason, their deed was done, and they were guilty of it as was their father. No human logic can be applied that would make their actions acceptable on any level. This episode may not be employed to excessively celebrate when we are delivered. If that was the case, believers would never be sober.

The product of this drunken incestuous debacle was the impregnation of the daughters and sons born to both. Their sons, in time, would prove enemies of Israel. They would

become the Moabites and the Ammonites. They would be continual thorns in the side of Israel while in Canaan. Two things can be learned here. First, the simple and plain equation; sin equals ruin. No good thing can come of disobeying God. Secondly, in the grand and glorious predestinated providence of God, he raises up the enemies of His people to ultimately have them cry out unto him for deliverance. Just as he raised up Babylon, the Meads and the Persians, the Assyrians and the Philistines to trouble and enslave Israel, so he raised up the Moabites and the Ammonites to trouble his people. They were implements used in His loving chastisement to bring His people to call on His name (Ps. 107:5-8, 12-13, 19-20, 28-29; Heb. 12:11). Regardless of circumstance, let us always remember the LORD is on His throne, that He does according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, what doest thou, and all of it is for our good and His glory (Is. 46:10).

## REPEAT OFFENDER

### Genesis 20:1-18

1, And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.

2, And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

3, But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.

4, But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?

5, Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

6, And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

7, Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.

8, Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.

9, Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

10, And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

11, And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.

12, And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

13, And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother.

14, And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

15, And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

16, And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved.

17, So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children.

18, For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.



It has been said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting a different result. Barnard said that not believing the Bible is insanity. Unfortunately, the believer often reveals this kind of insanity in his life. The believer has trusted his never dying soul to the care of God Almighty. The believer trusts that he has been saved from sin and eternal punishment without contributing anything to that salvation. The believer trusts that his salvation is solely conditioned on the merits of Christ and his substitutionary propitiatory sacrifice offered to and accepted by God, the Father. The believer trusts that God has made Christ to be his righteousness by imputation and that he, having no personal righteousness, is made the righteousness of God, in Christ. The believer trusts that he is accepted in the beloved Son of God and that he is God's heir and a joint heir with Christ who is heir of all things. The believer trusts that his salvation is eternal, sure, and unchangeable because of the immutability of God. The believer trusts these truths because they are the declared in the Word of God. Faith rests entirely on the Word of God, what God has said. This unshakable confidence is not in self or in the flesh, in feelings or circumstance but in what is written. Such confidence is foolishness to the world because it is outside the realm of the possible reach of human logic and reason. It would seem that having such confidence would set all things in order and set our little bark to sail on calm seas. But let a rogue wave assail our little boat and we who trust that our salvation is sure, find that we do not so much trust the providence of God. The Bible declares that our course is set, our destination sure, our steps ordered, and all things are being worked for our good. But when circumstances press us hard, we most often apply to the flesh to fix it, undo it or change it. It always meets with failure yet, for the life of us, we can't seem to help ourselves. Some have said that experience is the best teacher but if that were the case, we would not keep repeating the same mistake over and over again

expecting a different result. Not trusting providence is a form of insanity.

In our text, Abraham, the man who believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness, and who God called out of idolatry, a man who had an assured relationship with God, signified by circumcision, a man who had been given the vision of Israel's captivity and deliverance from Egypt a man, who in this text God calls a prophet...this blessed man, rather than trust in the providence of God, sets on a tried and failed scheme to protect his wife and preserve his own life (v.13; 12:11-13). He tried this lie with Pharaoh, and it failed, and with Abimelech he tries the same thing hoping for a different result. This will be the result every time we apply to the flesh to alter the effects of circumstance. What we call circumstance is providence, and we cannot alter what God has purposed. But sadly, we try and ultimately find ourselves kicking against the pricks. In the case with Abraham, he put his wife and other innocents in jeopardy. We are not an island. When we apply to the flesh, who knows who else may be affected?

The Lord visited Abimelech in a dream and revealed that he had believed a lie and his life was hanging in the balance. He was innocent but Sarah's integrity was involved and that would not be compromised. When questioned about the reason that Abraham had hatched this scheme, his excuse was the same as before with a slight caveat. Abraham told Abimelech that he knew God was not in this place. That was a given in that idolatry permeated the area. But the real reason is what is connected in the statement that is attached to it (v. 11). "I lied so you wouldn't kill me," said Abraham. "I applied to the flesh to save my life." Abraham said that God was not in that place and the fact is that he was not thinking much about God or trusting His providence, or he would not have come up with the scheme in the first place.

Although the frailty of Abraham resulted in much trouble, the Lord delivered Him. This is always the case. Our faith or

lack thereof is never the cause of our deliverance. When we believe not, He abideth faithful, He cannot deny himself.

God was not in that place, religiously speaking, but He was there, even in the dream of an infidel. Abimelech was innocent in this episode and declared to be so (vv. 4-6). There is an interesting twist here. Abraham was suffered to employ his scheme and was delivered in spite of it. The twist is that Abimelech was prevented from sinning in this case and was delivered from death. The Lord is marvelous. Abimelech was withheld from sinning for the benefit of the elect, for the good of Abraham and Sarah (Dan. 4:35; Rom. 8:28). History is the record of God manipulating all things, all people for the salvation and the good of His own (John 17:1-3).

## BORN OF LIFE

### Genesis 21:1-8

1, And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

2, For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

3, And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

4, And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him.

5, And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

6, And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.

7, And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.

8, And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

This is the account of the birth of Isaac, the child promised to Abraham and Sarah in their old age (v 5). This blessed event is full of Gospel import because it is the catalyst of the New Testament teachings of the two covenants, election, true Israel, and the teachings concerning the law and grace and faith in the promise of God and His ability to keep His promise and sovereignly accomplish His will. It pictures the new birth, the

distinction between flesh and spirit and how the two are always contrary to each other.

As is all the word of God, this passage, addresses the glory of God in the salvation of the elect. The characters involved picture the way God saves sinners. It is the old, old story, ever new to the ears of the redeemed. Sarah and Abraham were two people who were unable to produce life. They were too old to procreate. In the epistle to the Romans, Paul described their bodies as “now dead.” This is the definitive spiritual description of man and woman as they are born into this world. Everyone born of Adam is spiritually dead. They can produce nothing that will draw them closer to God, and being dead, they have no inclination to do so. They cannot exercise faith because faith does not exist where there is no life. Life must come first or else there will be no seeing, no hearing, no hunger, no thirst, no desire, no ability, and no will to respond to anything in the realm of the spiritual. It is a sad condition, a despicable condition and the only aspect of salvation that is universal in scope. Humanity is born, dead in trespasses and sins.

The one thing that is of absolute necessity for a dead sinner to be brought to life is that the Lord of life visits him. Without this visit, the sinner will remain as he is and will be so eternally (V.1). The elect only differ from the eternally lost because the Lord visits them. That visitation is according to the Lord’s word, His promise. Abraham and Sarah were aware of the promise because the Lord had spoken to them personally. However, the dead sinner is unaware that a promise has been made to him and for him until he is made alive and given faith through the preaching of the Gospel. But the promise is nonetheless real. That promise was made unawares to the elect before the foundation of the world. That promise was that they would, by predestination, be conformed to the image of God’s Son. That promise was secure in that Christ was made surety for them, assuming all their debt of sin and being accountable to guarantee its payment. That promise was that they all would be taught of

God, which would result in them coming to Christ. That promise was that they were given to Christ and that He would not lose one of them, but raise all of them up in the last day. That promise was that Christ would see of the travail of His soul (their new birth) and be satisfied. The promise was that they would know no condemnation, no charge would ever be laid against them, having been perfected by the sacrifice of Christ. The promise was that they would hear the voice of Christ and follow him, and He would give them eternal life. The promise was that they would be saved (Matt. 1:21). When God gave them ears to hear the Gospel, they knew immediately that this was their salvation (Eph. 1:13).

When they heard that promise, they realized that life had been imparted and that it was according to purpose and at the appointed time (V. 2). The result of that knowledge and understanding, born of faith, is joy. They named the child born Isaac, which means laughter and the birth of a child of God spreads laughter all around (vv. 3, 6; 1 Pet. 1:8). There is also, with this manifestation of grace, a continual sense of wonder concerning the knowledge of what God has done (v. 7).

With that new life, that true life, that eternal life comes a desire to obey the Lord (v. 4). This is the heart of the elect. Though Ishmael lurks in the wings, ever nearby to torment. "With my mind I serve the law of God, with my flesh, I serve the law of sin and death."

Finally, when they heard the promise, of a rest wherein they could find sweet rest and refreshing, they receive it because they are weaned (v. 8; Is. 28:9-11, II Pet. 3:18). And a great feast is made, a feast of fat things, wine on the lees and well refined. Bring on the fatted calf, my son who was lost now is found. That feast is the Gospel (Is. 52:7-10).

## NOT AN HEIR

### Genesis 21:9-13

9, And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

10, Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

11, And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.

12, And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

13, And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

The characters of this story are employed throughout the word, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Abraham is seen as the father of the faithful, those who believe in Christ (Gal. 3). Sarah is presented as the heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of us all (Gal. 4). Isaac is presented as true Israel, the elect according to grace, the seed of Abraham in which the true church is called (Rom. 9). The children of Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Esau set forth the definitive doctrine of election and the distinctive love of God (Rom. 9). Isaac and Ishmael represent the doctrine of that which is born of the spirit and that which is born of the flesh and the enmity between the two (Gal. 4, 5). And this entire, historically true episode is an allegory depicting the old and new covenants, law, and grace. The riches

of the Old Testament are manifestly revealed in this nuclear family.

This episode is rich in Gospel doctrine and presents a particular aspect of that teaching that is the bread and butter of the life of the child of God. It is the doctrine of law and grace and the flesh and the spirit. These elements of existence of the child of God are ever present in the believer's life. They are cited in scripture as a war within our bosom and that which was contrary to us that Christ openly nailed to His cross. Also revealed in this passage is the doctrine of those who are heirs according to promise and those who are not. And the difference has nothing to do with natural generation or tribe or nationality except as it relates to the natural descendants. It is about spiritual election and the sovereign God dictating who are heirs with His Son.

This episode begins when Ishmael is a teenager, probably 16 or 17 years old. He had been a long time with his father and Abraham loved him. He was Abraham's boy. But this is not how Sarah describes him. Language means something and though we are not privy to Sarah's thoughts, since "out of the heart the mouth speaketh", Sarah's words betray her estimation of Ishmael. She sees him as the son of Hagar. Perhaps there is some selective memory exercised here. It was Sarah who besought Abraham to take Hagar to wife, howbeit that request was born of unbelief concerning the promised seed. Often the hardest part of being a believer is waiting on God.

Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac and her remedy by any human standard of decency and family dynamic seems extreme. She tells Abraham to banish Ishmael and his mom, "the bondwoman and her son" (vv.9-10). We might even be appalled at her vehemence if we did not know that this all serves the sovereign purpose of God. Ishmael mocking Isaac was part and parcel of God's purpose in grace. His hatred for Isaac was the necessary catalyst for an understating of the two covenants.



Sarah's very words are quoted in describing that truth (Gal. 4:30).

Any father can understand Abraham's reticence in banishing his son (v. 11). It had to be a hard thing for him. But the Lord comforted him concerning Ishmael and told him that the words of Sarah described how it was supposed to be (V. 12: Rom. 9:7; Heb. 11:18). Again, we see the providence of God in accomplishing His purpose. Also, in the grief of Abraham we see our own love for what we produce in the flesh. We nurture it and feed it though we ought to despise the garment spotted with it. But the reason it continues to plague us is because we don't want to let it go.

The Lord also told Abraham that he would make Ishmael and his descendants a great nation (v. 13, 18; 17:20). The last words of verse 13 tell the reason why God will bless Ishmael in the world, "because he is thy seed." Though Ishmael will always be an enemy of Isaac, the flesh, always the enemy of the spirit, they exist for the elect's sake (John 17:2-3). The rain falls on the just and the unjust. The sun shines on the just and the unjust... but they are both for the good of the elect. Ishmael will serve his purpose, always serving as the contrarian of the believer.

As the episode progresses Abraham sends the bondswoman and her son away with bread and water, and they wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba, and they began to falter and fear for their life as the bread and water was consumed. Destitute, they sat under a Juniper waiting for inevitable death and prayed. Their death was not according to God's purpose. God heard their cries. Ps 102:17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. God opened their eyes to see a well and they were there refreshed. Whether the well was miraculously created or was there all along and the Lord had hidden it from their eyes is not recorded, but how they saw it is plainly stated (v. 10). What refreshing will we see, when at the end of our rope, the Lord opens our eyes.

Ishmael became an archer and dwelt in wilderness of Paran (16:11-12). His descendants, the Nabataeans and the Saracens were famous archers, warriors and huntsmen, were even guards in Mecca. They were called "Dart men." How aptly this describes the enemies of grace who hurl the fiery darts of slander against those who hold tenaciously to the doctrine of grace (Rom. 3; 8). The darts of slander, accusations, lawlessness, and antinomianism are hurled by the descendants of Ishmael, and it is the God of glory who has preserved them for His purpose (1 Cor. 11:19).

## GOING TO WORSHIP

### Genesis 22:1-8

1, And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

2, And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3, And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4, Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5, And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

6, And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

7, And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

8, And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

This passage is one of the most well known in all of scripture. It is recorded in the 11th chapter Hebrews in that great chapter chronicling the faithful. One could spend a great deal of time here as each verse holds a wealth of Gospel truth. I expect that we will pitch our tent here for a bit and seek to glean some of the wealth of doctrine that is before us. For tonight I want us to consider the words of Abraham in verse 5 concerning what the Lord had commanded him to do. The Lord commanded him to take his son, his only son, and the son that he loved and offer him as a sacrifice, burnt offering unto the Lord. Isaac knew that certain elements that were required in such an offering were available and in hand (knife, wood, fire) but the one singular element of the burnt offering was missing (v. 7). There was no lamb, an absolute must in the performance of the burnt offering. Abraham's reply is the clarion call of every watchman on every tower who loves the Gospel of grace. "The Lord will provide Himself a Lamb." And He has...His Son, His only begotten Son, His Son whom He loves. Jehovahjireh...the Lord will provide. This is the heart-song of every redeemed sinner who, of himself has nothing to offer, no suitable sacrifice, nothing that can be accepted because the requirement is perfection. Thank the LORD that he has provide Himself a Lamb.

What I want us to see is the estimation that Abraham applies to all the elements he has gathered at the command of the Lord. He said in verse 5, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship the LORD." When Abraham heard the word offering and when Isaac saw the element lacking for that offering, that boy revealed that that worship was about sacrifice. There is no worship unless there is sacrifice. Worship is not about the worshipper receiving something. It is about offering something. Worship is sacrifice. The moment the Lord commanded the

sacrifice, Abraham knew he and the lad were going to worship the Lord.

When the believer, the sinner saved by grace comes to worship there is sacrifice. The first sacrifice is self and the elements of self that we naturally rely upon. We naturally rely on our strength, our ability, our problem-solving acuity. These are sacrificed on the altar of awareness that these things that we have relied upon cannot help us on any level. Upon this realization we are made painfully aware that all we have left is need (Matt. 15:25). She came worshipping Him, saying, "Lord, help me." Ability and power is sacrificed as she comes worshipping. When the Leper cried "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst", he was sacrificing all hope outside of Christ. When the publican in the temple cried "Lord be merciful to me, the sinner" He was sacrificing all sense of worthiness. Worshipping is declaring that I have nothing, can do nothing, am nothing and I am unworthy and thus attributing all glory to the power and will and worthiness of the Lord. Every hymn, every message, every method must resound with "Worthy is the Lamb" and that truth being born of the knowledge of our utter impotence.

There is a positive side to the realization and acknowledgement of our impotence and unworthiness that is involved in our sacrificial worship of the Lord (Ps. 100:4). Thanksgiving and praise *is* sacrifice. It is a sacrifice of self in that it is an acknowledgement that we had nothing to do with our salvation resulting in thanking and praising and blessing the name of the Lord for all that He, alone, has done for us. The Gospel is a revelation of what God has done for His elect (1 Cor. 2:7-12). After we hear the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation our hearts are filled with thanking and praising God, not our decision, our will or faith, but Christ alone (Heb. 13:15). Self is sacrificed on the altar of thanksgiving. The Lord said that for a person to follow Him, He must deny himself, and that is not self-denial such as giving up something for lent. It is

not giving up something you really like or want in order to merit acceptance. It is not will worship or self-induced suffering to be seen of men. It is not fasting for strife, our toting a cross mounted on raining wheels down some highway, or self-flagellation. It is denying that anything of you or about you was involved in your salvation. It is denying your words, your worth and you merit.

Worship is sacrifice. The epitome of that is seen in only one place, the place where the most pristine and astounding worship service was ever accomplished. That place was Calvary. There, God's Son, His only Son, His beloved Son worshipped His Father perfectly. There in the space of a few hours He sacrificed, not a lamb, a kid, a turtledove, or a bullock, but Himself, The Lamb of God, yea very God Himself united with perfect humanity. God has provided himself the Lamb. He gave himself to God. He gave His life, He gave His death, He poured out His soul unto death when He made His soul and offering for sin. This is worship beyond our ability to imagine. He denied Himself completely, substitutionally, to God for men and women who despised Him from their birth. This is the worship service that honored, glorified, and propitiated the Father. In agonies and blood, for the joy set before Him, He endured the Cross, disregarding the shame. This was perfect worship by perfect sacrifice. As men did their worst, laughing and mocking, shooting out the lip and worshipping their power in ridding themselves of this Jesus of Nazareth; He was perfectly worshipping God. The LORD had provided himself a Lamb. "I and the lad will go yonder and worship".

## BELIEVING THE PROMISE

### Genesis 22:1-17; Hebrews 11:17-19

Gen. 22:1, And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

2, And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3, And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4, Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5, And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

6, And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

7, And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

8, And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

9, And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10, And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11, And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

12, And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

13, And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

14, And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

15, And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

16, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

17, That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the



sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

Heb. 11:17, By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19, Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

The account of this glorious episode in the life of Abraham and Isaac, as we have seen, is replete with types, pictures, and shadows of Christ and His work. The longer we spend here, the more Gospel is revealed. It is clear, from his willingness to obey God in this great trial, that Abraham was a man of faith and rightfully bears the title of the Father of the faithful. In the book of Hebrews, the Spirit inspired the writer to include Abraham and this occasion in that great chapter that declares the lives of the faithful (Heb. 11:17-19). It is evident that Abraham believed the promise of God, which in truth, is the very life of the believer...he believes the promise.

Verse 17 begins with the words "By faith" and this two-word phrase is the description of the believer's existence. We walk (live, have our being) by faith and not by sight. Abraham could not see the end of this trial, but he believed God and the promise that God had made to him. His faith was notable in that the trial that God had assigned to him involved the very fulfillment of that promise. Isaac was the Son of promise; the seed of promise and his death would be the natural and logical end of that promise. So regardless of the act of destroying that promise, Abraham believed that God would keep his promise. By faith, when he was tried (his faith was tested) Abraham

offered up Isaac. He *actually* offered him up. He bound his thirty-year-old son on an altar. He put the wood under him, had the fire at the ready and lifted the knife to slaughter his only son. He would have followed through had not God provided a ram in the thicket to be a substitute for Isaac.

For us to grasp the gravity of the trial and understand the manifestation of Abraham's faith, our Lord directs our minds to two vital details. First this trial that commands offering up the promised one is to be done by "he that had received the promises." There was no third party involved. It was the man who had received the promises and the promises were tied up, lock, stock, and barrel in the slaying of the received promise. Everything hangs of this promise and the command is to end it. Indeed, it must be faith by which the promised seed was to be offered. Secondly, in verse 18, the Lord amplifies the greatness of this trial. As if to assert that this command, this trial seems to be the demolition of the promise, the Lord declares (to our amazement and wonder) that the entire future of the elect is about to be slain. "Of whom it was said (promised) That in Isaac shall thy seed be called." No small thing this!

In verse 19 the fact of Abraham's God-given faith is disclosed. He was going to kill his son, his only son, the son he loved, the promised seed because he accounted that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. The word "accounting" in the original means to reckon and it comes from the root word "logos", which means "word." In this we see the validity of faith. It is based on the Word. This is faith's resting place, the inerrant Word of God. Abraham reckoned that Isaac's future and the happy estate of the elect was safe because he counted on the Word of God. From this, the word declares that Abraham also received him in a figure. This word "figure" means parable or proverb and relates the fact that this entire episode was about something else, a true thing teaching about another true thing. This is about Christ. Gill's exposition of this verse tells the tale. He wrote: "Abraham did not go about this affair without

thought; and yet he did not consult with flesh and blood; his reasoning was the reasoning of faith; and the conclusion of it was, not that he believed that God would raise his son from the dead, but that he was able to do it. He knew that he had received him at first, as it were, from the dead; he sprung from his own dead body, and out of Sarah's dead womb; and though his faith did not prescribe to God, yet as he believed the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, he might believe that God would raise his son from the dead, rather than that his promise should fail; and this conclusion proceeded upon the power and faithfulness of God: from whence also he received him in a figure; or for an "example" of faith and obedience; or for a "parable or proverb," that such a proverbial expression might be made use of, for the comfort and encouragement of saints in distressed and difficult circumstances, as is in or as a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, whose type he was in other things, as well as in this; as in his birth, and the circumstances of it; he was long promised and expected, as Christ, was; his birth was beyond the ordinary course of nature, and attended with great joy; he was circumcised the eighth day; at his weaning a great feast was made, typical of the Gospel feast; and as he was persecuted by Ishmael, so was Christ by Herod, in his infancy: and he was a figure of him in his oblation; they were both sons of Abraham; both only begotten and beloved sons; both heirs; both carried the wood on which they were offered; both were offered on a Mount, and by their father, by whom neither of them were spared; and both by the command of God, and alone, none were with them: and Isaac prefigured him in his deliverance; Abraham stretched out his hand, but was restrained, and not a bone of Christ must be broken; not Isaac, but the ram was slain, not the divine, but the human nature suffered; both were delivered on the third day, the one as from death, the other really from death; and both returned to their father's house. Moreover, Abraham received his son in the similitude of a resurrection; it was as life from the

dead; it was like the return of the prodigal. Abraham, looked upon him as dead to him, and Isaac thought himself a dead man; so that he that was accounted as one dead, was received alive. By faith, Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac.

## EXTREME PROVING

### Genesis 22:1-2

1, And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

2, And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

The first verse of this chapter records that “God did tempt Abraham.” The verse begins with the words “And it came to pass after these things.” Sometimes we see words such as these and kind of pass over them as being little more than a statement of when something happened. But more often than not the words carry considerable weight. This occasion is one of those weighty times because understanding the significance of this trial relies heavily on trial’s connection to previous events. These events give even greater gravity to the trial of Abraham. Isaac had been born, as promised. Ishmael had been cast out. The promise that the many nations that would come from Abraham would realize fruition in Isaac has been declared, in whom the seed of Abraham would be called. The entirety of the covenant made with Abraham was now reduced to one person. In this, Isaac pictured Christ and the mediator of the covenant of grace, the One in whom the entire covenant resided. So, the ramifications of Isaac being the seed of promise set forth the future of the salvation of the elect. This is a bright and weighty future and the trial required, humanly speaking, puts the promise in jeopardy. This is indeed a severe trial for its spiritual connotations. It is also a severe trial on the human level. The

requirement to offer up Isaac is a parent's worst imaginable trial. There is no greater pain in the heart than the possibility of the loss of a child and how much greater that trial to consider that the demise of your child will be by your own hand. "God did tempt Abraham." The word "tempt" means to try or to prove and when used in reference to Christ and His people, it is always about faith. The Lord sent manna from heaven to prove Israel, to see if Israel would be satisfied with what God has provided. They were not. Christ is the manna from heaven and salvation is the revelation of whether a person is satisfied with what God has provided. The believer is satisfied. Dissatisfaction is proven when men and women seek to insert themselves into the accomplishment of that salvation, whether it is the false notion of free will, personal merit or religious reformation. If you are not satisfied with Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and righteousness than you are proven. Every time the Gospel is preached, you are proven.

Abraham's is about to be tested. The word "tempt" has a strong stem in the original. The stem is called "*Piel*" and with that stem the word rises to an extreme, intensive level. For example, the phrase "He broke;" with the *Piel* stem, the phrase would read "He broke to pieces, he smashed." So, this trial is an extreme test of Abraham's faith, and a more extreme one cannot be imagined (v. 2).

Just as every son of God's love is chastised, so every son of God's love is tested in faith. It is a necessity (1 Peter 1:5-7; 2 Cor. 12:9; Rom. 5:3-5; James 1:2-4). The testing and proving of faith is likened to the refiner's process wherein the dross is consumed and the gold is refined. The One who does the refining is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ (Mal. 3:1-4). He refines the priesthood with trials and testing (1 Peter 2:5). The refiner's process eventuates in two things. First, as the gold is heated by the smelter's fire, it melts and liquefies. As the dross begins to rise to the top, the gold shakes, and trembles. This is indicative of the pain of trials that cause the believer to tremble.

When the dross is removed, the gold takes on a mirror finish and the refiner sees his own reflection, without spot or blemish. This is indicative of the result of the trial. The gold doesn't see its own reflection but reflects the face of the refiner (2 Cor. 3:18). So the trial for the revelation of faith of which Christ is the object (Heb. 11:17-19). In His face is the glory of God (2 Cor. 4; 6; turn back to 1 Peter 1:6-9)

Another aspect of the believer going through trials and testing is that the experience of it is useful in comforting those who have likewise suffered (2 Cor. 1:2-5).

The comfort that comes through and after the trial is the fact that no trial that has come our way that has not been suffered and overcome by our blessed Savior (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:14-16). In every trial, the Lord is with us, beside us, holding us. Your trials, testing and proving is a necessary to the believer as is his faith. God did tempt Abraham.

## FOR A BURNT OFFERING

### Genesis 22:2

2, And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Rolf Barnard used to put a lot of stock in what he called the doctrine of first mention. Here in this verse, we have a whopping first mention because it ultimately relates to our salvation and the Gospel we believe and preach. Abraham is commanded to offer up Isaac as a “burnt offering” and this is the first time that the burnt offering is mentioned in the word of God and it is repeated 5 more times in this episode (vv. 3, 6,7,8, 13). The first time it is used, it is used six times. It is referred to in Exodus several times and is described as to manner in Leviticus chapter 1. The burnt offering speaks to a singular glorious truth. It typifies the substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ, by which our Lord paid our sin debt, satisfied the law and justice of the thrice holy God and propitiated God to the wondrous extent that He will remember our sins no more. In that sacrifice, according to Leviticus 1, the offerer (Christ) must offer a male of the first year (Christ). He must offer the offering to the Lord (Christ offered Himself to God). He must offer the offering voluntarily (Christ freely offered Himself, “No man taketh it from me, I lay it down of myself”). He must put his hand on the head of the sacrifice showing that the sacrifice is accepted for him, in his place and stead, picturing the believer’s faith that he was in Christ when Christ offered himself and that he is accepted in the beloved. The sacrifice was then bled out, cut into pieces and it along with the fat was put on the fire to be utterly consumed. This pictures the cross where Christ kept



nothing back, paid the ultimate price, availed himself to the unmitigated vengeance and wrath of the God whose anger against sin cannot be assuaged. This the burnt offering that pictures the offering of Christ, His perfect death that satisfied God and saved our souls (Lev. 1:4c). C.H. Mackintosh in his great book on the Pentateuch set forth a wonderful distinction concerning of the biblical use of the word burnt. The word “burn” used in reference to the burnt offering is different from the word “burn” in the sin offering. In the sin offering the word simply means burn. In the burnt offering the word mean to burn as incense. Incense is often employed to picture the intercessory work of Christ. This is particularly precious because the sacrifice of Christ and the preaching of the Gospel that declares it, is referred to in scripture as a sweet-smelling savor to God (Eph. 5:2; 2 Cor. 2:14). This is the result of the burnt offering Godward. It is pleasing in His nostrils. It has satisfied Him.

Abraham is to offer his son thusly complete with all the fire and gore. What a thing! What a command! What has intrigued my poor mind for years is that this episode is the quintessential declaration of substitution because God provides a ram in the place of Isaac. What intrigues me is considering what God had revealed to Abraham. What revealing conversations had transpired between the LORD and the man? Years before Moses wrote of this incident, years before he wrote of the command to the Levites, years before he wrote of Abraham, it is evident that the LORD had taught Abraham about these things to come. Had the Lord told him the entire story? Had He revealed to Abraham of His coming and dying and redeeming, of His sacrificial substitutionary death by which all the elect would be redeemed? He was a believer, the father of the faithful and he, as all believers, has the word of God written in their hearts and minds. When the Lord commanded him to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering, did Abraham see Christ on the cross? I have no idea. But I do know *some* things. When the record of this offering was addressed in Hebrews, it had to do with

Abraham's faith and his willingness to offer up his son. However, in the context of Genesis 22, Abraham, when commanded to offer a burnt offering, and when Isaac asked about the absence of a sacrificial animal, Abraham's mind went to the doctrine of substitution and a sacrifice that God would provide. Was he simply seeking to distract Isaac from the inevitable or was he declaring the work of Christ (John 8:56, 58)? Abraham knew that God would provide a lamb for Himself and Himself for a Lamb. Centuries later John the Baptist would cry aloud, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

## ALL NATIONS

### Genesis 22:15-19

15, And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

16, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

17, That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18, And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

19, So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

After Abraham has obeyed the LORD's command to offer his son as a burnt offering, the LORD reiterates His promise to bless him exceedingly. In that blessing there is a phrase that involves and includes all believers, all the elect of God. The promise to Abraham was that all nations would be blessed in "his seed." We know from Galatians that Abraham's seed was Christ and all the elect that make up His body, the church. It is all about "his seed" (vv. 17-18). All nations will be blessed in that seed, which is Christ. The word "nations", in scripture, is employed in many ways.

Here it is used to designate all nations and specifically the elect in those nations. All nations are blessed in Christ because

all nations are under his authority and rule. Men who will never look to Christ, who will hate and rebel against him yet live, thrive and prosper and propagate though justice would demand their death and eternal damnation. They are not in Hell because they are in the hands of the mediator until He has given eternal life to all those that God has given him. Christ, the Lamb of God is worthy to be praised because he has redeemed (by His blood) an innumerable company out of every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.

Once the Jewish nation was formed as and type and picture of the kind of people that make up true Israel, the Israel of God and the spiritual elect from the 4 corners of the earth, the nations came to be known as Gentiles. Because of the carnal grasp of natural election, the Jews who had the word of God, the priesthood, the oracles, the law, and the ceremonies, deemed themselves special and entitled and despised the Gentiles. The words “world” and “Gentile” became synonymous with the despised Gentiles, often referred to as dogs, sinners, and infidels (Luke 18:9; Is. 65:5).

If you were not born into the Jewish nation, you were a gentile and thus you were a pagan. When you read the word “Gentile” you can exchange the word for your name and account that you were born a pagan and will remain so, steeped in pagan idolatry until or unless the Lord has accounted you, by election, predestination, and redemption to be of true Israel. In Isaac shall thy seed be called. Neither Isaac nor Abraham was a Jew; they were denizens of the nations, the nations among all nations that would be blessed in his seed. So you see, before there was a Jewish nation to despise the Gentile, Gentiles were already promised, even firstly, the blessing in Abraham’s seed (Christ).

In the prophet Haggai Christ is declared to be the one coming who would be “The desire of all nations” (2:6-7) . This does not mean that all nations will desire Christ; that has never been the case. It means that all nations desire someone and something that will meet a specific religious need, and though

they don't seek Him, it is only in Christ that these desires are fully met, What and who do all nations desire? One man said that all nations desire 4 things. 1st all nations desire a visible God. We have but to look at the numerous images, statues icons and idols that man has manufactured to know this to be the case. Christ alone is the express image of God, the visible image of the invisible God the one in who the fullness of the Godhead dwells. 2nd All nations desire an atonement or a means of appeasing or propitiating God. Again, we have but to view the inventions and practices of nations to achieve atonement. They span a great breadth from confession and absolution, penitence, self-punishment, self-flagellation, bloodletting, repetitive prayers, aisle walking, and such are but a few means invented to atone for sin and to appease God. But Christ alone is propitiation (1 John 4:10). 3rd. All nations have desired a divine revelation or an authentic enunciation of the divine will. Men want to hear from their deity. They desire to know his will. Show me a religion in this world of nations that has not come up with a spokesman for God. Whether it is a priest or priestess, or shaman, or seer, or soothsayer, or witch doctor, an oracle or preacher; all nations desire a divine revelation from their deity. Plato in one of his discourses said, "It is therefore necessary to wait until one teach us how to behave toward the gods and men. And when shall that time arrive? And who shall that teacher be? For most glad would I be to see such a man." This is the desire of all nations. Christ is the teacher, the Prophet, the Divine communication, The Word made flesh, the authentic enunciation of God's will has come (John 6:27-38). 4th All nations desire some assurance of immortality, a promise of eternal life, a hope that this life is not all there is. No matter where you put your finger on the pages of the history of human religion, you will find the desire for existence beyond the grave. Egyptian mummification was an effort at eternal life. The notion that death ends it all has never found much purchase in the heart of humanity. Whether it is the Hindu notion of re-

incarnation, the Islam promise of paradise replete with virgins, the Chaldean notion of Ishtar descending into hades, Dante's descent into the inferno, or the milquetoast pap that after folks die "they are all up there watching over us" the desire for eternal life permeates the minds of all nations. Though they do not know it, and apart from saving grace refuse to acknowledge it, the desire of all nations has come. Christ is eternal life (John 17:2-3).

The nations first received the promise of blessings, and it was fully realized in the early days of church. When Peter was prepared to take the Gospel to Cornelius, he became the apostle to the Gentiles. Then Paul settled the matter in Acts 13:38-49. Read Genesis 22:17-18.

# MADE SURE

## Genesis 23

1, And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah.

2, And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

3, And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,

4, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

5, And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him,

6, Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.

7, And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth.

8, And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar,

9, That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you.

10, And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,

11, Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead.

12, And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.

13, And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there.

14, And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him,

15, My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.

16, And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

17, And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure

18, Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

19, And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan.



20, And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth.

Many years ago, a fellow told a good friend of mine that he thought I was a victim of “over-typing.” By that statement, he meant that I was guilty of trying to find Christ in every text in the Old Testament. When I heard the accusation, I told my friend to tell the fellow that I said, “Thank you.” This glorious tome, from Genesis to Revelation, is about the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is His story, His book and being the Word made flesh it is His person in literary form. Sometimes, for me, while looking for Christ in the text, comparing scripture with scripture, I end up scratching my head in wonder. Such was the immediate response to the 23rd chapter of Genesis. It is a straightforward account of Abraham purchasing a particular piece of real estate as a site to bury his beloved Sarah, who has just gone on to glory. The record reveals a bit of back and forth between Abraham and the sons of Heth because Abraham refused to take the plot of land as a gift but was rather determined to purchase it, buy it outright at the going rate. I saw something of Christ in Abraham’s desire to bury Sarah because of his stated belief in resurrection from the dead in Hebrews 11. Christ is the resurrection and the life. That was about as far as I got in the context after about 3 weeks of mulling over it. Granted, the resurrection, is a reasonable and viable subject that would entice many sermons, but I felt that there was something else that was being set forth in type and shadow in this account. Then, about 3 days ago, reading the chapter again, two words grabbed my attention. In the 17th verse, describing the result of Abraham buying the land, purchasing it at a valid present-day value and taking possession of it. With payment made and purchase possessed, the transaction is said to be “made sure.” This piece of real estate became the sole property of Abraham. The title and deed were in his name alone. This site, Machpelah or Hebron, is the oldest

piece of property of Israel. 3700 years have passed since this transaction and the property still belongs to Abraham and he and Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, and Leah are buried there. If you ventured there you would still be able to visit their burial site, 3 ½ millennia later (read v. 17). The purchase was indeed, made sure.

What this passage teaches is the true nature and elements of a purchase. It is made sure when that which is purchased is possessed, becoming the real property of the purchaser. This is imperative in such a transaction. For it to be made sure the purchaser must take real possession of the property purchased.

This applies precisely and particularly to the Gospel of God's sovereign grace. The doctrine of redemption is the doctrine of purchase. Three words in scripture are employed to teach the doctrine of redemption. They each apply to buying a slave from the slave market (*agarrazo*, *ecagarazzo* and *luatro*). They mean to go to the slave market, to buy or purchase a slave from the market, to possess that slave so that the slave will never be put on the market again. It is to own what you have purchased. We know that Christ is the redeemer. That title can only apply to one who has actually redeemed, to one who has gone to the marketplace of the world, bought, purchased by His blood/death, the slaves he intended to buy (his sheep, church, bride, people, brethren, sons and daughters, and took possession of those for whom he paid the purchase price. They must become His property or redemption, purchase, did not take place. The purchase, the redemption must be made sure, or it is not redemption.

The false Gospel that permeates the world of Christianity and Christendom today speaks of redemption, of payment of sin debt, of purchase but stall and get all stymied in the language of possession. I remember watching a prominent Baptist preacher in Atlanta, a doctor of theology some time ago. He declared that Christ paid the debt of sin, purchased the sinner, and then declared that Christ made redemption possible. He spoke

nothing of the actual possession of that which was bought and paid for. For nearly an hour he tried to explain how the debt had been paid but it was up to the thing purchased to make that transaction valid or the thing purchased would be accountable for paying the debt that had already been paid. Try as he might, he failed, simply because there is no such thing as a redemption that does not redeem, or a thing being bought if it is not actually possessed.

Nowhere in this inerrant Word of God do you find such prattle. When redemption is addressed, it is always, always addressed as the one purchased being truly possessed. What Christ has paid for; He owns. When you read in scripture of the Lord's peculiar people, that word peculiar means purchased and possessed (Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9; Eph. 1:14). The purchase price was God's own blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 1 Pet. 18-19; Rev. 5:9-10). This is the Gospel. Everyone for whom Christ died to pay their sin debt, he owns lock stock and barrel, or he redeemed no one. Only when what is purchased is possessed is the transaction made sure. 3700 years after Abraham made this purchase, it is still in his name but that is but a blip on the radar of time when compared to the eternal possession of all those that Christ bought and paid for on Calvary (Ezek. 16:8-14).

And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

# A WIFE FOR MY SON

## Genesis 24:1-9

1, And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

2, And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3, And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

4, But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

5, And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

6, And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.

7, The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

8, And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.

9, And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

This chapter is a picture of the revelation of the church, the bride of Christ. This chapter and the two that precede it set forth a pattern that is later revealed in the Gospels. In chapter 22 we have the offering up of Isaac, which is described in Hebrews as a figure of one raised from the dead. In chapter 23 we have the death of Sarah, being buried out of the way and in chapter 24 we have the bride sought out and revealed. As we go to the Gospel we have the rejection and death of Christ, the setting aside of natural, physical Israel and the revelation of the church, the bride of Christ though, as Rebecca existed before she was made the bride of Isaac and though she was unaware of the glory that awaited her, she was already set securely in the will and purpose of God and only awaited the providence of God to bring her to her appointed end. So it was with the church, the bride of Christ, she walked this earth in utter oblivion to her glorious future but, unbeknownst to her, she had been chosen from all eternity in the election of grace to be the bride of Christ. She was bound to Christ before the world began and after His death burial, resurrection, and ascension, he sent His Spirit into the world to find her, tell her of Christ and gather her to Him. All this was established before it was actualized in an oath between Abraham and His trusted servant who picture God and His Holy Spirit. The catalyst for it was the death of His Son. Nothing could take place in the calling of the church until the issue of her sinful condition was addressed by Christ dying in her room and stead, her being given life and a righteous standing imputed to her. This was done for her, before she ever was made aware of in through the testimony of the Spirit by the preaching of the Gospel, but it was nonetheless a marital union sealed in eternity (Romans 8:29-30; Eph. 1:3-6; 2 Thes. 2:13-16; Ps. 139:16). This eternal purpose is disclosed in the oath made between Abraham and his chief servant (vv. 2, 9).

The salvation of the elect was according to the eternal purpose of God. Rebecca's destiny was set, and it would soon be revealed. She has no idea of the dignity and honor that awaits her, but it is hers for sure. Though her willingness might be in question in the mind of men (vv. 5, 8) it is never so in the purpose of God (Ps. 110:1-3; John 10:26-29).

Isaac having a bride is necessary. It is in Isaac that Abraham's seed will be called. The accomplishment of the seed being called relies on Christ having His bride. She is His body, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh and is said to be "the fullness of Him that filleth all." The union of Christ and His church is the very heart of the Gospel. She was made for Him. As Paul said, "Man was not made for the woman, but the woman was made for the man;" as the LORD said, "It is not good for man to be alone."

Paul said that the "woman is the glory of the man." The bride is the glory of Christ. All He did in his life and death, He did for His Father's glory and His bride's good. He died for her sin according to scripture. He loved her and would have her forever know that (John 17:23-24). The salvation of His bride is His glory and the only way he truly glorifies His Father (John 17:1-4).

Has God redeemed His elect? Indeed, He Has. He has eternally betrothed her to Him, to be glorified in Him and because of Him (Eph. 5:25-27; Ezek. 16:14). Read Gen. 24:4 – "a wife for my Son".

## THE GLOWING REPORT

### Genesis 24:10-60

10, And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

11, And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

12, And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

13, Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14, And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

15, And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

16, And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

17, And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

18, And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

19, And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

20, And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

21, And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

22, And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;

23, And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

24, And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

25, She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

26, And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

27, And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.



28, And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things.

29, And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.

30, And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.

31, And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.

32, And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.

33, And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

34, And he said, I am Abraham's servant.

35, And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.

36, And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

37, And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:

38, But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

39, And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

40, And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house:

41, Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath.

42, And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go:

43, Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink;

44, And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son.

45, And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

46, And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

47, And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom

Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

48, And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.

49, And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

50, Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.

51, Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.

52, And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth.

53, And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.

54, And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.

55, And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.

56, And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.

57, And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth.

58, And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

59, And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.

60, And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

Last time we looked at the oath that Abraham made with his servant to find a wife for his only son Isaac. That wife Rebecca has been introduced to us in the latter portion of chapter 22. The ordination had been set by the Lord and though Rebecca had no idea that she was to be the bride of Isaac, her steps had been ordered of the Lord. Sovereign providence would bring her to the side of her bridegroom. This was a picture of Christ. Before the world began the election of grace took place whereby God the Father chose the bride of Christ, the church and betrothed her to His only begotten Son. She came into the world, her eternal estate secure, without any knowledge that she had been chosen from the foundation of the world. Rebecca would be the mother of two men who would be the very defining example of election and reprobation and all according to the sovereign will of God (Rom. 9:10-13).

The Lord had sent his angel before Abraham's servant and the providential details were precisely met in the predetermined encounter. As we have just read, every scenario of the possible encounter with the future bride is asked of the Lord and each was met with precise accuracy to the final agreement wherein Rebecca left with Abraham's servant to be united with her betrothed. How every believer might take pause and ponder, for a bit, the twists and turns, the ups and downs, the ins and outs, things grasped and things let go, things loved and things hated

that made up the steps of their existence to finally bring us to the feet of our Savior, Lord and bridegroom. We made our plans, were moved and manipulated by powers outside us, having no say, no choice in our race or place, exaltation or disgrace, and each step was toward a glory that we could not imagine. What amazing things had been ordered for us, ere we drew our first breath. What a school our life was, what an education when we were finally made aware that we were predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God.

All this is done, planned, purposed before the world was made. The elect were the betrothed bride of Christ. Her willingness was ordained in the day of the Lord's power. She would agree, most heartily to be His bride. But she has no knowledge, and she must be told, or willingness will not even enter into the picture. She must hear the report, believe the doctrine and desire to come (Rom. 10:14-17). Abraham's servant is a type of the Holy Spirit employing the preaching of the Gospel to inform the bride of the glory of her bridegroom. The Holy Spirit does not come with bargains, quid pro quo equations, threats, or inventions. He comes to the bride speaking of Christ (John 15:26; 16:13-16). Abraham's servant told Laban and Rebecca about the greatness of his master (VV, 34-36). It was an enticing report. Oh, but the report given by the Holy Ghost! The God of glory sent His Son into this world to secure the salvation of His betrothed. He bore the punishment due her for her sin, died the death that she owed to God's law and justice, was made to be her wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption and called her by His grace. When she hears the report, she is overwhelmed, filled with anticipation and wonder. She is so enamored, so utterly taken with the report, the description of the bridegroom that her answer was, "Yes, yes, a thousand times yes!" Sink or swim I go to him. Though He slay me I will serve him. In love and full of praise and thanksgiving she flies to the arms of her bridegroom, clothed in the pristine robe of His righteousness, her beauty

renown because of his comeliness that He has put own her. He calls her and she follows him, and He gives her eternal life, and bestows on her all that His Father has given him.

“And can it be that I should gain

an interest in the Savior’s love?

Died He for me who caused his pain,

for me to whom his death pursued?”

This is why we tell the story over and over again. With resplendent redundancy we rehearse and repeat the glorious report of what the bridegroom has done as one coming out of his chamber and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. “To God be the glory, great things He has done” (v. 58).

## SURE RESPONSE

### Genesis 24:61-67

61, And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

62, And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.

63, And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.

64, And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.

65, For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.

66, And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.

67, And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

The process involved in bringing Rebekah to meet her bridegroom is a picture of the bride of Christ, the church, being brought to meet her Lord. It began with an oath, a predetermined purpose to choose a bride. This oath was made with the assurance that the angel of the Lord would attend the purpose, making the calling sure. Then there was the glowing report concerning the glory of the bridegroom and his vast

wealth, a report that pictured the beauty of the Gospel and its wondrous report of Christ and His work and the boundless wellspring of grace and mercy. The report worked and the one espoused to Christ was irresistibly drawn to Him of whom she had heard. I don't know how long the journey took but it stands to reason that all along the journey, Rebekah was inundated with more of the glory and the worthiness of Isaac. Up to this point, she had not seen her bridegroom, but she went forward, committed to him having only heard of Him and his glory. When asked if she would go, even though her family desired her to stay behind with them for a while, she would have none of it. She said, "I will go." Is this not the story of every believer? We have yet to see our bridegroom, but we have heard of Him. The Father has taught us of Him, and we have come to Him (John 6:45). We continue to come to Him (1 Pet. 2:4). The Holy Spirit, our guide into all truth, first told us of Him through the preaching of the Gospel and He continues to teach us of Him on our journey to meet Him. We have not seen Him, our knowledge of Him is entirely wrapped up in what we have heard (1 Pet. 1:8-9). As the Lord told Thomas, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." We are coming to Christ. We will go and nothing, not even our close relatives will hinder us...the very gates of hell will not prevent us...our former religion will not put a stumbling block that will halt us...we will go. No matter how long the journey, how difficult the race, leaving all things behind we press toward the prize of the high calling in Christ. With patience we run the race, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (see Gal. 1:15-17).

In this passage we see the sure result of the preaching of the Gospel, the result of the glowing report, is that the elect, the Lord's chosen will come (Is. 43:6). They will not have to be cajoled, invited, gang-saved or persuaded by 50 verses of "Just as I am" or by the plaintive teardrops that attend some sad and sappy tale of woe. They will come because they have heard of One so



utterly wonderful, that apart from God given faith, they could not believe that such a one could even exist (v. 61). The elect have not seen Christ, but through the Gospel they have heard His voice and have followed Him,

When Rebekah saw Isaac, she asked the servant who that man was and he told her that He was the Master, the one of whom he had spoken. She put on her veil (symbolic of her humility, modesty, and that she was his bride). When she knew who He was she lighted off her camel. This verb “lighted” has many applications and can mean several things but all the meanings have to do with going down, bowing, being prostrate. She bowed to Isaac. Is this not the posture of all who meet Christ in the Word? As the old preacher said, “bow or burn.” When the elect meet Christ, through His word, they do not meet Him at the cross, they meet Him where He is, on His throne. He is Lord over all.

Isaac, immediately received her and took her to Himself, married her. There was no religious council to test her worthiness or veracity to qualify her to be His bride. There was no watch care program that would have her wait for six weeks to see if she met some religious standard. She was immediately made to be His bride. This is the result of purposed election, and Gospel declaration. The bride will come and will be received immediately.

## ABRAHAM'S END

### Genesis 25:1-10

1, Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.

2, And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.

3, And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

4, And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

5, And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.

6, But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.

7, And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.

8, Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.

9, And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre;

10, The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

This portion of the chapter is the record of Abraham's marriage to Keturah, the children born of that union, Abraham's death in a ripe old age and his burial in the tomb at Machpelah with the body of his wife, Sarah. In this passage, Abraham is said to have concubines. That term is in reference to Hagar and Keturah. In other places in scripture, they both are referred to as Abraham's wives and also as his concubines. In some Jewish writings they are referred to as "concubine wives." This is not done to diminish them as individuals but to denote the contrast between them and Sarah who is always referred to as Abraham's wife. Sarah was truly Abraham's wife and the mother of the child of promise, Isaac, from whose lineage the Messiah would come. Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, and her son Ishmael, along with Keturah and her son's were Abraham's family, the sons born of the flesh, the vitality of Abraham. Isaac was born of the miracle of God, in other places in scripture this declared to be analogous to being born of the Spirit and not the flesh. This truth is carried out through the Word of God to represent the two covenants and the distinction between the flesh and the spirit.

With that in mind, there are three things that stand out concerning the flesh and the spirit. It is important to remember that the natural man, the carnal son of Adam, has no understanding of the two principles that live in every believer. No one truly knows the meaning of the flesh who has not been made alive in regeneration by the Holy Spirit, through hearing the preaching of the Gospel. Men may experience what they call the devil on one shoulder and an angel on the other as they wrestle with what they term to be good or evil decisions. However, this is merely the vagaries of the conscience, which operates only in the realm of the flesh, sin and the law. The only way to grasp the obscurities of the flesh is to be spiritually alive. And in setting forth the things involving the spirit and the flesh, the natural mind cannot deal with how God operates entirely for benefit of the spirit and entirely against any benefit of the flesh. This is always the case. Though natural men may be caused to

prosper and live a life of ease, their blessings will be turned to cursings and those cursing will be worked out for the good of the elect. This does not sit well with the carnal mind because, “there is a way the seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

That being said, the first of the three things that stand out in this passage concerning the flesh and the Spirit is found in verse 5. Abraham gave everything to Isaac. Though he gave gifts to the sons of his concubine wives, he gave all to Isaac. This means he gave his name, his inheritance, all that God had given him. The covenant and the promised were given to Isaac and nothing pertaining to what God had done for him in that covenant was passed on to the sons born of the vitality of his flesh. This is a picture of two things. First, this asserts the singularity of Christ and the one in whom God the Father has invested in all things (John 3:35; Matt. 11:27). This simply means that no one will receive anything from God that is not found in Christ. It also means that God is only glorified fully, in all His attributes, in Christ (John 12; 17). Secondly, in I Corinthians 3 it is declared that the believer has all things. He has all things in only one way. If he is in Christ, he has all that God has put in Christ’s hands (Eph. 1:3). The believer is God’s heir and joint heirs with Christ. Christ is the Savior and only in him are invested all things that have anything to do with salvation. The flesh resists this because the flesh is invested in glorifying self and since all of salvation belongs to Christ, the flesh, natural man, is no part of and has no part in that equation. If you have not Christ, you are not saved (1 John 5:12; 2 John 9).

The second thing concerning the flesh and the Spirit is found in verse 6. Though the sons of the concubine wives received gifts, they were not allowed to abide in the vicinity or proximity of Isaac. Abraham “Sent them away for Isaac, his son.” Though he was the sire, the father of the sons of his concubine wives, they were not called the son of Abraham. Isaac is denominated as Abraham’s son. This is addressed throughout

scripture to teach that the flesh and the Spirit are always contrary to one another, operating in two utterly opposed realms that never intertwine, never applying to one another, and never operating in one another's realms (Gal. 5:16-18). This theme is repeated in the word of God (John 3:5-7; Rom. 8:5-8; Gal. 4:28-31). The kind of people that God has chosen and called to salvation are specifically designed so that they could not glory in the flesh, or account that that have ought to do with their salvation (1 Cor. 1:26-31). The flesh cannot abide with the Spirit.

Finally, we find the third thing that concerns the flesh and the spirit is found in verses 8-9. Abraham, after living a long and good life, blessed of God he gives up the ghost. There was no terror or pain in his death but is stated this way to reveal that he was ready to go. He had fulfilled his purpose as the one whom the Spirit inspired men to describe him as the Father of the Faithful. Though this account is declared as a matter of record, there is a symbolic truth set forth in the fact as the body of Abraham was entombed, on either side of the grave was Isaac and Ishmael (the son of the flesh and the son of the spirit). Though scripture declares that Ishmael tormented Isaac, as is often the case at a funeral, animosities are set aside at least for a brief time. The symbolism is that believers will not end the struggle between the flesh and the spirit until they are dead. As long as we live there will remain this war within us. At our graveside will be what used to define us, but at last we will leave it behind. Perhaps this is what Paul was referring to when he spoke of this corruption putting on incorruption and this mortality putting on immortality. What a change indeed, no more flesh! What a day that will be!

# Two

## Genesis 25:21-26

21, And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

22, And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

23, And 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.

24, And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

25, And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

26, And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

Throughout the Word of God, the Lord employs the number *two*, the use of which reveals many aspects of spiritual truth. In the Garden there was God and the Serpent representing good and evil, truth and the lie, transparency and deception. Later there was Cain and Abel representing obedience and disobedience, grace and works, faith and sight, life and death. Then there was Sarah and Hagar who bore Isaac and Ishmael representing the distinction between flesh and Spirit and the Old and New Covenants. In this passage we are introduced to

two brothers Jacob and Esau. These two will be addressed in much of the Bible to represent many spiritual truths. Here in the record of their conception and birth there is a great deal of the Gospel of grace intimated, suggested, addressed, and declared. As with all of Holy Scripture, the key of knowledge is Christ and His work, and so it is here.

Historically, the word reveals that twenty years had passed in the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah without a child being born to them. When Isaac is sixty Rebekah conceives after Isaac entreats the Lord because his wife, up to this point is barren. We are not privy to the content of the prayer that he uttered but it stands to reason that the entreaty was based on the promise of God that in Isaac the seed of Abraham would be called. The Lord opened her womb and she conceived. The pregnancy was an unpleasant one for Rebekah. This is the first mention of twins being conceived in scripture. It appears from her plea that there was a battle going on inside her that gave her considerable despair (v. 22). She feels as if something is wrong with her pregnancy. She wonders within herself that if this is a normal pregnancy why is there all this painful activity going on within her. This certainly pictures the struggle of every believer, whose body is the residence of two principles, life and death, good and evil, spirit and flesh in his bosom, to the point of crying out, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." How often has our heart entreated, "If this is right, why am I thus"? She inquired of the Lord for the answer.

The answer given her is Gospel full, pressed down and running over. The Lord didn't say you are going to have twins, but rather told her of things to come, a definitive future and promise concerning the struggle that was occurring in her womb. A struggle that began before the boys were born that would continue until time was no more. In her womb were two nations. Historically it will be the Israelites and Edomites,

spiritually it will be the world and that nation born of grace in a day.

In her womb are two manner of people. Historically the boys will look different, have different lives, act differently and live in different places. Spiritually they represent the lost and the found, the elect and the non-elect, those whom God loves and those who he hates (Mal. 1:2-3). The two boys will come to be the very definition of the nature of divine election unto salvation (Rom. 9:10-13). God will never refer to Himself and the God of Esau, but will often, in His Word, refer to himself as the God of Jacob.

The Lord tells Rebekah that one of the boys will be stronger than the other. He doesn't say which because it is true of both. Naturally, Esau will be physically stronger, a mighty hunter, a man's man, and his father's favorite. Jacob would be a homebody, without survival skills, a momma's boy who, naturally speaking, is of questionable character. Spiritually, Jacob is the stronger of the two, not in himself but because of the grace of God (Ecc. 9:11). It is he who will be the father of the twelve tribes and though he will show his frailty in many instances, he is yet beloved of the Lord. The Lord is his strength. We will see Esau's weakness in this very chapter.

Then the Lord delivers the final promise. The elder shall serve the younger. This goes against the doctrine of the firstborn (Esau) who, as the firstborn, is to receive all that the father has (v. 5). Historically this applies to the chicanery and subterfuge of Jacob, who caught his brother in a moment of weakness and conned him out of his birthright and later, with the help of his mother, tricked his father into giving him the blessing. This was done in unbelief of the promise of God and reveals the wickedness of men who feel that God cannot do what He wills without their assistance. Spiritually this statement reveals the destiny of the two covenants (Heb. 10:9). When the Lord came to do the will of God, He took away the first and established the second. He abolished the old and introduced the new.



When the twins were born, the firstborn was Esau and as he proceeded from the womb, Jacob reached out and grabbed His heel. This is a wonder and suggests the reason for the struggle while they were in the womb. We don't attribute such intellect to newborns, but the truth is that we don't know. Today men and women question that a child in the womb is even alive but this certainly suggests otherwise as when John the Baptist leapt in his mother's womb when Mary, pregnant with the Son of God enter into his presence. This heel grabbing reveals the nature with which we are all born in this world, as soon as we are born, we are all about interjecting ourselves into God's business. The name Jacob means "heel grabber" or "supplanter", which means a usurper through intrigue or trickery. This is finally a description of the kind of people who make up the elect of God— not a good person in the whole shooting match— heel grabbers all. Christ came into this world to save sinners so that no flesh (no Jacob) should glory in his presence.

## ESAU'S GAIN

### Genesis 25:27-34

27, And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

28, And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29, And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

30, And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31, And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

32, And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

33, And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34, Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

This is the record of an incident that has, in many ways, come to define the difference between the flesh and the spirit, this present world and the world to come, love for self and love for God and gaining the world and losing your soul. The Bible is replete with references to the destruction that attends investing oneself in this world. I think that the things that have happened

in this last year have made many believers fix their mind and heart on the city whose builder and maker is God.

The story before us is a simple one but one of profound importance. It is easily understood and does not need theological language to explain. The entire episode rests in the last phrase of verse 34, “thus Esau despised his birthright.” By his selfish actions he defined what it is to have the mind that disregards things eternal. Esau became the exemplar of those whose god is their belly (Phil. 3:19).

In verse 27 and 28 the twins are described and the attitude of their parents toward them is set forth. Esau was a mighty hunter, a man of the field, an outdoorsman. His father loved him because he put meat on the table. Esau fed his father’s belly. Jacob is said to be a plain man and as loved by his mother, Rebekah. That word “plain” has its roots in the concept of being complete. We know that Jacob will often reveal his frailty and his trickery and his willingness to exercise his unbelief, But, because God loved him, he is complete. All who are loved of God are in Christ and are complete in him. In many days hence Jacob and Esau are comparing what they have. Esau will say, “I have enough.” Jacob will say, “I have it all.” So it is with all who know Christ. They are complete, having need of nothing (Col. 2:8-9; 1 Cor 3:21-23).

This episode in the life of these twins teaches us another lesson concerning the natural and the spiritual, the temporal and the eternal. Esau came home hungry and when he got home Jacob was cooking up a stew. It was a red stew because it was made of meat and lentils. How hungry Esau was is not stated but it is recorded that he was faint and the only thing that was of interest to him was getting fed. He asked, perhaps even begged, Jacob for some of that red stew, According to verse 30 the name that attended Esau’s lineage from that day forward was acquired from that stew. He was the father of the Edomites, and Edom means “red.” Think of that. The entire nation of Edom got its name from this episode that defines what it is to

despise the birthright. Jacob pulled a fast one, but the impetus is that Esau was ready to trade everything for a full belly.

Just as Israel despised the “pleasant land” of Canaan:” (Ps. 106:24), just as they despised the Messiah (Zech. 11:13) and just as those invited to the wedding feast despised the invitation (Matt.22:5), Esau despised his birthright. Though his actions deprived him of all that is involved in the birthright it primarily was about how he regarded the Messiah. He despised Christ, the singular provision that marked the importance and value of the birthright. Now we know that the birthright was never truly Esau’s. The Lord had designated that the elder shall serve the younger, thus the birthright belonged the Jacob by sovereign decree. Though it is never clearly stated that Jacob was aware of this, in all probability, his mother had told him. Two things are revealed in this transaction. First is that Jacob was of the mind that the Lord needed help in fulfilling His promise. The complete man was still plagued with presumption and unbelief. Secondly, Esau was a man whose interest was in the present and not in the future. Paul said, “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” This incident is referred to in Hebrews 12:16.

Esau had a belly for the things of the flesh but no heart for the things of God. He was sewn up in the present and discounted that which is eternal. Our lord has much to say about that. One man said, “Don’t grasp this world so tightly that God has to break your fingers to make you let it go.” The world is yours to use and enjoy but you are not the world’s. The Lord said that His people were in the world but not of the world. He said that His kingdom was not of this world. What profit is there if a man gain the world and lose his soul. (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Pet. 3:9-18; Matt. 6:19-21).

## FAMINE AND FRUITFULNESS

### Genesis 26:1-33

1, And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

2, And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:

3, Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;

4, And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

5, Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

6, And Isaac dwelt in Gerar:

7, And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.

8, And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.

9, And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.

10, And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us.

11, And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.

12, Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him.

13, And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great:

14, For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.

15, For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.

16, And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.

17, And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

18, And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

19, And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.

20, And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him.

21, And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah.

22, And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

23, And he went up from thence to Beersheba.

24, And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

25, And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

26, Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army.

27, And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?

28, And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee;

29, That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the LORD.

30, And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.

31, And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32, And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water.

33, And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day.

This is the account of another famine that took place about 100 years after the one that sent Abraham to spend some time among the Philistines and get in trouble over doctoring the truth about Sarah. We find that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, because Isaac tells the same lie about Rebekah and for the same reason (compare 20:11 and 26:7, 11) and to a king of the same name, ending with the same result (vv.6-11). Several things immediately come to mind. The first is that famine comes to the lives of the children of God. We do not escape trials and tribulations as believers, they are sent from God upon all but are intended for the good of the Lord's people and will eventuate in that end. Second, we see that a lesson experienced does not necessarily result in a lesson learned. Isaac repeats, to a tee, the error of Abraham. Thirdly, the world will never be at peace with the people of God until it has no other choice than to be so.

Abraham had dwelt there and had digged a number of wells to water his herds and flocks. After Abraham vacated the premises, the Philistines filled the wells with dirt, in effect, removing the memory of Abraham. Though Isaac proved an unwelcome guest, the Lord had promised to bless him there and he did (vv. 1-4). After the debacle with Rebekah the language is matter of fact (v. 12-13). Now the blessing referred to are of a temporal nature, but they are born of a spiritual covenant and



are purposed of God (Matt. 6:24-34). The result of Isaac's prosperity was that the Philistines envied Isaac (v.14).

Two things are played out here. First, natural men are unable to see spiritual truth and so the prosperity of Isaac made the Philistines see Isaac's wealth as the theft of their entitlement. Envy is believing that what someone else has should be rightfully yours. Secondly, it was time for Isaac to move on and the Lord used this envy to fix the Philistine's mind against Abraham. Their plans had been thwarted. They had buried Abraham's wells and Isaac had dug them back up (V.15-19). How many nations have sought to bury the wells of living water only to have the next generation clear the old paths and dig up the Gospel that men have sought to bury (vv. 20-22)? We see this in our day in the political climate. One political icon recently called the Bible, hate speech, and indeed, it loves righteousness and hates iniquity. Fear not brethren, the Gospel will prevail; the very gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The sheep will believe and drink of the living water and out of their bellies will flow rivers of living waters (Ps. 46:4).

The promise to the Savior in Psalm 110 was "rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." In the midst of the hatred of the Philistines, after the well named "contentions" and the well named "hate," there was digged a well named "room" because the Lord had made room for his people. And Isaac removed to Beersheba whose name means "well of the oath." That oath is seen in vv. 24-25. Isaac built an altar, worshipped the Lord, pitched his tent there, and digged the well in Beersheba.

The end of the story is that the King of Philistines and one of his friends and the captain of his army came to see Isaac. They did not come in battle array or carrying weapons of war. They came seeking peace. There is not an iota of evidence that Isaac was gathering forces of preparing for war. Why did they seek peace? They did so because every effort they had made to discourage and thwart Isaac had met with utter failure. They surmised that whoever the Lord had blessed, they could not

curse. The infidels use the name Jehovah, which indicates that Isaac had been verbal in who he claimed was his benefactor. The reason they sought peace was that they had failed to destroy the peace that evidently governed and informed Isaac's life. This is what the world hates and envies and cannot know...peace; peace that passes knowledge and understanding. In all the vain efforts that the philistines had tried, they could not shake Isaac's peace. The Lord said, "My peace I give thee, not as the world giveth, give I thee." Every effort that the world makes is to destroy the one thing that surpasses everything that the world and all its gold cannot purchase...peace.

When I was a lad, the threat of nuclear war loomed over the head of this nation like the sword of Damocles. It was called a cold war with nation behind an iron curtain. Children were taught to "duck and cover," families built bomb shelters, and there was a general and palpable feeling of unrest. The population was easily controlled because they lived in fear. Then the iron curtain fell, and the Berlin wall came down, and we breathed a resounding sigh of relief. The people cried peace and there was no more duck and cover— bomb shelters became storage bins and playhouses. The populace was at peace and the world was ill at ease. Suddenly and dramatically newspaper, magazine, television, and radio journalist began to inject into their reports words like "crisis" and "calamity" and "apocalypse." Politicians made a crisis out of everything from hunger, poverty, plastics, and tobacco to cow flatulence. Why? When a person is at peace, his sense of freedom enlarges, his freedom-meter redlines. The world needs fear to control men and women, and this plays right into the hands of religion. Believers are the Lord's freemen, and it is because peace has been established by the cross of Christ. In the midst of the turmoil, Isaac was at peace. He knew that the Lord has blessed him and that what came his way was the Lord's doing. This is the bane of the world and its religion, and in the end, they seek a fragile peace that is simply "leave us alone and we will leave you alone." It's the best

they can get because the peace that the Lord gives his people cannot be shaken (Heb. 12;22-29). Fear not little flock, it is the Lord's pleasure to give you the kingdom." Read Isaiah 54:13-14, 17.

## ADVANTAGE

### Genesis 26:34- 27:46

Gen. 26:34, And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:

35, Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

Gen. 27:1, And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I.

2, And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death:

3, Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison;

4, And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.

5, And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.

6, And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

7, Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death.

8, Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

9, Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:

10, And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

11, And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man:

12, My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.

13, And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.

14, And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved.

15, And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son:

16, And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck:

17, And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

18, And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?

19, And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

20, And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me.

21, And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not.

22, And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.

23, And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

24, And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.

25, And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26, And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27, And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:

28, Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

29, Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

30, And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

31, And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

32, And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

33, And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed.

34, And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.

35, And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

36, And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

37, And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

38, And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.

39, And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

40, And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

41, And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

42, And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.

43, Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;

44, And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;

45, Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

46, And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

This passage is book-ended by a principle established by Abraham when he made sure that Isaac did not take a wife from



the women of Canaan. In the last two verse of chapter 26, Esau takes a wife of the Hittites having surely known the prohibition from Abraham. This grieved Isaac and Rebekah and they agreed that Jacob would not follow in his brother's rebellious footsteps but rather follow the words of Abraham (v. 46). The report in the remainder of the passage is a treatise of what it is to operate in the flesh and not in the spirit. The clandestine theft of the blessing promised to Esau was a calculated between Jacob and Rebekah to take advantage of Isaac, the very one in whom God promised the calling of His seed, even the Messiah. This promised birthright was already established in glory by divine edict before the twins were born, neither having done good or evil that the purpose of God according to election might stand. God said that the elder would serve the younger. If Esau could get this blessing it might diminish some of the pain rendered by the lost birthright. That was the set order of things concerning Jacob and Esau. Behind the plot of Jacob and Rebekah was the desire that Esau get nothing at all, thinking that for him to receive a blessing was tantamount to a slam against Jacob's heritage. It was jealousy and envy, plain and simple. So, as we read this entire scenario it is a revelation of the unbelief that plagues every believer and their innate willingness and consummate pride in thinking that they must play a part in the accomplishment of the purpose of God and a jealousy and envy to consider that anyone would receive blessings that they did not earn. Ultimately this plays out most fully in the religious mind of the flesh that it must contribute to that which glorifies God the most, the salvation of the elect by the work of Jesus Christ. Religious flesh actually believes that salvation will not occur without the assent of the human depraved will and that the will of man actually gives power and credence to the salvation that the Bible declares was wrought entirely by the Lord of Glory. Well we may cry with the disciples, "Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief."

To fully understand this episode, it will be instructive to see the manner that unbelief incorporates to obtain its goal. The goal has already been obtained in the purpose of God, but unbelief cannot enter into that purpose. In this episode there is eavesdropping, disguise, lies, and the short con. The purpose of all this subterfuge and chicanery is to take and gain advantage over the weak and infirm, the oppressed. Isaac was old and his eyesight was all but gone. As was the custom, when an old patriarch was about to pass from this world, he would bless his children (Gen. 49:1-2). This meant that he would speak of their future well-being and what would be theirs according to their father's blessing. This was not the right that attends the birthright but involved a prophetic utterance of good things to come in the life of the child blessed. Jacob already had the birthright by the will of God and had sought to guarantee it by stealing it from his brother. What was left for Esau was to be blessed by Isaac with a bright future. That possibility occurred when Isaac bargained with Esau to exchange a belly full of savory meat for a blessing for Esau. Esau went "a hunting" so he would be blessed. Esau was not taking advantage of Isaac; He was just agreeing with the bargain in order to feather his own nest. Jacob and Rebekah, however, were all about taking advantage of Isaac's frailty, old age, and visual malady. They devised a fiendish scheme to steal this blessing from Esau and it worked. They fooled the old man, and the blessing was stolen from Esau, and Jacob lived up to the meaning of his name (v. 36). The sting of the stolen blessing was like unto the birthright in that Jacob, the supplanter, would be lord over Esau, and Esau's brethren would serve Jacob until his tribe would overthrow Israel for a time and insert an Edomite king on the throne (v. 40; 2 Kings 8:20-22).

Jacob and Rebekah took advantage of the weak. So it is with unbelief and the reason that God admonished his people to fight for the weak and the oppressed. The pride that attends the false notion of entitlement and self-righteousness is always erected on

the ruins of those who are deemed less fortunate. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican was spoken to those who thought themselves righteous and despised others. The Lord warned the Corinthians to confirm their love for the returning brother who had sinned against his father “Lest Satan should gain advantage.” The warning was given because the flesh, the old man in all those believers, was ready to take advantage of this poor fellow.

The Gospel gives the poor and the oppressed all things freely. The Gospel takes advantage of no one but blesses freely with all spiritually blessings. The Gospel has no blessing for the flesh. Unbelief gets no good thing from God. Salvation and all its attendant mercies and gifts are by grace alone. The blessings of Jacob were not gained by his thievery, they were already his by grace, and we can be assured it was by grace because of Jacob’s character. Nothing about him deserved the blessing of God. He was chosen so that no flesh would glory in God’s presence.

Looking at this episode let us consider the goals, bent, manner, and method of religion today. Who is it that blesses? It is God. How is He presented in this day? Is he not presented as one who can’t do anything unless you let him? Is he not presented as one whose hands are tied, as one who wants to but can’t? Is he unlike old Isaac, infirm and in need of help? Does he not bargain with men to get something from them in order to bless them? “If you pray enough, give enough, attend enough, witness enough, then God will bless you” is the language of religion. Is not the message today that you have the power to take advantage of God and get the blessing that he can give if you will just give him what he wants, filling his belly with the savory meats which you hunted? “All you have to do is unleash your faith, and health, wealth, and happiness will flow down as a deluge. This is the religion of the flesh and has nothing to do with the God of Scripture. The works of Jacob and Rebekah, the bargain struck by Isaac and Esau are examples of the religion of

the flesh and a reminder that the old man still operates in us and only the Spirit can subdue him. Love for the brethren will never result in taking advantage of them and love of God will never entertain any thought of bargaining with Him or that he is there for you to get a blessing by the works of your hands (Eph. 2:8-10).

## WAITING

### Genesis 27:41-45

41, And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

42, And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.

43, Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;

44, And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;

45, Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

words of Rebekah are the words of one caught in the web of her own deceit. The entire family has proved themselves to be full of guile. Esau has bartered his birthright for a bowl of stew. Isaac was willing to sell the blessing for some savory venison. Jacob has twice betrayed and conned his brother for gain and Rebekah has been a driving force for evil in the life of her favored son, Jacob. Now, when Esau has set his vengeance against Jacob, Rebekah takes no blame for herself (v.45). In every situation, and in every person, there is found the glaring presence of unbelief. The birthright and the blessing, as to who it belonged,

had been settled by the Word of the Lord before the twins were born. Jacob was to be the heir by divine edict, and nothing nor anything could change that outcome, nor could anyone be the cause of it to take place. What God has purposed shall stand and what He has spoken shall surely come to pass. Just as He has guaranteed the destiny of Jacob, he has likewise guaranteed the salvation of His elect and neither of these things is dependent upon the will, work, or whims of His creatures. His purpose shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure.

The problem arises when us human beings, plagued with impatience, find that the Lord does not operate on our presumed timetable. Thus is discovered the one thing that carnal nature, the flesh, finds so difficult to swallow and all but impossible to practice. As is revealed in the actions Isaac, Jacob and Rebekah, there is great difficulty in waiting on the Lord. The truth is that nature, that carnal driving force that we received from our father and federal head, Adam, cannot, has neither ability nor inclination to wait on the Lord. That nature that still resides in the believer's bosom is vehemently opposed to waiting for anything and thus wars against the believer's very life. The life of the believer is about waiting. In truth, it is all about waiting. The believer looks for a city whose builder and maker is God. Being not now in full realization of that promise, they wait for it. The believer is actively looking for the Savior's return. He, having not yet returned, causes the believer to wait for Him. The believer is referred to many times in scripture as a child of promise or an heir according to promise. A promise, by definition, is a thing yet to be received. That being the case, it is waited for. So, the child of God is found *waiting* but not *wanting* because what God has promised will surely be received. The Word says we are saved by hope or expectation (Rom. 8:24-25). Peter speaks of a salvation ready to be revealed (1 Pet 1:5). The waiting is full of glory.

The concept of waiting permeates to Word of God (Ps. 27:14; Isa. 40:31; Lam. 3:25-26). The flesh resists this with all

its energy. The lyrics of one of Queen's songs was, "I want it all, I want it all, I want it all and I want it now"! This is the theme song of the flesh and the bane of the spirit. Our old man simply disdains waiting and often we find ourselves, not unlike Isaac, Jacob and Rebekah desiring and even plotting to look at the revealed will of God and seeking a way to speed it along. The fact is, though, we will wait, and everyone will wait whether they choose to or not. Time is our bailiwick but with God time is not a factor. With him a day is the same as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day. So, we wait, the old man, unwillingly, and the new man, willingly.

There was but one who mastered the precept of waiting on the Lord. It was our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to this world to die, it was His mission and he set His face like a flint toward Jerusalem, to Golgotha's cruel hill where, in resplendent gory glory, He would give himself to the treacherous torture of the creatures He had made, He would consume the wrath of God against the sin of His people and finally finish His mission and give up the Ghost and make payment to God, to satisfy justice and redeem His people. However, it took 33 years to reach this place. He must wait and suffer being despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. He must live in His world with no place to lay His head. He must suffer the hatred and vitriol of venomous religion, bent on His destruction. He must wait, for there is a Roman scourge that is his destiny, the shameful stench of spittle on His face, cursing lips and a crown of thorns and a cruel Roman gibbet to suspend Him between heaven and earth. He must wait for there are the deaf and blind, the harlots and the publicans, the wretched and ruined that he must heal, restore, and raise from the dead. He must wait for humiliation and wait for exaltation. In all this the Word declares that he "pleased not Himself." In his greatest sorrow and fear, when He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, he cried, "Not my will, but thine be done." He waited until every jot and tittle of the law, the Word, was fulfilled. He

waited for the hour of His enemies, their hour was the power of darkness when Herod, the king of the Jews, Pilate the head of civil government, the Jews, (picturing organized religion), and the gentiles (picturing the world), were gathered together to do what the Lord had foreordained (and waited) to be done. He waited for the hour, the power of darkness, which must precede His hour when the Light of the World would disclose and dispel their darkness. He spent his life waiting, knowing His hour had not yet come until it did come, and He finished the work and redeemed His chosen, His sheep, His bride, His brethren, His church, His own. Read Philippians 2:5-11. This is what it is to wait on the Lord.



## BETHEL

### Genesis 28:1-22

1, And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2, Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

This chapter begins with the word “And”. It relates to the woeful cry of Rebekah in the last verse of the previous chapter. Isaac is responding to the words of his wife concerning where and of what family Jacob will take a bride. She was sick of the fact that Esau had taken a wife of the daughters of Heth, a Canaanite woman and would have no such thing for her favored son. So, Isaac sends Jacob to Padanaram, to Laban to get himself a wife. Isaac blesses Jacob with the promises that God gave to Abraham, and he strikes out toward the land of his fathers. Esau, realizing that his choice of wives has displeased his mom and dad, takes wives of the granddaughters of Ishmael perhaps to curry favor with Isaac. It was not a good plan in that his wife was the daughter of the outcast, the son of a bondwoman and being such, her sons could not inherit anything in the land of promise (vv. 1-9).

The remainder of this text through verse 22 is the record of Jacob’s journey and his encounter with God. In vv. 10-11, Jacob begins his journey to Haran. Somewhere along the way he made camp in a certain place and gathered some stones for his pillow and lay down at sunset to get some sleep. Verse 12 says that he dreamed. This was often the way that the Lord spoke to His elect before there were prophets or any written word of God. In

this dream he saw a ladder. The top of the ladder reached heaven and the bottom of the ladder sat on the earth. Moving up and down the ladder were the angels of the Lord.

This ladder is a picture of Christ in many ways. First, it was singular. There was but one ladder that went from earth to heaven. Christ is the one way to God. He said "no man can come to the Father but by me." He is the way the truth and the life. Often men balk that there is but one way, desiring that some way they have invented might also be the way to God, but Christ alone is the kindest of things. One way removes any possibility of confusion. One way reveals where you stand. The top of this ladder was in heaven and its base was on the earth. This sets for the divinity and the humanity of Christ. He is God and He is man. Paul said that without controversy, this was the great mystery of godliness; God manifest in the flesh. Fully God and fully man, the only one of His kind; as God He can sovereignly save; as man he can suffer and die and pay the debt owed to Law and Justice. As God he can touch the Father, fellowship with Him. As man he can touch man and fellowship with him. He is the mediator and daysman between men and God and He is the only one. He is the Just God and the Savior. Christ is both places at one time and so are His people (John 3:13; Eph 2:6). In Jacob's dream, he saw angels ascending and descending on this ladder, ascending to heaven, and descending to earth. These are the ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). They ascend to receive their assignments, steadfastly beholding the face of God. They descend to execute their assignments to minister to the elect and they only do this through Christ. Only from this ladder do we hear the voice of the LORD, the Word of God. God once spoke to the fathers by the prophets. In these last days, He has spoken by His son and His son is the language he speaks. Christ is the Word that was in the beginning with God and was God and was made flesh and dwelt among us and

we beheld His glory as the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. He is that ladder (John 1:51).

For God to speak to Jacob cannot be accounted to Jacob's character any more than God's refusal of Esau had anything to do with his character. This was exclusively God's prerogative that his purpose according to election would stand. He spoke to Jacob because He would and that He spoke to him was entirely by grace. Jacob did nothing to receive these words and he could have done nothing to prevent them. He was asleep when the vision came. He was responsible for nothing. He had not prayed himself into some spiritual trance or performed some kind of self-imposed suffering to get a vision. He was asleep, doing nothing but automated breathing, unaware of his surroundings and seeking nothing. The Lord spoke and when He did, He spoke the language of the Sovereign (vv. 13-15). "I am...I will give...I will keep...I will bring thee...I will not leave thee." Great things await Jacob and God has left nothing to Jacob to see the job gets done. What a picture of Sovereign grace. God has given his elect all things, in Christ. He has guarantee it all by His will and He has left nothing to His elect to do. "'Tis done, the great transaction's done."

But once again we see the vileness of our flesh, of the character of Jacob. He awoke and was afraid and said "How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven." God's house was uncomfortable to him. The promise was there but the willingness to rest in it was not. His heart proved still to be hard, deceitful, and unbroken. He was loved but He knew it not (v.16). Had he known it, believed it, fear would have been cast out, "Perfect love casteth out fear." God's house is not a dreadful place to those who believe, it is a place of delight and royal dainties (Ps. 26:8; 27:4; Ps. 65:4).

The proof of Jacob's unwillingness to believe the Word spoken is his response. Once again, unbelief seeks to assist God in accomplishing what he has promised, alone, to do. Jacob sets

out to bargain, inserting his “if” into God’s sure promise (vv. 20-22). Jacob thinks that he is going to let God be God. There is some more stripping to be done to break that old stony heart, but it will come. In due time the Lord will remove the stony heart of the elect and replace it a broken, contrite heart. With Jacob, it’ll take an all-night wrestling match (Ezek. 36:21-38).

# ‘TIS GRACE

## Genesis 29-31

Please read chapters 29 through 31.

I invite you, at your leisure, to read these three chapters and do it several times. I do not intend to preach these chapters expositively but will, in weeks to come, deal with some specific elements of this narrative. For this time, I will take an overview of these 3 chapters because of the effect they had on me after I read them. One thought kept entering my head after each perusal of these episodes. That thought was that salvation must, without question, be by grace and only grace. After looking at these chapters my mind was drawn to the 2nd chapter of Ephesians, which in the 1st 10 verses declares distinctly and definitively the absolute necessity of grace if a son of Adam is ever to be saved. In the first chapter of that sweet epistle, the Lord accounts the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the complete redemption of the elect. It began before the world was and consummated, in time with the Spirit giving the elect faith to believe what God the Father and God the Son had accomplished for them. Absent in this grand accomplishment is the fingerprints of Adamic humanity. One can, upon reading that account, almost hear the shouting of “Grace, Grace unto it” in the building of the temple in the days of Zerubbabel. Then, the kind of people who are recipients of this stupendous salvation are described in the first 3 verses of chapter 2. These verses exhibit, of a surety, the complete unworthiness of those who have received so much good at the hand of God. Those who had been given all spiritual blessings in Christ, eternal blessings, blessing that extend from eternity to eternity, are worthy of eternal damnation and death. They were,

in fact already dead in trespasses and sin. They, from association with Adam, were born condemned, legally dead, denizens on death row and awaiting execution, the executioner's needle, filed with deadly concoction, looming before them like the sword of Damocles. It was these, this kind that was quickened to life, resurrected from the dead with Christ. They walked according to the course of the world, operating in the manner that the world operates, void of any thought of God. Their mind was centered in the things of the flesh, the realm of Satan whose entire reason for existence was to make men feel safe in their own merit and self-righteousness. This is the mind that operates in the children of disobedience (Col. 3:5-6). They live to fulfill the lust of the flesh and the desires of the mind (James 1:14-15). They were, by nature, "the children of wrath, even as others." This phrase was what I thought of when I read these 3 chapters in Genesis. What we see in the encounters between Jacob and Laban, knowing that Jacob was elect of God and Laban was not, shows that, by nature, Jacob was a child of wrath, even as was Laban.

After a look at their doings, underhandedness, their numerous cons, chicanery, and their subterfuge, it can only be surmised that they were 2 peas in a pod. They ran scams on one another with the ease of a gifted magician. Sleight of hand, bait and switch and out-right skullduggery was the way these two dealt with each other. It reads like a how to book on pulling the wool over someone's eyes.

The thing that arises in any reasonable mind is that there was no difference between these two. By all observation they were the same. Jacob had not yet been brought to see himself as he was and there is no indication that Laban ever did. There was no "Woe is me" or "Why am I thus" that formed a cry from Jacob's lips. He had knowledge of God but that only equated to a slavish and superstitious fear born of the guilt of conscience. That fact was easily overcome as he once again began to act according to his supplanting nature, vying for the upper hand in his dealings with Laban. There was no difference between Jacob

and Laban, their acts were the acts of the children of disobedience, proving that, by nature, they were children of wrath, even as others. We can readily understand that the carnal nature with which we are born, can never attain to anything spiritual, never have an interest in Christ and never even consider God except in some superstitious and fearful notion. Mark well, brothers, and sisters, this is our resume, this is us in spades. Think of the vilest kind of person that you can consider. Think of the kind of person that you would like to see dead. Think of the kind of person by which you are appalled and paint your portrait there with the broad brush of iniquitous, vile, and consummate guilt. The colors on your palate are iniquity, sin, and transgression. There is no difference between you and I and any villainous miscreant that writhes upon the planet.

Yet there was a difference, a difference that neither Jacob or Laban had anything to do with, a difference accomplished outside their arena and having in no way applied to their nature or made use of it in any way. There is a difference between Jacob and Laban (Numbers 23:21). There you have it. The difference is that God has not beheld iniquity in Jacob. He has not seen perverseness in Israel (Jacob's new name). This does not say that sin, iniquity, and perverseness is not there in Jacob. It was all over him, innate to his being. The difference is that God does not behold it and does not see it. The difference is that the Lord is with Jacob; always has been and was actively over-riding his plans and plots. How is it the God cannot behold and see these things in Jacob? It is because there is the shout of the king in the camp. The king has shouted with a loud voice, from his bloody wooden throne, "It is finished." 'Tis grace, sweet sovereign grace. Christ has, by one sacrifice, perfected forever them that are sanctified by the will of God and the result of that is that God will remember (behold, see) their sins no more. The difference is grace (read Eph. 2:1-8). Jacob have I loved and for the great love wherewith I have loved him, I have quickened him together with Christ; by grace he is saved. This is the difference and it has

nothing to do with anything in, of, or about Jacob— us (Ex. 11:7; 1 Cor. 4:7)!



## FOR HIS BRIDE

### Genesis 29:9-11, 18-20

9, And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them.

10, And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

11, And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

This is a love story, the story of Jacob and Rachel. It is clear that from the moment that Jacob first saw Rachel he was in love with her (vv. 9-11). So great was his love for her that he was willing to work 7 years for Laban to gain her as his bride. After Laban tricked him and sent Leah into him on the wedding night, Jacob willingly served Laban 7 more years to have Rachel for his wife. No one can doubt the love that Jacob had for Rachel. Of the first seven years he served, the word records that it seemed to Jacob as but a few days. One of the remarkable things is that because of love for Rachel, Jacob did not resort to his shady dealings during the entire 14 years that he served. Love for Rachel, as it were, subdued his nature for a time though when he was about to leave Laban the old supplanter resurrected. During these years of servitude, the twelve tribes of Israel were born into existence, born of Leah and Rachel and their handmaids. Jacob loved Rachel and did whatever was necessary that he might have her for his own. This reminded me of the words of the Lord concerning men and their wives in Genesis

2:24. When considered it is quite an astounding statement. It is all about the husband's allegiance to his wife. It is he who leaves his home and cleaves to his wife. There is no allegiance of the wife or of her cleaving to her husband declared until after the fall. The result of the husband's cleaving to his wife is that would become one flesh. This is a picture of Christ and his bride who said of His church, His bride that she was bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh and was the impetus for the admonition to husband to love their wives as Christ love His church. He left His home and cleaved to His wife declaring that He would never leave her or forsake her. Jacob loved Rachel and cleaved to her fourteen years, and it seemed but as a few days.

It is not a reach of the imagination to see that this declaration of the nature of love as a type and picture of Christ's love for His church. His allegiance to her was from eternity to eternity. That story is set forth in type also in the record of Caleb offering his daughter as the bride of any man who can conquer the city of Debir, formerly known by two other names, Kirjathsepher and Kirjathsannah (Joshua 15:13-17).

Those names mean city of books or city of letters and were probably the seat of records for Canaan. Many believe that the city was ancient and had a great library as the Arabs were great record keepers and advanced in science and math and were great enthusiasts for knowledge. This city was an important city, a city that contained the collective mind of natural wisdom.

Caleb was the leader of his family, the chief of his tribe and to offer his daughter was no small thing. To have her for a wife was to immediately advance in rank and stature, and this was not lost on Othniel. He knew that he would make himself a name and receive honor as well as a bride. So, he sacked Debir and took his bride.

As we consider this and what follows we need to once again remind ourselves that these Old Testament incidents are all, in one form or another a picture of Christ and His work on behalf of the elect and for the honor of God (Jn. 5:39). What are the

elements that make up this passage? We have a city to be conquered. We have a conqueror. We have a bride given by her father. We have a conqueror who volunteers to the task for the sake of having this bride. We have a contingency, which states that to have the bride the conqueror must be successful in his conquest. We have success, and the bride and the conqueror are wed. Sounds like the Gospel to me!

First, we have a city to be conquered and deposed of its king. This city contains the wealth of human wisdom and knowledge. The name of the city is important because in not only signifies worldly wisdom but one of the names “Kirjathsannah” contains the word *Sanna*. This was significant both to the Phoenicians and the Arabs because it means “law, doctrine, and manner of life.” To Islam it is the secondary law to the Koran. Islam is typical of works for righteousness religion and is parroted by what most would call legalist, freewill fundamentalism in this day. Religion looks at the Old Covenant as law, doctrine and manner of life and sees it as an adjunct to grace. It is the mind of the flesh and is the city that our Lord came to conquer. By natural wisdom, men cannot know God (1 Cor. 1:17-21). God destroyed the wisdom of this world and made Christ to be the wisdom of His people.

We have a conqueror. His name is Othniel which means the lion of God and he is of the tribe of Judah. We need not press our imagination into service. There is one who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and He has prevailed. His name is Jesus, the Christ, the son of the living God, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He voluntarily undertook to conquer and conquer He did. He besieged the city of man-soul and being stronger than the king who temporarily reigned there He bound the strong man and spoiled his house. From the cross he cried with a loud voice, “it is finished” and the earth shook, and the rocks split in twain, and the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom.

We have a father betrothing his daughter to him who is able to conquer the city. We have the conqueror taking on this battle

for the possession of the bride. She is the daughter of Zion, the elect, those given to Christ before the world began.

We have a contingency. If the city is not conquered, then the conqueror is not a conqueror and he cannot possess his. But Christ cannot fail. He has redeemed His bride, His church, everyone whom God has betrothed to Him. He comes forth as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race (2 Tim. 1:9). This is the story of God's sovereign grace. It is the story, the old old story, of the absolute success of the lion of the tribe of Judah, conquering the law, the doctrine and the manner of the life of the world of His elect and making a name for himself and taking his bride to realms of glory. Hail the conquering hero, our sovereign substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:2). It seemed as but a few days.

## MANDRAKES, HERDS AND PROVIDENCE

### Genesis 30:14-43

14, And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.

15, And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes.

16, And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.

17, And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son.

18, And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar.

19, And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son.

20, And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun.

21, And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

22, And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

23, And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach:

24, And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.

25, And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.

26, Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee.

27, And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.

28, And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it.

29, And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me.

30, For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?

31, And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock:

32, I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire.

33, So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me.

34, And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word.

35, And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstraked and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

36, And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

37, And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.

38, And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink.

39, And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted.

40, And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.

41, And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.

42, But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.

43, And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.

If you have taken time to read these chapters, you will have found a true representation of fallen humanity. It is quite remarkable the amount of corkscrewing, backstabbing, and dirty dealing that the characters in the chapters commonly practice. No one is exempt save, perhaps the handmaids of Rachel and Leah who just did as they were bid to do. But Laban, Jacob, Leah, and Rachel all spend most of their time and energy endeavoring to get the upper hand by hook or crook. Except for Laban, the main characters are all people who pray to the Lord. It is recorded that Leah and Rachel and Jacob were praying folk. They prayed to God for children and for wealth. It is also recorded that they practiced that useless religious tradition and freewill, works axiom of “putting feet to your prayers.” They prayed and then set about to make sure the prayers were answered by various schemes intended to ensure that their prayers were answered to their pleasing. They were about the business of answering their own prayers. They didn't really trust God to answer their prayers, but their supplications were a way to add the name of God to what they had already decided to do and give their action religious credence. If sanctity was added to their plots, plans and schemes, they were under the delusion that that modicum of religious activity would justify their endeavors. I once had a young couple come to me for council. They weren't married but were vigorously consummating their physical desires. They confessed their fornication to me and then declared that they had prayed about it as if to say God had somehow sanctioned their illicit behavior. I suppose they came to me for justification...I fear they left without what they came for. They were putting feet or other parts of their anatomy to



their prayers. They had made prayer a kind of superstitious atonement for their concupiscence. So it is with the unbelieving believers in our context. They employed superstition to see to it that God's promise would attain to fruition. The god of false religion needs your help and seeks it. The God of Heaven neither wants, needs nor asks for the help of His impotent creatures. Sovereign providence will bring all things to their appointed end. God answered their prayers because He did not count on their prayers to accomplish what He had already predetermined. The effectual and fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much but changes nothing. Therefore, prayers offered to God are included in the purpose of God mostly for the benefit of the one who prays. God answers our prayers according to His purpose and in spite of our manifold efforts to aid him in the accomplishment thereof.

God had promised that Jacob would be the Father of a great nation. The twelve tribes of Israel were being born to Leah and her handmaids and thus far the handmaid of Rachel. The last two to be born will be Joseph and Benjamin and they will be born of Jacob's true love, Rachel. The promise was being fulfilled as the Lord opened the wombs of these women. It was God's doing. But Rachel and Leah were superstitious. Reuben had found some mandrakes in the field and brought them to Leah. Rachel heard about it and wanted some of them mandrakes. She wanted them so badly that she traded a night with Jacob for them (vv. 14-15). Why? It is because that there was a superstition that the mandrake was a fruit that was an aphrodisiac and a fertility drug. The Hebrews called mandrakes, "love apples" and the word is thought to come from a root word meaning "sexual love." Rachel, yet barren, believed that the mandrakes would eventuate in her pregnancy. She did get pregnant and bore Joseph, but it was not the mandrakes (V. 22).

When Jacob struck the bargain concerning the striped, spotted, and black livestock, he did so because God had told him to do exactly that (31:9-13). Now Laban didn't know about

the dream and when the bargain was struck, he took all the described livestock, gave them to his sons and sent them three days journey away from Jacob, thinking that he had foiled Jacob's plan and beat him at his own game. But God had promised Jacob that he would end up with more stock than Laban and He did. But, though, Jacob had the promise, he still took those branches and carved rings and stripes and spots on them and put them by the watering troughs believing that the pregnant livestock would produce ringed, striped, and spotted offspring because of what he did. Despite his superstitious efforts, God kept His promise and Jacob left with herds greater than those of Laban. The promises are yea and they are amen in Christ. What He has promised, He is able to and will perform.

God has promised to save His people, His elect. He has promised to do it in a way that the world and its religion do not believe will work. The way that God has ordered it is foolish to the world and its religion. God is pleased, through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (Matt. 1:21; 1 Cor. 1:21; Rom, 10:13-17). Men because of superstition (natural religion) have invented many ways to accomplish what God has promised. The invitation system is a big superstition (Lady weeping). The simple plan of salvation is a superstition. God loves everybody is a superstition. Christ died for everybody is a superstition. The Roman Road is a superstition. The church altar is a superstition. Soul winning schemes are superstitions. Acceptable personal merit for righteousness is superstition. Freewill is superstition. Decisionism is superstition. All of these are but inventions from the corruption of the carnal imagination that presumes that God's promise must be aided by man's expertise. Despite all that, God will keep His promise to save His heirs according to promise and will do so through the preaching of Christ and Him crucified (Is. 52:7; John 6:37-39).

## GLORY, LITTLE GODS AND MIZPAH

### Genesis 31

Please read chapter 31.

Twenty years have passed since Jacob first saw Rachel tending the flocks. He worked for her father seven years to have her and was given Leah instead. He worked another seven years to have Rachel and after she became his wife, he worked another six years to build up his herds flocks and families. In this chapter Laban is not happy with the agreement he made with Jacob and Jacob along with his wives, children and wealth flee the land of Laban to return to his father Isaac. He is pursued by Laban under Laban's supposed hurt feelings, but the real issue was that God had greatly blessed Jacob and not Laban and Laban wanted what God had blessed Jacob with. Had not God intervened, warning Laban to do Jacob no harm, Laban would have sought to kill Jacob and would have taken back his daughters, grandchildren, and all that the Lord had blessed Jacob with. Also, when Jacob fled, Rachel had stolen Laban's household gods and when confronted, she hid them in a camel chair, sat down on it and claimed to be having her period so she could not get up because religion and custom prohibited anyone touching a woman or anything she sat on during her menses. After a large amount of bickering and chin music, Laban and Jacob made a covenant of sorts and, with a stone pillar drew a line in the sand, not to be crossed and parted ways, never to meet again. At this time 11 of the 12 sons, the tribes of Israel have been born. The last, Benjamin will be born in due time and Rachel will die in giving birth to him. If you have spent some time in these 3 chapters, you have witnessed the overriding providence of God on behalf of his beloved elect, Jacob and the truth of grace, God

blessing his own in spite of their depraved endeavors. Every character mentioned on these chapters are glaring examples of the carnal nature of humanity, exhibiting jealousy, envy, lying, supplanting, fraud, extortion and underhandedness as common as breath. I want to finish the study of these chapters by considering 3 things. The title of this message is, "Glory, little gods and Mizpah."

First, in verse 1 of chapter 31, we see a statement made by Laban's sons. In reference to the fact that Jacob's husbandry techniques that have produced great herds and flocks, the sons see Jacob outdoing their father, by far, in wealth and possessions. They said that Jacob had gotten all their father's glory. In this statement it is precisely clear what natural man considers to be his glory. The old catechism asked the question, "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is, "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." It is evident that Laban's sons were not of that opinion. They believed that the glory of man was the extent of his possessions. We have but to consider the mindset of this day to see that there is nothing new under the sun. Humanity's sense and estimation of self is determined according to his possessions. These, in the mind of men, equate to power and strength. They are, in effect, his glory. Seeing that men come into this world with nothing and exit in the same condition they have no glory at all, coming or going, if possessions are the barometer. If this is glory, then it will prove a matter of transient endowment because when you and I leave this world somebody else will get our stuff. A friend of mine, a fellow pastor was named in the will of a lady who, under his ministry and heard and learned the Gospel to the saving of her soul. She thought to leave him a sizable amount of money, but her children had their lawyer contact the pastor and threatened a lawsuit to keep him from getting that inheritance. My friend told the lawyer to give it to the lady's kids, he wanted no part of it. It was neither part nor parcel with his glory. The Lord has

said much about this matter of glorying. See: Luke 12:15-21; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Ps. 62:7.

In verse 19, it is recorded that Rachel stole the images that were her father's. In verse 30, Laban accused Jacob of stealing his gods. Now, Laban had heard from the true and living God (v. 24) and if I were a betting man, I would wager that he had never heard a peep from these little images, the diminutive deities, these tiny statues that he called his gods. These little gods could be stolen, put in a sack, and carried about— so what stock could be put in them (Ps. 115:1-8)? They were images of humans and other creatures called “teraphim.” There is no indication that they were necessarily objects of worship, though one of them was mentioned in the same breath with the true God in verse 53, “god of Nahor” (god of snorting). These images were, in a sense, the currency of inheritance. The possession of these gods was legal claim to inheritance. So, when these images were stolen, Laban was legally without anything to leave his sons and the sons of Jacob could have legal claim to that inheritance in a Syrian court of law. Rachel may have done this for something as simple as payback (vv. 14-16).

Finally in verse 49 we have the word “Mizpah.” This was the name of a heap of stones placed as point of demarcation between Laban and Jacob when they finally parted company. Over the years, due to a misunderstanding of scripture and the evolution of language this word has come to mean a kind of “blessing” and is often used as a benediction at the end of meeting as symbolic of communion and fellowship. No, this was a proverbial line in the sand, an armistice, a cease-fire, a warning. Though the wording seems to say, “I'll not cross this line to do harm” (v. 52), the underlying meaning is “cross this line at your own risk.” This Mizpah was not a blessing but was rather a bold statement that Laban and Jacob were done with each other and their next meeting, if it occurred, would be attended with pain of death. In the end, there can be no true

peace between the worshippers of the true God and the worshippers of little totable, portable deities. Men can worship the gods of their making or of their imagination but they *of themselves* cannot worship the true and living God (Joshua 24:14-14).

# ATONEMENT

## Genesis 32:1-20

1, And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

2, And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

3, And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

4, And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now:

5, And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

6, And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

7, Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;

8, And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

9, And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

10, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

11, Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

12, And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

13, And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother;

14, Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams,

15, Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals.

16, And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove.

17, And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee?

18, Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us.

19, And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him.



20, And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me.

Jacob is as prime an example of true and frail humanity as can be found in all the inspired word of God. This chapter is a glaring report of the truth that a believer, one chosen of God and endowed with all the attendant promises, is yet plagued with unbelief. I have, especially of late, been brought to realize and experience that fact in me. I cannot sum up the times, here lately, the word of God has stung me by having that verse in Number 11 entering my aching head, "and the people, as it were, were complainers." I am thankful, that the word of God is honest and genuine about the weakness of the human being else I would despair of my salvation.

In this part of this chapter, we see some wondrous things. The very first thing we see is God's protection of Jacob. The promises that God has made to Jacob are guarded and upheld by the very one who promised. I've never seen an angel, that I'm aware of, but Jacob did and not just one but a host of them. Think of it. What a message, to assure Jacob of God's sovereign care (Ps. 91:11-12). The promises are safe, protected by the very heavenly host, God's army. This is the case of every believer (Matt. 18:10). Sadly, if we are honest, our behavior considering this great and astounding angelic presence is much the same as that of Jacob. You may say that we have never actually seen angels but what can be seen is not even in the same ballpark with what the believer beholds (2 Pet. 1:16-21). We walk by faith and not by sight looking steadfastly on things that cannot be seen (2 Cor. 4:18).

What was Jacob's response to this heavenly phenomenon? He immediately began to make a plot to soothe his conscience. He is trying to figure out a way to get on the good side of Esau. He has wronged his brother in numerous ways and the scream of the soul's banshee is reverberating in his mind. He is afraid

and as Shakespeare said, “conscience makes cowards of us all.” The method of conscience is to somehow undo what wrong thing we have done, mitigate its consequence or make amends to lessen its eventuating outcome. What we know, even though we employ these fleshly endeavors, is that they never work. Jacob’s various schemes, plots and plans have met with embarrassing failure on ever hand, but he cannot help himself. Before he even gets his plans to a place of a modicum of fruition, he gets the news that Esau is looking for him (vv. 3-6). Jacob comes up with another scheme (vv. 7-8). He splits his company into two bands believing that Esau was coming for blood. His thinking was that if Esau kills one group, the other would survive. Does he need to worry so? Is he not surrounded by the host of heaven? There is no indication that the angels have vacated. There is no time gap between verse 2 and 3. It kind of makes you hope that angels don’t have a sense of irony. The chronology of Jacob’s actions and what follows is important. He does not seek the Lord and then act. He acts and then he seeks the Lord (vv. 9-12 exp.), By all standards this is a fine prayer, and its sincerity cannot be questioned. He feared for his life and turns to God for help, stating his own inadequacy and declaring the promise that God had made to him. But one little phrase in verse 10 reveals that this prayer is more about getting God to sanction his plan than to truly ask for help. That phrase is, “and now I am two bands.” This was all his doing and now he wants God to bless his plot. The proof of this is found in what follows this prayer.

After beseeching God for help against Esau he comes up with another plan and its and expensive one (vv. 13-20a). The droves of beasts beginning with those of least value to those of greatest value was a desiring to hopefully overcome Esau with the progressively increasing-in-value abundance. These droves were an enormous mammalian fig leaf apron in effort to cover all the ill he had done to his brother. The largess expressed reveals

Jacob's knowledge of the depth and breadth of his crimes against his sibling.

Now the thing we need to see is the reason that Jacob gives for doing this grand gesture. In v. 20b we see a first use of a word. The word here is "appease." Jacob hoped his extravagant gifts would appease Esau. This word translated as appease is translated as "pitch" in Genesis 6:14 in reference to covering the Ark and throughout the book of Leviticus in reference to every blood sacrifice and is translated as "atonement." It means to cover. Jacob did what he did to make atonement, to cover his sins. Atonement is an Old Covenant term and does not address remission of sin. That requires propitiation and is not accomplished by humanity but by the blood/death of Jesus Christ. But that does not prevent the flesh from seeking to atone for sin in whatever way it can conjure. Religion preaches atonement in numerous ways. The notion of a freewill decision equates to atonement. Preachers do not say pray to God to save you, or take up your headquarters at mercy's door, or to get alone with God and beg for mercy. No, it says "decide for Jesus" or "accept Jesus." This is the way to cover your sins. Also, religion touts that a good life, a life well lived makes up for a bad life. If a thief becomes a philanthropist, he atones for his thievery. Jacob thought to atone for his sin with a grand gesture. In effect he hoped to cover the face of Esau so he would not see the wrong that he had done.

You cannot atone for your sin, though religion may accept your effort. God will accept only death for your sin and that either occurs in you or in a substitute dying perfectly before God in your stead. If you feel you must make up to people for the wrong you have done then do so and more power to you, but don't think that you have paid for your sin, which is against God (Ps. 51:3-4) Christ alone is the answer for sin and nothing and no one else. There is no salvation, atonement, propitiation, or appeasement in anyone else. Jacob will soon find that out as will every one of the elect. Salvation is of the Lord.

# THE FACE OF GOD

## Genesis 32:22-32

22, And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.

23, And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

24, And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

25, And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

26, And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

27, And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

28, And he said, 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.

29, And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

30, And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

31, And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

32, Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the young man, who had lived a life of profligacy, did not begin to consider what was of true value until he came to the end of himself. He was never outside the love of his father. His father suffered him to go his way and patiently awaited his sure return. That he would not return was never a consideration. The father looked out that window until his son returned. It is a beautiful and simple truth that every one of the elect will go astray, turning everyone to his own way until it is time for them to see the face of God. The life of the elect, before meeting Christ appears as a maze and like a maze there is only one way out. That door is Christ. Jacob, as we have seen, has traveled in many directions. It has been a life that was replete with all manner of plots, plans, schemes, lies, tricks, and subterfuge. But he has been directed to the end of this maze and there to meet him is the very one who has directed his steps, overridden his schemes, and brought him to the end of himself. He has sent his family and his wealth away. He is in fear for his life, and he is alone (22-24a). He has passed over the ford Jabbok which means "poured out" and so he is. In truth, at this ordained point, he has nothing. "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling."

There, alone and destitute, it is said that he wrestled with a man. Much speculation has been rendered as to who this man was. Some say it was Michael, some say it was a metaphor for man's struggle but at the end of the match, Jacob says. "I've seen the face of God" (2 Cor. 4:5-6). So, this man was the Lord Jesus Christ in a preincarnate manifestation. The picture that enters our mind is what we know as wrestling, but the word employed and interpreted as "wrestling" comes from the word "dust." This wrestling wound up with Jacob in the dust. Dust we are and to dust we shall return. Dust is a picture of death. Death is the

answer to sin. The ordinances given to the church have to do with death, the death of the substitute wherein the elect died with Christ. Jacob is brought down to the dust to die. Except a seed is put into the dust to die it cannot be brought to life.

It is said that Christ did not prevail against Jacob, the dust. And so it must be that the Savior will not prevail with the dust because dust cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. Christ will not make use of the dust to inhabit His kingdom, “Who can bring a clean thing out of and unclean thing, not one.” Nothing save new creation— a new creature— will be made suitable for the inheritance of the saints. So, once again, as at the beginning, the Lord lays his hands on the dust and makes a man, a new man. And the new man is different, he is still dust, but dust with a different cadence. The Lord puts his hip out of joint and his walk is never the same. People cannot see the disjuncting. It is on the inside, but they can see that the man walks funny. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them nor discern them for they are spiritually discerned” (v. 25).

Once touched by the master, the wrestler becomes a clinger. The combatant becomes the beggar. The elect will, in due time, find themselves a poor, destitute, touched, and wounded mendicant at the hem of the garment of the Savior. Jacob is now holding on for dear life (v. 26). The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.” Jacob did not invite Christ into his heart, or limp down an aisle. Immobilized, he laid hold of eternal life. Though He slay me, I will serve Him. The flesh will always resist, but the disjuncted supplicant will not let go till he is blessed. Jacob had a revelation. The man he wrestled with was more than a mere man. With a touch the man had disabled him, and he held on (believed) that the man could bless him, and he knew that blessings are from God alone (Is. 2:10-11).

The Lord brought Jacob to confess. What is your name? It is Jacob, supplanter, sneak, tricker, heel-grabber, and schemer. He

had lived up to his name in spades. Now, he has no plot, no scheme, no hope, save for the One to whom he clings. He clings to life, having nothing left to. He, by stating his name, confesses that he has no right to blessing but relies entirely on the goodwill of his benefactor. If he heals, I will be healed. If he turns, I will be turned. Jacob attributes his hope to the sovereign will of Christ. Will he bless? We must wait, and see? We have no merit whereby to claim, so we hold on, and in the end, we will find that God has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ and all according to His electing grace.

Though Jacob will retain that name to represent God as the savior of sinners, he is given a new name, Israel. There are numerous interpretations of that name. Here in the Authorized Version, it is “prince of God.” Some say it means “contender with God.” But of the 40 names in scripture that end in the divine suffixes “el” or “jah” mean that God is the actor (Barnhouse). Daniel means “God judges.” Samuel means “God hears”, Ishmael means “God shall hear.” *Israel* does not mean “Jacob shall rule with God” but that “God rules Jacob.” This surely fits the context. After The Lord had crippled Jacob and caused him to confess that he had thought himself, by his schemes, to have ruled the day, He assures Jacob that God rules him. Jacob has received a new life, a new walk, and a new name (Is. 62:2; Rev. 2:17; 3:12).

This eventuates in a new perspective (2 Cor 5:17). When Jacob came over the ford it was Jabbok (poured out), when he returns after meeting the Savior the place is called Penuel or Peniel, “the face of God.” So, it is with every bit of dust made into a new creature; everything is seen in the light of the blessed fact that “God rules.” The world is Jabbok, but to the believer it is Penuel This is the peace that passeth knowledge. The name of the church is “The Israel of God” (Gal 6:14-16).

# ENOUGH

## Genesis 33:1-11

1, And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.

2, And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.

3, And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4, And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

5, And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.

6, Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.

7, And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.

8, And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord.

9, And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.



10, And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

11, Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

Jacob has seen the face of God. He has been broken and renewed. He has a new perspective. He has a new name, Israel, that means “God rules.” He is a picture of the regenerated and converted child of God. Some might think that such a life-changing experience would set a person on a road of rectitude and a life that is in a constant state of godliness. They would be wrong and if a believer were asked about that, He would probably quote Paul in Romans 7; “With my mind I serve the law of God but with my flesh I serve the law of sin and death.” Thank God that He views us in Christ, in that righteousness that He has made Christ to be unto us.

Jacob is Israel, a picture of every believer who is both flesh and spirit. In Genesis alone, from here to the end, the Lord refers to him as Jacob more than twice as many times as He refers to him as Israel. And here, immediately following that astounding experience at Penueel, we find Jacob (not Israel) making his plans, plotting out his course. A great, even amazing, experience of grace does not do away with the flesh. The concept and chief principle of faith is trust, but how often did our Lord say of His people, “O ye of little faith.” Men mistakenly interpret that to mean that they should exercise greater faith or invent ways to increase it. but “little faith” is not a lack or want of sufficient faith; it is faith in self rather than in Christ. It is to apply to the flesh for that which can only be accomplished in the spirit. It is looking away from Christ, the object of faith, and seeking some other means of getting done what needs doing. Sadly, looking to Christ is too often the last resort, occurring

only after all other measures to do things on our own have been exhausted. These vain endeavors are common to all men and women, both redeemed and unredeemed. Though it is one of the “ways of death”, it is, nonetheless, “a way that seemeth right unto man.” In the world that is both logical and reasonable. In business, my motto was, “plan your work and work your plan.” That does not wash in the realm of the Spirit. In that realm, “trust in God who rules” is the order of the day. Every believer can say, “I have seen the face of God” (2 Corinthians 4:6). Every believer also knows that “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh. They are always contrary to one another so we cannot do what we would.”

So, in verse 2, we find Israel being Jacob. In concern for his encounter with Esau, he lines up his family (handmaids, wives, sons) in order of their value to him, saving the best for last. He does so in case Esau sets about killing. Those who he loves less and considers more expendable will be the first to be dispensed with. There can be no doubt that this is conditional affection. No such love exists with God; his is unconditional. For this, we give thanks, God loves His people unconditionally, fully, equally and has loved them eternally. Sadly, our love is not so. In this we are truly Jacob, basing love on what is pleasing to our self.

In verse 3 we see Jacob bowing seven times to Esau. This is progressive bowing, each bow being deeper and closer to the ground. He humbles himself, though humility is not a prominent aspect of his life. This would be, perhaps, more readily described as groveling born of a stinging conscience for how badly he had treated his brother. He could not imagine any possible scenario in which his brother would be happy to see him. Jacob braced himself for the worst possible outcome.

Thankfully, for Jacob, Esau’s heart had been softened by divine providence (27:41). In the years of separation from his brother, Esau has been materially blessed. It is clear from his response to Jacob’s largess that wealth or recompense were not in his thinking. To Jacob’s utter surprise and the disallowing of

all his schemes and plots, Esau was genuinely joyous to see his conniving twin. Tears and kissing ensued in this happy reunion.

After family introductions were made (vv. 5-7), Esau asked Jacob for the meaning of the horde of creatures he had sent ahead. Jacob answered honestly (v. 8). He said that he had done it so that he might find grace in Esau's eyes. This is a common and erroneous concept of grace. Jacob thought it could be bought, bartered for, or gained in some sort of trade. In short, he thought it could be merited. Grace is unmerited favor, yet much of religion holds that grace is quid-pro-quo. If that were the case, no one would ever receive grace because no human being has anything to offer God in exchange for it. It is actually Esau who is gracious in the encounter (v.9). Esau's response to Jacob's elaborate oblation revealed that he was interested in his brother, not his brother's goods.

Jacob, however, being himself presses the matter (v. 10). It is evident that he may still have some confidence in his own plan. His language betrays him. He had actually "seen the face of God" at Peniel. Now he likens that experience with the power and influence of his brother. It is very close to the concept of worship in that he had hoped that his brother was pleased with him (satisfied) and accepted him. This is high and lofty flattery and entirely unnecessary. The abundance offered had nothing to do with the tears and kissing. Esau loved his brother and though, in years to come, the Edomites (Esau's lineage) would prove Israel's enemies, for now, love flows like a mighty river.

After all is said, two statements spoken by Jacob and Esau distinguish between the believer and the unbeliever, When Esau saw the gifts, he said "I have enough." Here the word (enough) means much, plenty or abundance. In effect he was saying, "I have sufficient and need nothing from you." Jacob says, "take all this stuff, I have enough." Here the word "enough" is different. He prefaces the statement with, "God hath dealt graciously with me" (consequently) "I have enough." Here the word means the

whole of, anything or everything. He is saying that god has been gracious with him and he has it all. Therefore, these things are nothing to me, they have no eternal value at all (Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 3:21; 2 Corinthians 5:17-18; Colossians 2:8-9).

# BETHEL, NOT SUCCOTH

## Genesis 33:12-20

12, And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.

13, And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.

14, Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.

15, And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? let me find grace in the sight of my lord.

16, So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.

17, And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

18, And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city.

19, And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money.

20, And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel.

If you follow the life of Jacob as it is reported in the word of God, you will begin to find it difficult to believe anything that he says. The continual revelation of his subterfuge and supplanting sets a kind of standard in one's mind that causes one to take everything he says with a grain of salt and wonder what he might be up to. As I read the commentators on this passage, for the most part, all of them presented these last verses in this chapter as a glowing report on the spirituality of Jacob. When I read this portion of scripture. I confess that I had a completely opposing response. My mind went to the episode in Numbers when the tribes of Gad, Reuben and ½ the tribe of Manasseh opted not to enter the Promised Land but desired to stay on the wilderness side of Jordan because of the wealth and worldly riches it promised. Moses told them what has come to be a proverbial word of warning, "be sure your sins will find you out." He said this to warn these tribes that the blessing of God was not on the wilderness side of Jordan but were secured only in Canaan. No good would come of their choice. Those tribes promised to fight for Israel, if needed, and they even built a giant altar, visible from the Canaan side of the Jordan, to assure the tribes that possessed the Promised Land that they were also the children of God. When war came to Israel, Gad was the first to fall. The clarion call of John in his epistles rings loud and clear, "love not the world." "Set your affection on things above and not on things of the earth. Lay up your treasures in heaven and not on earth." These verses came to mind as I read this account. Another verse also came to mind. Hebrews 4:1, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

What prompted my suspicion of Jacob's intent is found in what he did and opposed to what he said. The dialogue between Esau and Jacob seemed a reasonable intercourse (vv. 12-15). Esau had invited Jacob to go with him to Seir and to begin the journey immediately and it appears that Jacob intends to do that but not just now. Jacob's reticence and his excuse for not

immediately following Esau sounds a bit too Jacoby (compare vv. 13-14 with 32:11). It is not beneath Jacob to play on the sympathy and good will of others. Esau relents and leaves Jacob, believing that he will soon follow and spend some time with him in Seir.

But the real reason why the intent of Jacob is questionable is found in what he did. Esau is making his way to Seir, heading South. As soon as Esau gets out of sight, Jacob heads northwest toward Succoth. He never intended to go with Esau. Though some have said he might have actually gone to Seir, there is no indication that he went, and following the manner of his dealings with Esau thus far, it would appear that Jacob is still running from Esau even though the enmity between them has been assuaged. Perhaps his conscience is still bothering him.

Jacob goes to Succoth and pitched his tents there near Philistine territory. This reminds us of Lot, whose love for the safety and comfort of the city life “pitched his tents toward Sodom” and later begged to take up residence in Zoar because it was just a little town. Is this not akin to the mind set of Gad and Reuben and the ½ tribe of Manasseh? After a time in Succoth, Jacob goes to Shalem and buys land and builds a house. He sets up roots in Shalem when he ought to have headed for Bethel, the house of God.

This is no small distinction and is made clear by what follows. After Jacob had set up his house near the Philistines and planted himself firmly in that area he builds an altar and gives it a name. He calls it “Eleloheisrael.” That means, “God the God of Israel.” What Jacob is saying is, “God is my God.” What is wrong with that? Nothing is wrong, save for the location and circumstance when it was uttered. Here, abutting the land of the enemy, with roots sunk deep in the world, he sets up an altar to declare that God is his God. If he had planted his roots in Bethel, “the house of God,” he would be saying that God is the God of His house, the God of His people. It is like saying Christ is my head rather than saying the He is the head

of the church of which I am a member. That may seem a distinction without a difference, but it is not unlike Gad, Reuben, and the one-half tribe of Manasseh building that enormous altar outside the Promise Land. The sole purpose was to say that though they were not where they should be, God was still their God. I have known many, through the years, who say they believe the gospel, and I do not doubt that they do, but the only relationship they have with the people of God is a bookshelf of long dead authors. For some reason they cannot be part of a local body of believers, probably because those deceased authors have made them to feel theologically superior and suspicious of others who are not so learned. Others I have known that declare faith in Christ are unwilling to pay the cost of association of believers for fear of censure or loss of the comfort that the world affords. The tribes on the wilderness side of Jordan were the children of God but they never got to enjoy the benefits of living in the Promised Land. Moses told them that no good would come of it, “be sure your sins will find you out.” And they did. And though Jacob has planted his roots outside Bethel and declared truthfully “Eleloheisrael” that God is his God, the warning of Moses rings true. In Chapter 34. His sins will find him out when his daughter Dinah is defiled when Shechem rapes her. Lord grant that our choices are such that we lose not the joy of our salvation and the benefits of living among the people of God in Bethel (Ps. 51:7-12).



## BRUTALITY

### Genesis 34

Please read chapter 34.

This chapter is the historical record of the brutality and subterfuge of all parties involved. Many commentators spend a great deal of time on the results of bad parenting, declaring that as it were, the actions of the sons of Leah against the family and heritage of Shechem was “the chickens coming home to roost.” They asserted that the character that Jacob had displayed before his children resulted in them acting in the manner that they did. There can be no doubt that there is some gravity to their assertions. Though it is not always the case, for the most part, children emulate the character of their parents, and it is true that the children of Jacob didn’t have a lot to work with. To begin with, it was not only Jacob that was a poor example but also the mother of Simeon and Levi, Leah was party to a sneaky deal to begin with. She willingly slipped into Jacob on his and Rachel’s wedding night and stole her sister’s husband. The thread of chicanery winds throughout this entire outfit. But as bad as the parenting might have been, it can never excuse what any of the perpetrators did. Shechem raped Dinah; he defiled her. So the anger of her brothers against Shechem is reasonable and understandable. In fact, in Exodus, there would be a law made that dealt with very infraction and law that demanded that the rapist marry his victim or pay substantial reparations to the family (Exodus 22:16-17). At this time no such law existed, and it became a financial transaction, a kind of dowry. What we find in the remainder of the chapter is that finance is a driving force behind the willingness of the Hivites to be circumcised (vv. 20-

24). The Lord had blessed Israel and the countries around them coveted their riches.

What the sons of Leah, Simeon and Levi did was premeditated murder. It was cruelty beyond measure, utter brutality. Granted, their anger was understandable, but their actions were proven to be the pursuit of wealth, power and control. Shechem was guilty, the rest of the men who perished under the sword of the angry brothers were not. The only reason for this wholesale slaughter was gain (vv. 27-29).

As we well know, this historical account is true and factual, but it is about something else. It applies to Christ and His work and the people for whom that redemptive work was accomplished. More and more I marvel in these Old Testament studies at the wealth of knowledge and information that was available to the Apostles as they gleaned the Old Testament to preach Christ and him crucified. Until about 100AD the law and the prophets were the sole source of information about the glories of the Savior. I often wonder what it must have been like for Paul, the former Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, to sit at the feet of the Master, on the back side of the desert for 3 ½ years and have Him open the book and teach of the things concerning Himself. Jim Byrd told me of a message he preached from The Revelation entitled, "The Lamb was the Light Thereof." This is indeed the story, the key of knowledge; the understanding of this book is that the Lamb is the Light thereof (Lk. 24:44-45).

What is before us in this chapter is different aspects of the Law, which was yet to be given some 5 centuries hence. The law concerning murder had been established in Genesis 9:6 and would be handed down from Sinai saying "Thou shalt not kill (murder)." The law against mixing with pagans, the daughters or son or religions was set forth in Deuteronomy and continually throughout the Old Testament and New Testament (Deut. 7:3; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Rev. 18:4-5).

What stands out as the prominent thing in this chapter is the doctrine of circumcision and this teaching is found throughout the Old and New testaments. Its employment here is an all out assault on its meaning. It was given to Abraham a token of the relationship that God had established with him. It always had a spiritual meaning but, as all things visible, it was soon turned to a means of establishing human merit, which is another term for self-righteousness (Deut. 10:16; Rom 2:28-29). At this time, it was not a law but would become part of the Levitical law, a practice preformed upon boys on the 8th day after birth. It never applied to anyone outside the seed of Abraham. In time it became, to the Jew, an evidence of salvation and was pressed upon early believers as proof they were saved (Acts 15:1,5). Paul dealt with this fallacy in many of his epistles. In Paul's writings, circumcision was put forth as synonymous with the Law and was never to be applied to the believer for justification, righteousness, evidence of salvation or as a rule of life. The word is interchangeable with the Law of Moses in Paul's epistles to the church. And it is here that we see the spiritual application of what the sons of Leah did to Shechem and the sons of Hamor as it is tied to circumcision. Is it not the teaching that is proven time and time again throughout the New Testament? The result of circumcision or keeping the Law for righteousness is death, The letter killeth. If righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. If Christ's death was vain, then you and I are dead forever. In Christ, circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature. The believer is, by the Law dead to the Law (Gal. 5:1-4). If you are circumcised (apply he the law for righteousness) Christ will profit you nothing. If Christ is not profit to you, death is your existence. This is the teaching of the barbarous and brutal act of Simeon and Levi (Gen. 49:5). To seek to bring a brother or sister under the Law is a barbarous and brutal act that will end in cruel death. Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to them that believe (Rom. 10:1-4).

## NOT ALLOWED IN BETHEL

### Genesis 35:1-4

1, And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

2, Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:

3, And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

4, And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.

Jacob once again finds himself in distress. The murderous actions of Simeon and Levi have left him “stinking” in the eyes of the countryman surrounding him. As is always the case, in his times of woe the LORD appears to him and by His presence comforts and directs him. This is the testimony of every believer in every trial. The believer does not receive a personal, visible appearance of Christ, as did Jacob, but rather finds comfort in the Word of God that meets every need. Always involved in the comfort given is a reminder of past times when the believer was delivered (vv. 1, 3c). In the last chapter the name of God was not mentioned, and reasonably so, as it was an account of the utter depravity of man. In this chapter, which records the deliverance of Jacob out of distress, the name of God is found

numerous times. It is fitting because the Lord is leading Jacob back to Bethel, the house of God. Bethel is the house of God, the church, the Holy Land, the Promise Land, Immanuel's land, the home of the free and the land of the graced. As Jacob sets out toward Bethel, as per the Lord's directions, he gives instructions to his family. These instructions are solely intended to give understanding as to what is allowed in Bethel, the church of God. When I speak of the church I'm speaking of the body of Christ, that spiritual body made up of all the redeemed of which some of the local churches are members. In the local church there are tares among the wheat but not in the true church where is true righteousness. Bethel is a picture of the perfect spiritual body.

Jacob, when commanded to go back to Bethel and there build an altar (worship the Lord) he speaks of three things that are not allowed in that perfect, holy place, three things that must be left behind as we enter into the house of God. These three things are not allowed in Bethel, they do not exist in Bethel.

The first of these things not allowed is your idols, your false gods (v. 2b), We know that Rachel took the teraphim from Laban's house when they departed but evidently there had been some further accumulation of handmade deities in their time spent at Shechem. The fact of living in proximity with the pagans had equated in the sons of Jacob embracing the surrounding false religion. As going to Bethel is a picture of salvation, leaving false religion behind is part and parcel with it. Over the years, I've run into numerous scraps with folks who cannot let go of the profession they made under false religion. They all had real religious experiences but even in the light of scripture are reticent to leave them behind. They are idols and are not allowed in Bethel. The fact is that no one believes until after the heard the word of truth (Eph. 1:13). Those to whom this word of truth came are defined in verses 3-12. They are recipients of the work of God and are informed of the work of God on their behalf when and only when they hear the word of

truth. And it a personal word and word meant only for the hearer. It is good news of a salvation that is theirs and has been since before the world began. It is news, a report of an accomplished redemption that that the recipient is entirely unaware of until they heard the word of truth, the good news that God had saved them. Every religious thing prior to this, regardless of how real, how genuine, how truly felt is no longer in play. The very first thing that the Holy Spirit convinces men of is unbelief (John 16:8-9). What value can be placed on religious experiences done in unbelief. What follows is what Paul asserts in Phil 3:13-14. Jacob said, “we are going to Bethel, lose the strange gods.”

The second thing not allowed in Bethel is your sin. Jacob says, “be clean.” With men this is impossible (Job 9:30-31). But with God all things are possible. “The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” As our Lord washed the feet of His disciples, he said to them “Ye are clean, every whit.” “He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” even to the magnificent extent that God says, “I will remember their sins no more.” Your sins are not allowed in Bethel (Isa. 35:8; Rev. 21:27). “Be clean”.

Finally, your righteousness will not be allowed in Bethel. Jacob said. We’re going the Bethel, “change your garments.” Garments are typical of righteousness throughout the word of God. Our righteousness is as filthy rags, and they are not allowed in Bethel. We must repent of our righteousness for that is the sin that keeps us from God. We must enter Bethel on the righteousness of another (1 Cor. 1:30-John Jasper). “Change your garments” they are not allowed in Bethel. (Ps. 132:9; Isa. 61:10; 52:1). Your idols, your sin and your righteousness are not allowed in Bethel (Rev. 7:9-14).

## ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS

### Genesis 35

Please read chapter 35.

As we saw in the last study, the three things that are not allowed in Bethel are your idols, your sin, and your righteousness. The answer for all these is the blood/death of Christ wherein the Father, the true and living God is revealed to you, your sin is put away and the righteousness, which is Christ Himself, is made to be your only and your entire righteousness. This chapter, overall, is a chapter of endings and beginnings.

The chapter begins with Jacob being commanded to leave Shechem and go to Bethel. His days in Shechem are ending and his days in Bethel are beginning. This is much more than a change of address it is a confession of the truth. When Jacob moved to Shechem, after promising to follow Esau to Seir (he went in the opposite direction), he was elated that he had escaped the wrath of Esau, and to him, it was proof that God had delivered him, and that God was indeed his God. He raised an altar there and called it Eleloheisrael. That name means "God, the God of Israel." Since Israel, as a nation, did not yet exist and the 12 sons who would form the future twelve tribes were yet to be born, Jacob was talking about Jacob (or himself). He was saying that he was delivered from Esau, and that is proof that God is the God of Jacob or God is my God.

There is nothing inherently wrong with such a proclamation, and it is indeed the joyful declaration of every child of God when he considers the times that God had delivered him. But Shechem is not Bethel and the proximity to the surrounding cities and communities have had a dilatory effect. Paganism and idolatry had taken hold on the family of

Jacob and the influence played part in the utter cruelty of Reuben and Levi in the slaughter of the Shechemites. As vile as their acts were that did not fall outside the realm of divine providence (nothing does). Their acts made Shechem and uncomfortable place to be for Jacob and made it so that the command of God to journey to Bethel would meet with no resistance. I'm reminded of the words of God to the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 43:3-4. I'm also reminded of the words of the psalmist in Ps.137:4 "How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a land of strangers." So, the name that Jacob (Israel) gives to the altar he erects at Bethel carries and entirely different connotation. He names the altar "El-bethel" (v.7). That means "The God of Bethel" or the God of His own house." There are times when with we cry with Thomas, "My Lord and my God" but in His house, we worship Him as the God of Bethel, the God of His own house. The churches one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord.

As this journey proceeds there are numerous ends and beginnings. In v. 8, Deborah, Rebekah's devoted servant dies. In verse 18, Benjamin is born, and his name will play a big part in the rest of Genesis. He will be used in teaching us of the meaning of Christ, our Surety. His mother Rachel, the true love of Jacob, dies in giving Benjamin birth. She named her son Benoni, which means "The son of my sorrow." But Jacob named him Benjamin, which means "The son of the right hand." Some have said that these names picture the condition of the elect as they are born of woman "a few days and full of trouble," born into the world a son of sorrow but all the while the elect of God. To the Father he is the Son (born again, predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself)...a son of the right hand...the hand of salvation. Others see these names as a picture of Christ...a man of sorrows who, having accomplished salvation, sits at the right hand of the Father. The heads of the twelve tribes are complete.



Lastly, we have two more endings. Isaac dies at Mamre, old and full of days. At his grave are two men, Jacob, and Esau. This is the last time those two will meet but their progeny will fight each other to this present day. The story of the enmity of the Middle East and Israel is still making chapters in the volumes of this hour. But this is also the story of every one of the elect. The struggle that every child of God experiences throughout the days of his life will only end when death comes to our door. That struggle is Esau and Jacob, the flesh and the Spirit. When Isaac died, he left them behind. Every Isaac has his Jacob and his Esau, and they will be there at his grave, but until that day, they will be dedicated enemies. Praise God for His grace.

## GENERATIONS OF ENEMIES

### Genesis 36

Please read chapter 36.

This chapter is a catalogue of the descendants of Esau, and it is a large list of those who prove enemies of Israel throughout the Word of God and even to this day the animosity and enmity still carries on. Man may discount the word of God, but this one aspect of human history still looms large in the narrative of this age. Some Old Testament commentators pass over his passage without a great deal of consideration and that thought crossed my mind as well. But as all scripture relates to Christ and His church, this passage too speaks thus. One of the primary aspects is that Edom was pagan and idolatrous and thus representative of all religion that is in opposition to Christ and His people. Idolatry takes many forms and generally, in the minds of men, it has to do with man-made, handmade gods, visible abominations that men worship. Christianity, so called, and Christendom, which is Rome and the reformed religions that flowed from it, all practice some form of idolatry. Statues of Mary and saints, crosses, indulgences, pictures of deities and all sorts of sacred contraband decorate the homes, cars, and dashboards of religious folk. These are idols. Many would agree while worshiping the biggest idol of all, the grand icon of self. Self is that idol that intrudes in the work of salvation, exalting the works and the will of men as having a contributory factor in the salvation of their souls. Self is the idolatrous enemy of Christ. It is the flesh that no man should glory in. It is the carnal mind that is enmity against God and can only mind the things of the flesh. Self is the opposite of love. Edom and idolatry are evil brothers that are seen side by side on the pages of this book.

And Esau, in this chapter, is said to be Edom, or the father of the Edomites no less than 5 times (vv. 1,8,9, 19, 43). Remember, the epitaph of Esau is that he sold his birthright for a bowl of pottage (Heb. 12:16-17-note margin).

In verse 12 we see the birth of an important character in the history of Israel. Amalek is born and he is the father of the Amalekites. In many passages the Lord tells Israel to utterly destroy the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:18). But the chief part that the Amalekites play in the word is that they were one of the reasons given by the Israelites for their refusal to enter the Promised Land. The Amalekites were the excuse for Israel's unbelief. This is seen in Numbers 13 and 14. The Amalekites and the sons of Anak were used by the Israelites to choose to believe the 10 spies and to discount the words of Caleb that promised victory. This episode revealed the intractability of unbelief. Unbelief cannot and never does become belief. For one to believe, God must give them faith, faith must be added to a person and that by the grace of God. Unbelief remains in the believer and is his bane. But thank God, the believer overcomes the world by faith (1 John 5:4). The account of Israel's unbelief, born of a fear of the Amalekites, is proof of the obstinacy of unbelief. When they refused to enter the Promise Land, God told them they therefore *could not* enter and turned everyone who was over the age of 20, when they left Egypt, back into the wilderness to die. The Israelites then, in unbelief, said that they would go into the Promise Land and made preparation to do so; proving that unbelief cannot believe. The result is they all became carcasses in the wilderness. The Amalekites were instruments in the hand of God to cull some rebels out of the herd.

In verse 33 we see another word that is prominent in scripture. That name is Bozrah. It is a city named in several prophets (Isa 34:6; Jer. 48:24; 49:13, 22; Amos 1:12; Mic 2:12). In each of these instances Bozrah is set for judgment and destruction. As in every instance the judgment of the enemy is

set in two aspects in the word of God. First it speaks of the Cross of Christ and secondly, it addresses the second coming of Christ. Both are attended with blood and battle. The first, speaks of the bruising of the serpent's head by the seed of woman. The second addresses the return of Christ with His saints and the final, glorious destruction of Babylon the religion of the world. This is magnificently displayed in Isaiah 63:1-4. It appears that the prophet is astonished at the appearance of this one who appears to be returning victorious from a battle. That battle took place in Bozrah (ever declared the enemy of God). He appears to be awash in blood (v. 2; Is. 34:6; Rev. 19:11-16). He appears to be utterly victorious, traveling in the greatness of His strength. His words are true and the victory that he has accomplished is the salvation of His people; "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save" (Zeph. 3:14-17). He declares Himself to be the truth. He does not say that He speaks in righteousness, though He surely does. He inserts the word "that" ...I *that* speaks in righteousness, separating Himself from all others as the source of righteous speech. Thy word is truth. He has engaged this battle by Himself (v. 3; Heb. 1:3; 9:12). The remainder of His enemies He has reserved for the day of judgment and the year of my redeemed is come This is that day, the Gospel Age, the last days, and the acceptable year of the Lord (Is. 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21). He came from Bozrah victorious. The lineage of Esau, who is Edom, is about Christ and His glorious victory in the salvation of the elect.

# THE FAVORITE SON

## Genesis 37:1-4

1, And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

2, These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

3, Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.

4, And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

This chapter begins the revelation of perhaps the most prolific typification of Christ in all of Holy Writ. His name is Joseph, the firstborn to Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob. In A.W. Pink's book, "Gleanings on Genesis", he asserts that there are more than 100 ways that Joseph was a type of Christ. Joseph will take up much of the remainder of this book as he sets forth the glories of our blessed Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jacob is finally where he is supposed to be. He is in Canaan, in Hebron, separated from his brother Esau and at peace in his advanced age. He was being attended by his son Joseph loved his son more than any of his brethren, though it is stated later that he loved Benjamin likewise. They were the sons born to Rachel and did not prove evil in their deeds as did the sons of Leah. Joseph was Jacob's favorite (v.3). As is often the case, one child

generally takes the job of caring for an aged parent. It was Joseph would take up that banner and perhaps that fact made him extra special in his father's eyes. This distinction was not lost on the sons of Leah. It is stated that they hated him because his father loved him best. They hated him so much that they could not even bring themselves to give him the common greeting of that day, "peace be with you."

In verse 2-4 we see the unfolding of the Savior, the favorite son (45:7; 50:20). The words "generations of Jacob" does not refer to genealogy but rather to the acts, deeds, and life of Joseph. The first thing that is revealed about Joseph is that he was "feeding the flock." He was a shepherd. This is one of the sweetest references to Christ, the chief shepherd, the good shepherd, and the great shepherd of the sheep. His command to Simon Peter was "feed my sheep" (Isa. 40:9-11). As sovereign shepherd, His sheep will hear His voice and will follow him, and He will give them eternal life (John 10:26-30).

The last phrase of verse 2, reveals one of the reasons that Joseph's brothers hated him. He "brought unto his father, their evil deeds." Our Lord as he walked among men was loved by the ruined, oppressed, and despised, but He was hated by the religious, entitled Pharisees. They hated Him because He declared their evil deeds done under the color of authority as religious rulers (Matt. 23). They hated Him without a cause, desiring His death because He told the truth about them. His word revealed the thoughts and intents of their heart. Joseph's brothers hated his for the truth he told (John 7:7).

V.3 tells the tale of Joseph picturing Christ. His father loved him more than all His brethren. Every blood-bought born-again sinner is a child of God and a brother to Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; Heb. 2:11-12; 1 John 3:1-2). But the only begotten of God is the favorite Son, The Father loved the Son (John 3:35). How often did the Father say of Christ, "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." God's language, His singular means of communication is His Son (Zeph. 3; 9; Hebrews 1:1-

2; John 1:1-2). The only way to know God is to know the Son of His love (John 14:7-9; Col. 2:8-9).

Jacob expressed his love for his son by making him a coat of many colors. Whether it was many colors or patchwork, like a quilt or of intricate design such as embroidery is a matter of conjecture among scholars. One thing they all agree on is that it had sleeves that reached to the palms of the hand and was a long coat, reaching almost to the ground. Culturally such a coat or tunic was a distinctive garment, worn by men of stature. To give Joseph such a coat set him above his brethren. This incensed his brethren and made them extremely jealous when they saw that Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his brethren. Scripture declares that Christ came to His own, and His own received Him not. The Jews were the brethren according to the flesh, he was the son of David, from the tribe of Judah but they hated Him without a cause. The Father loved Him and though His own would desire His death and refuse to have Him reign over them, He came to save and save He would, some out of every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. This is Joseph the prolific type of our Savior.

# THEY HATED HIM

## Genesis 37:4-11

4, And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

5, And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6, And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

7, For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

8, And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

9, And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

10, And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

11, And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.



If one is at all familiar with scripture, he will immediately see Joseph as a type of Christ and the response of the world to Him clearly expressed. One phrase, repeated 3 times in this passage, was spoken of Christ as He walked this earth. That phrase is, "They hated him" (vv. 4, 5, 8). To add insult to injury, the hatred manifested was found in the hearts of his close kinsmen (Matt. 10; 34-36). Another phrase, one which gives reason for their hatred, is found in verse 5 and 8. They hated him because of what he told them, and they hated him for his words. There is also a progression in this report. The hatred appears to increase as Joseph reveals more about himself, his words, as it were, are like daggers that pierced their souls. Was it not so with Christ? The more our Lord spoke, the more the world hated Him, and it progressed to the point of the crowd standing in unison crying, "Crucify him, let his blood be on our heads." An example of this is found in Luke 4 when our Lord was well received until He said the scripture in Isaiah was fulfilled in Him and then told them of electing grace and the once receptive congregation then turned into a homicidal mob (Lk. 4:16-29). When truth is spoken, the natural reaction is to hate the messenger because it lays the ax to the root of the hearers presumed worth and supposed power of their will and the pipedream of their entitlement. Both Jacob and Joseph's brethren were resistant to the declaration that Joseph would reign over them (vv. 8, 10; Luke 19:14). The message, the Gospel is a stripping declaration. It is an offence to the flesh because it entirely removes man for the equation of salvation and declares to those who believe and those who do not, "You will bow." With these words, man's will, works, sense of entitlement and value of self is ground into the dust and without a work of sovereign grace this is true of every man and every woman and every child. Old Baxter said "Bow or burn"; he spoke thusly of the only two possible responses to the Gospel. But the message of the Gospel is absolute, you *will* bow and that right soon (Phil 2). Some will bow in thanksgiving and praise (Rev. 11:17). Others will perish

for want of love for Christ (1 Cor. 16:22). The message of the Gospel is first and foremost this primary and paramount truth (Is. 52:7).

This is the rub. This is where the proverbial rubber hits the road. The response to the words of Joseph, especially the theme to which their minds were immediately drawn tells the tale. They centered on the fact they heard that Joseph was going to reign over them. They had no idea that the sovereignty that Joseph revealed would eventuate in their salvation, but the thought of his exaltation was repulsive to them. What men rail against, rebel against is, in truth, is the only hope of their salvation. If Christ is not absolutely sovereign, you cannot be saved. They called His name Jesus because He shall save his people from their sins. There is a strong man, even Satan, that holds you fast in his grasp, from the moment you draw your first breath. Unless a stronger that he overcomes him, binds him, and takes from him what he holds fast, men will remain in his palace, at peace, never knowing that they are a denizen of the devil. Only one who is his sovereign can rescue your hell-bound soul. But this does not enter the carnal mind, it only hears that Christ reigns over them and they cannot abide that truth.

Scripture declares that Christ is God, one with God, one with the Father, the fullness of the God head dwelling in His body, having all preeminence, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and Lord over all. He reigns omnipotent, doing according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand or question him. He does not give account of his matters. He shall reign till all his enemies are His footstool. He has chosen who He will save and has redeemed them by His blood. You will bow. Our Lord made no bones about who He was, and the world hated Him and hated Him more and more.

The Gospel is not an appeal, an invitation, or an offer. It is a proclamation— news published— and it begins with a singular truth upon which all else hangs. Joseph said, I will reign, and

you will bow. The Gospel preachers say, “He reigns,” and you will bow. Mark well that you will not gain public accolades for telling men the truth. The Lord said, “marvel not that men hate you, they hated me first.”

Some may say that Joseph was bragging. They said the same about Christ, “we want to kill you because you, being a man, make yourself to be God.” Let me say as clear as I can say it. Christ reigns in creation, providence, and salvation. He reigns and you will bow.

## SEEKING HIS BRETHREN

### Genesis 37:12-20

12, And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

13, And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.

14, And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15, And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

16, And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.

17, And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

18, And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

19, And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20, Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

This passage is the report of the further revelation of the fulfillment of the prophecy given to Abraham concerning the captivity of Israel in Egypt and the deliverance by the mighty hand of God through the blood of the Paschal Lamb (Gen. 15; 13-14). It is the story of the salvation of this family and ultimately the deliverance of Israel. As this is the case, this is the story of the salvation of the elect. The record is that Jacob sent Joseph to seek out his brethren. Joseph was willing to go. His brethren were, at last report in Shechem, but had moved when Joseph arrived there. Joseph was wandering about Shechem when he was told that his brethren had moved the flocks to Dothan. So, he went to Dothan, and his brethren saw him, mocked him, and began to plot how to kill him. This passage is Gospel full, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.

The first thing we see is that the Father sends the Son, his beloved Son. How many times did our Savior speak of being the one whom the Father had sent? One of the marks of His teaching was that it was the words of the Father that He spoke because the Father had sent Him. For His hearers, this fact, carried great authority (John 5:36-37; 6:38).

Secondly, the Father sent His son to seek His brethren. There can be no doubt that Joseph was aware of his brother's hatred and envy toward him. He was sent to seek those who hated him. His enemies were they of his own household. This is the case of every soul that the Lord saved (Rom. 8:7-8). Yet, they are his brethren. They are his family, though they hate him (Heb. 2:14). He came to seek and save that which was lost. He came not to call the righteous but to bring sinners to repentance. He came to His own, and His own received him not. He was sent to seek true Israel, the Israel of God and without exception, they naturally hated Him (1 John 4:10).

Thirdly, though his brethren hated Him, Joseph came voluntarily. When the Father called, Joseph said, "Here I am." Our Lord came to this world willingly, voluntarily to die in the room and stead of His brethren (Is. 53:7-9; John 10:15-18). He

gave his back to the smiters, his face to them that plucked off the hair. He loved us and gave himself for us.

Fourthly. The places that Joseph went, seeking the brethren are significant. First, he went to Shechem, the place where a horrible sin had been committed. As bad as that sin was, it pales in comparison to the world our Lord entered where the crown of His creation had ruined the universe by eating the fruit that God had forbidden, plunging it into sin and death. Shechem means “shoulder”, and this alludes to the Lord bearing the sins of His people. The Greek word for bearing up under a burden is employed concerning the Lord and our sin (1 John 3:5, “taketh away”) (lost sheep). It is said that Joseph wandered a bit in Shechem and though we know that Christ did not wander, his face was set like a flint toward Jerusalem and the Cross, the wandering could well apply to the fact that the Lord, while here, had no place to lay his head. It is recorded in the Word that the disciples went to their houses and the Lord went to the Mount of Olives. He found His brethren in Dothan. Dothan means “two wells” and some scholars have said that the two wells signify law and customs. This is an apt description of the religion in which our Lord sought His brethren. They were under the law and therefore guilty (Rom 3:19) and their customs and traditions, they had put forth as if they were the doctrine of God (Matt. 15:9). The accomplishment of the Calvary is that “sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

Fifthly, (v.8), “And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him’. The words “saw him afar off” can surely be applied to Herod. When he heard that the men from the East were following the star, seeking the King of Israel, as it were, seeing him afar off even before He came near, Herod issued an edict to kill every child under two years of age. And this fact played out in the minds and heart of the religious leaders of the Lord’s days (Matt. 12:14).

Finally, the brethren mocked Joseph (V. 19-20). You can actually hear the tone of vitriol in their word, “the dreamer...we shall see what becomes of his dreams.” Let’s venture to the foot of the cross and hear the words of the brethren whom our Lord came seeking (Matt. 27:37-44).

## **BLOOD PROOF**

### **Genesis 37:20-35**

20, Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

21, And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

22, And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

23, And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;

24, And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

25, And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

26, And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

27, Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.



28, Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

29, And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

30, And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

31, And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

32, And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.

33, And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

34, And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35, And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

This is the record of the culmination of Joseph's brother's vehement hatred toward him. It is the natural result of envy untempered and unleashed. It is the revelation of the extreme measures that men will take when their sense of false entitlement is challenged. The brother's mind could not tolerate, could not assent to the possibility that Joseph would reign over them. They knew that if Joseph lived, his dreams would come to fruition, his words would result in them bowing down to him. This, they could not abide. Their only solution was to slay him.

He must die. It is no wonder that the natural mind, born at enmity against God, must and will rebel to the truth that the God it despises is its sovereign and the posture of obeisance would be its future estate. The Gospel message begins with the declaration of God's sovereignty and every aspect of the Gospel is informed by that fact (Is. 52:7). The Gospel says that you will bow. The carnal mind says that you deserve to die for saying such a thing.

As soon as Joseph showed up in Dothan, his brethren were plotting his homicide. They were murderers and were bent on exercising their will. They would not become murderers when that slew their brother. They would slay their brother because they were murderers (Mk 7:20-23). It is recorded that they hated Joseph, they hated him more and they hated him yet more (1 John 3:15). The first thing they did when Joseph arrived was to strip him of the coat that his father had given him. No doubt, if he had undergarments, he was relieved of those garments also. This had a two-fold intent. First, that coat was tied to His dreams, his assertion of his future reign. He was no longer the favored son, he was a naked man. Secondly, stripping him was to humiliate him.

Then they cast him into a pit where there was no water, in effect, assuring that he would die. As far as they were concerned, they had done Joseph in, he was no longer a problem to them. This is seen in the fact that as their brother lay at the bottom, dying as far as they were concerned, they sat on the brink of the pit and had lunch. The food probably tasted sweet as the knowledge of the demise of their nemesis added savor to the palates.

Through a series of negotiations by Ruben and a deliverance by Judah, Joseph was taken out of the pit and sold to a caravan for 20 pieces of silver. They had no idea that they had sold their savior, for as Christ must go to Calvary to save his brethren, so Joseph must go to Egypt to save his brethren.

The brothers must account for Joseph's disappearance. They *must* face Jacob and have a plausible explanation for Joseph's absence. They take the coat of many colors and slay a kid, a young goat, take its blood and slather it on Joseph's coat and tell Jacob that his favorite son was slain by a wild beast. The proof of Joseph's death was the shed blood. Jacob goes into mourning and stays in that condition until he sees Joseph's face some 20 years later. This is the course of sovereign providence thus far.

The Gospel is in this passage. As the brethren hated Joseph, so Christ's brethren, the elect, naturally hated Him. When Christ was brought before Herod, they stripped him, "parted his garments and cast lots for them." They humiliated him and cried "we will not have this man reign over us." He was sold for 30 pieces of silver. They, as it were, thought they had killed Him. The pit where there was no water was His grave, His tomb. When Rueben went to check, Joseph was not there, when the women went to Christ's tomb He was not there. "Why seek ye the living among the dead; He is risen." The crucifiers thought they had killed Him but he ever liveth to make intercession for the saints.

This part of the record is also a picture of the salvation of the elect (Job 33:22-24; Zech. 9:9-11; Matt. 20:28). Also, there is the essential aspect of salvation— substitution. They slew a kid and sprinkled its blood on Joseph coat and Joseph lived. Christ shed his own blood; the blood of the spotless Lamb of God, poured out in the heavenly Holy of Holies and his people lived (Heb. 9:11-12).

Finally, to Jacob, the proof that his son was dead was the blood. With the heavenly Father, the proof, the efficacy of the salvation of the elect, the proof of the death that answered law and justice was the blood. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." To God be the glory forever and ever, Amen.

# JUDAH AND TAMAR

## Genesis 38

Please read chapter 38.

To some, the insertion of the chapter in the narrative of Joseph's revelation as the savior of his people seems out of place. Judah, however, is an important character in scripture. The first employment of the doctrine of the surety is found in Judah. The Jews got here name from a transliteration of the word "Judah." Judah was the kingdom of David when Israel was divided. Our Lord's high priesthood was from the tribe of Judah and not of Levi. Christ is declared to be the Lion from the tribe of Judah. Judah typifies and pictures Christ in Jacob's prophecy concerning Judah in Genesis 49:8-12. This story and the principle set forth concerning the continuation of the name and title and entitlement of the firstborn seems to be the basis of the law in Deuteronomy 25. 5-10. This was not part of the law of Sinai but of the laws to be employed in the Promised Land. At this point in time, this was probably a common practice in the East. Also, the passage in Deuteronomy explains the practice of removing the some when the nearer kinsman refused to marry Ruth. Also, this practice or Law of Moses was used by the Pharisees to try to entrap the Lord in Matthew 22. This passage carries a lot of influence in Holy Writ. Its placement here in Genesis may seem out of place but, whether it can be explained or not, it's precisely where it is supposed to be, and we know what the subject matter entails (John 5:39).

It is an odd bit of inspired literature and has been the source of controversy by many men because it seems that what Tamar did was so Machiavellian in principle and practice. This principle is that the end justifies the means and is often difficult

for those, especially of the Puritanical persuasion, to swallow. A friend of mine who submitted a commentary on Genesis was asked to leave his commentary about this portion out of the book because it was what they termed controversial. Obviously, it offended their sensibilities. I'm always kind of amused by men who deem that their judgment of what God has written to be greater than what the infallible Author has himself inspired.

Judah's declaration that Tamar was more righteous than he, though she had seduced and gotten pregnant by him, her own father-in-law, is hard for some upright folks to get their mind around. But this was Judah's declaration (v. 26). Why was she more righteous than Judah? She was more righteous because she had regard and respect for the *seed*. The subject prominent throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament, though the applications differ from the natural to the spiritual. In both cases the matter at hand is the purity and maintenance of the perpetuity of the seed. Throughout the word, the seed is a paramount theme and concerns the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was necessary to maintain this purity in the natural realm so that Christ would be born of the royal house of David of the tribe of Judah and rightful heir to that throne; so that when the Jews rejected him, they would be naturally rejecting their own anointed king (Romans 1:1-3). In the spiritual realm it was necessary to maintain the purity of the seed as the seed of woman so that the Father of Christ could never be called into question and He would be born as promised, into humanity without the taint of Adam's sin and thus be the only perfect sacrifice for the salvation of the elect. The seed has a dual application in the word. Christ, Himself, is the seed (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16). Also encompassed in the concept of the seed are those who are referred to as Christ's seed, those to whom He would give birth by His substitutionary travail (Isaiah 53:10; Genesis 15:4-6; 17:15-19; Romans 9:7; Gal. 4:4-5, 22-28).

Er, Tamar's husband was killed by God for his wickedness. Onan was killed because he showed disregard for the seed by spilling it on the ground. Judah had disregard for the seed because he did not keep his promise to Tamar to give Shelah, the next brother in line to Tamar for her husband. Tamar, by clandestine subterfuge, by the covert incestuous harlot-like seduction of Judah made sure that the seed would continue in the line of the Messiah. Just as in the case of Abraham, she believed God concerning the seed. Her acts were sinful, of this there can be no doubt, but where sin abounded grace did much more abound. She had twins and it was a remarkable birth. As the first child began to proceed from her womb his hand came out first, the midwife said this is the first-born and tied a scarlet string around his wrist. Then he went back into the womb and the other child came out first. Being astonished she named the child who was the true firstborn Phares which means breach or breaker, not knowing that she was declaring one of the titles and descriptions given our Savior in prophecy (Micah 2:13). The whole of this incident comes to this singular point, the seed was maintained. The continuation and protection of the seed was absolute in importance. In the lineage of Christ in Matthew 1 there are five women mentioned (Matt. 1:3). The first mentioned is Tamar. Along with her are Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba (the wife of Uriah) and Mary the mother of our Lord. Tamar is most assuredly recorded in a favorable light. The first part of that verse says that "Judah begat Phares." The historical and spiritual significance of this fact is unsearchable (Hebrews 7:14; Revelation 5:5).

# SOLD

## Genesis 39:1-6

1, And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

2, And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

3, And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

4, And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

5, And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

6, And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

After the interlude of the story of Judah and Tamar that declared the importance of the firstborn and the protection and continuation of the seed, the Word picks up the history of Joseph again. Already, Joseph has been set forth as a prolific type of the Lord Jesus Christ (Chapter 37). Joseph was the son born in his father's old age, Christ is the son of the Ancient of

days; Joseph was particularly beloved of his father, Christ is his Father's beloved Son; Jacob made a coat of many colors for Joseph, God prepared a body in the likeness of sinful flesh for Christ. Joseph's brethren hated him and despised the notion that he would have dominion over them. The Jews, Christ's kindred, according to the flesh, detested him, and said that they would not have this man to reign over them; Jacob sent Joseph on a journey to visit his brethren, to discover the welfare of the flocks, Christ was sent from heaven to earth to seek and save the lost sheep of the house of Israel; Joseph's brethren, upon seeing him, conspired against him, to kill him, Christ came to His own and they received him not but sought to slay Him; The brothers stripped Joseph, and sold for twenty pieces of silver at Judah's behest, and Judas sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver, and the Roman soldiers stripped off his clothes; Joseph was delivered to foreigners, and Christ to the Gentiles; Joseph was sent to Potiphar's house, he was the chief of the executioners. Christ was handed over to the executioners. This is where we find Joseph in this passage. He is a servant Potiphar's house and, as is the case in Joseph's life, no matter how dire the circumstances seem, he prospers (v. 1-2).

Potiphar also prospered, but he did not prosper because he was a good man, or any other reason that might be found in him. He was made prosperous because Joseph was in his house and was given the responsibility for running Potiphar's business. He so trusted this Hebrew that he didn't know what was going on except that there was bread his table (Vv. 4, 6). From the moment that Joseph entered his house, "the blessing of the LORD upon all that he (Potiphar) had in the house and in the field." The reason that Potiphar received the blessing of the LORD is clearly declared. He was blessed, "for Joseph's sake." And so it is with all who live, breathe, and prosper in this world. Whether they are of the elect or not, they continue to exist, for Christ's sake. The father loves the Son and has put all things in



His hand (John 17:1-3). Joseph was a faithful servant; Christ is the true and faithful One.

The reason why Joseph prospered is singular (v. 2a). The LORD was with Joseph. There can be no greater thing accounted to a human being than this. The cry of the hymnist is “Change and decay all around I see; O thou who changest not, abide with me.” The apostle wrote, “If God be for us, who can be against us.” The prophet wrote, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.” They called His name Immanuel, which is interpreted, “God with us.” The Lord said to His people, “I am with you always, even to the end of the earth” (Ps. 75:5-7). Be not deceived, it is the LORD that brings one up and brings one down, and in both instances, the blessing is, “the LORD is with him.”

It is interesting to note that Potiphar, a pagan Egyptian, “saw that the LORD was with him (Joseph), and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.” This was not a strange thing among the Egyptians (41:38-39). Potiphar knew the Joseph was a Hebrew and believed in one God, the LORD Jehovah. Perhaps he was simply acknowledging Joseph’s God and one among the many gods in the pantheon of Egypt. It seems more reasonable that they were thinking that the skills that Joseph possessed were, indeed, other worldly, coming from a place that was beyond human understanding. Perhaps they were like Nicodemus, astonished at the gifts given Jesus (John 3:2). Whatever was their reasoning, Joseph was made special in their eyes. This is because, the LORD was with him, and he was being schooled to save much people alive.

# THE LORD'S PRISONER

## Genesis 39:7-20

7, And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

8, But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

9, There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

10, And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.

11, And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.

12, And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

13, And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

14, That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:

15, And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.

16, And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.

17, And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:

18, And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

19, And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

20, And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

The overriding and under-girding truth of all that takes place in the world, in time and in human history must be laid at the door of divine providence. God is the first cause of all things lest we presume there is something that lies outside His control and is contrary to His will. What we may call dire straits are but the things working for the good of God's people (Ecc. 3:1-14; Isa. 45:5-12; Pro. 16:4). The old hymn says,

“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,

but trust Him for His grace.

Behind a frowning providence,

He hides a smiling face.”

Amid the trials that attend Joseph, being hated, envied, sold into slavery by his brothers, bought by Potiphar and exalted, but now imprisoned because of a woman scorned, we find a phrase that brings all these occurrences to the proper light. In verse 2 and in verse 21 are the solidifying words, “the LORD was with Joseph.”

I think it was Bunyan who said,

“A prison would a palace make

if the LORD was with me there.”

Just as our Lord set His face like a flint to Jerusalem and Golgotha’s cross to save His people, so the LORD set Joseph’s face to the right hand of Pharaoh to save His people. To arrive at his predestinated place, he must suffer at the hands of his brethren, exalted as a trusted and faithful servant, defamed, lied about and delivered to the hands of the executioner but to live in order to save. One does not have to press his mind to a state of wild imagination to see that Joseph and his life is a picture of Christ.

Potiphar was not small potatoes in Pharaoh’s cabinet. He was captain of the guard and earlier writers say that he was chief executioner. Some writers say that the prison into which Joseph was cast was attached to Potiphar’s house, “a place where the king’s prisoners were bound.” Potiphar also had a lustful wife who had a wandering eye, and eye that fell upon Joseph. Potiphar had exalted Joseph to the highest possible position in his house (v.9a; 5-6). How long this lustful pursuit lasted or how long Joseph was in prison is not recorded but both were included in a thirteen-year period. Joseph was seventeen when he was sold to Potiphar, and he was thirty when Pharaoh put him in charge of the future economy of Egypt. This young fellow was highly favored of the Lord, and those in charge of him knew it. It might be asked on what basis these men, these pagan

worshippers of all manner of idols, account that the Lord was with Joseph regardless of if he was in the penthouse or the penitentiary. It all had to do with a common error of carnal thinking. It had to do with prosperity. Joseph prospered wherever his was, and they accounted that as the blessing of the Lord. In this instance they were not mistaken but carnal religious men have always thought along these lines. I remember in an economics class in college that one of the writings of an economist in the 17th or 18th century said that material wealth and prosperity was proof of the election of grace. You have but to listen to religious hucksters and snake-oil salesman of this day to see that they preach the same message...health, wealth and a Lexus means you are blessed of God. In the situation of Joseph and the future nation of Israel, as long as Joseph lived the Israelites prospered, but upon his death there arose a new pharaoh who knew not Joseph. Then the Israelite went from prosperity to poverty-stricken helotry. In both cases, behind a frowning providence there was a smiling face (Gen.15:13-14). The seed of hatred was already sown for Joseph and his family, though his presence brought prosperity. This is seen in how Potiphar's wife described Joseph after he had thwarted her sexual advances (vv. 14, 17) ...that Hebrew (your little group... what makes you special). He and his family and his progeny were hated because God had chosen them, they were the nation chosen out of all nations. Christ is the elect of God, God's chosen in whom all the elect reside (according as He has chosen you in Christ) and it is the reason that they are hate the believer (John 15:19).

Joseph proved himself an honorable man, He counted the cost of yielding to this ongoing relentless temptation (vv. 8-10). Was he tempted? He was a human man and though it is not recorded, I'm betting that this gal was not a dog-faced pony soldier. Temptation only works if there is something in the tempted that positively responds to it. Our Lord was tempted, yet without sin. He said that Satan found nothing in Him that

responded to that tempting. Thank God, that if you are faced with temptation, He gives you an understanding of consequence. Joseph knew two things. What this woman was offering or even demanding was a sin against his master and a sin against God. When her obsession was met with failure and her ego and self-esteem shattered, she was out to get Joseph in another way altogether. Her bruised pride wakened the lying accuser in her unsatisfied flesh. She lied about him and even a tiny bit of forensic analysis would have discovered her calumny. The wanton wench turned into the wicked witch. Her husband, whether he believed her or not, had his own reputation to consider, and Joseph got hauled off to the hoosegow, scourged to the dungeon like a quarry slave.

Here it is. A faithful, trusted servant, given all things in the master's house, tempted, falsely accused, not sinning and cast down in the domain of the executioner only to rise again! Is this not a picture of our Lord?

## PRISONER OF HOPE

### Genesis 39:20-23

20, And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

21, But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

22, And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

23, The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

The doctrine of Sovereign Providence is displayed in spades in the life and times of Joseph. It applies obviously to the steps of Joseph, the savior of natural Israel and a picture of Christ, the savior of the Israel of God, the church. He is likewise the picture of the chosen sinner saved and kept by the grace of God. In the case of Joseph as well as that of Christ men did their worst, openly disclosing their vehement hatred for God, and, without their consent or knowledge, indeed against their will, it only and always avails to precisely accomplish what God had foreordained (Acts 4:27-28 exp). I have often thought of Joseph, who had not the power of Christ to control the course of history, as to whether, in the manifold trials he suffered, if he remembered that dream about his family bowing down to him. Did he count that dream as a nail in a sure place, the shadow of a rock in a weary land, a palpable vestige of hope in his numbered and

predetermined trials? Potiphar, Joseph's master and God's pawn, had cast him into prison, a repeat of what his brethren had done to him as they had cast him into the pit where there was not water. The Word of God sheds some light and inserts some hope in this story of seeming desolation. This is a prison designed in predestination that speaks to the hope that cannot be seen. (Zech. 9:11-12; Isa. 53:8). Here is that blessed little conjunction that, in this case, declares a divine interruption in the puny plots of impotent men, "BUT the LORD was with Joseph." This alters everything, everything that applies to circumstance and serves to warm the heart of the believer even or especially when things are dire and appear hopeless. When Joseph was cast into prison he was put in irons and chains (Ps. 105:17-18). Every sinner saved by grace is found thus, in the fetters and iron of sentenced transgression, cast headlong into the dungeon in the darkness of an Egyptian night where he finds by the Word of God speaking to his soul, telling him that the LORD is with him. He said, "I am with you always." He said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee".

Potiphar, nor his keeper of the prison knew anything of the prophetic dream of Joseph. But in the grand and precise scheme of providence, they had a part to play, their script being written for them, and they would, without question, according to their appointed steps, fulfill their appointed rounds. Whether in Potiphar's house as a slave bought and paid for or in the cold dark depths of Potiphar's penitentiary, Joseph was a prisoner, but he was a prisoner of hope. His wardens could not see his hope, nor could he, with his eyes but his hope was as sure as God is sure (Rom. 8:24-25; 2 Cor. 4:15-18).

In both incarcerations, Joseph's captors treated him with deference. It is the LORD that touches men's hearts, moves them, manipulates them, and uses them for the good of His people. Both Potiphar and the keeper of the prison saw value in this slave. Their hearts, like the river of waters was turned whithersoever the LORD willed. They exalted and promoted



Joseph to be a ruler in his present situation (Ps. 106:46; Is, 54:17).

The mark of Joseph's sojourn is an oft repeated theme and is tied to the phrase, "the LORD was with him." That phrase was, "He was prosperous" or "the LORD made it to prosper." This is the language of both the Living and the written Word of God (Is. 52:13; 53:10; 55:11). If the LORD is with you, you will prosper in the thing that the Lord has employed you. The reason is that He who has redeemed you cannot fail nor be discouraged. The Gospel we preach is always successful because it is the record of the unmitigated and unbridled success of the Lord's sacrifice. We do not preach an offer or a hopeful bargain that is dependent upon the affirmative vote of vile creatures. We preach the one who prospered prosperously with the Word that prospers wherever God sends it. The sheep will hear it; the elect will not be deceived. The truth is about the business of reaching, penetrating, and awakening the elect, and business is good. By covenant mercies we have been plucked from the pit and made to be prisoners of hope and success is ordained because of the accomplishment of our Savior. He is exalted and extolled and because He is with us, we will prosper. Joseph prospered even as our Lord prospered (Ps. 1:3).

And all the glory belongs to God. This is the story of the salvation of the elect (v.21). The LORD was with them. The LORD showed them mercy. The Lord gave them favor. How so? Read Ephesians 1:3-14...to the praise of His glory.

# GOD'S WORD

## Genesis 40

Please read chapter 40.

Chapter 40 is another episode in Joseph's journey to the throne in Egypt, to sit beside the king of Egypt, and save his people. It is an interesting piece of inspiration as it reveals Joseph to be God's interpretation of dreams. He is a prisoner because divine providence put a lie on the lips of his former master's wife. He must be here in the hoosegow, the LORD being with him, because, in the future, Pharaoh will have a dream and only one man in the kingdom can interpret his dream. Immediately our thoughts go to our Savoir, who alone, is worthy to open the book and reveal the contents therein. He is the Word; the scriptures speak of Him, and He is the key of knowledge (Luke 24:44-45). In this, Joseph is a type of Christ.

Before men were inspired to write this book the Lord visited men in visions and dreams. That this was God's doing and this is proved by Joseph's response to the butler and the baker. He said, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" It could be then said that the dreams of these men were the Word of God a word from God as it plays into the intricate part in Joseph's predestinated position at the right hand of power.

The butler and the baker were in prison because they had offended the Pharaoh. This word "offended" has to do with duty and obligation. It suggests that these two, in some way, were derelict in their duty. It may also be interpreted as sin, which means to miss the mark. Sin has, from the transgression of Adam, cast us into a prison where there is no escape. We have need of a ransom to pay our way out and the announcement of that ransom cannot be made by just anyone. He must have

particular abilities (Job. 33:22-24). Christ is our interpreter; he alone is one among a thousand to tell us the meaning of God's Word. Likewise, the Lord has given this interpretation into the ministers that He has called and sent (Rom. 10:13-17; Ne. 8:8; 1 Cor. 1:21).

Joseph pictures Christ in His compassion (vv. 5-7). He, a prisoner himself, observed and was touched by the fallen countenance of his fellows. Our Lord is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. In all points tempted as we. He even says that He keeps our tears in a bottle. Scripture declares that He was taken from prison, the word used for distress and judgment. While he was surrounded by the bars of sorrow and well acquainted with the confinement of grief, He came to save such. showing great compassion (Isa. 61:1-2).

Joseph, interpreting the dreams in the manner that he did, pictures the result of preaching the Gospel. The butlers dream ended in exaltation and freedom. The bakers dream ended at the business end of a noose. The interpretation of the dreams was life and death. Those dreams were, indeed, God's Word. This is always the effect of God's Word. It will give you life or seal you in your doom. It is never a matter of indifference or opinion. Being the power of God unto salvation, going where God sends it and prospering thereunto. This is the Gospel that you have implanted in your heart, and it will have its way in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. Paul was inspired to make that very clear (2 Cor. 2:14-17). The interpretation of the dreams was life and death. So it is when the truth is declared.

The end of the story is a treatise on the depravity of man. The baker has been strung up and the butler has been lifted up. Joseph has made a request of the butler when he is reinstated (vv. 14-15). The record of the butler's capacity to fulfill a request is revealed in the final verse of the chapter. His ability to keep a promise is declared in a double record. He did not remember, and he forgot. The second meaning of the word "forgot" is "to

cease to care.” Webster’s defines it as, “to treat with inattention, to disregard.” Why he forgot Joseph was probably because he was exalted and didn’t care to give any credit to Joseph, still a prisoner. Whatever his reasoning, he shows that man cannot be trusted because he is basely ungrateful and is possessed with the delusion of entitlement and keeping his promise will be of no advantage to him. Well did Isaiah describe mankind (Is. 2:22). He is not to be trusted (Mic. 7:5-6). It will take another dream, another visitation of the Word of God, entering in the bedchamber of the Pharaoh for the butler to see an advantage in remembering Joseph. Providence rolls on like a great juggernaut to bring all things to their appointed end. Even as the butler forgot, the LORD was yet with Joseph.

# THE DREAM WAS DOUBLED

## Genesis 41:1-32

1, And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.

2, And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fattleshed; and they fed in a meadow.

3, And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river.

4, And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

5, And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good.

6, And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them.

7, And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.

8, And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

9, Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:

10, Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker:

11, And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.

12, And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret.

13, And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

14, Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15, And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.

16, And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

17, And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river:

18, And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow:

19, And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness:

20, And the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine:

21, And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

22, And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good:

23, And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them:

24, And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me.

25, And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do.

26, The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one.

27, And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine.

28, This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.

29, Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt:

30, And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land;

31, And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous.

32, And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

When Hannah prayed her prayer of thanksgiving because the Lord had opened her womb and given her a son, her words depict the sovereignty of God in the matters of men (1 Sam. 2:1-10). She prayed thusly attributing her words in reference to rejoicing in her salvation. These descriptions address sudden and profound changes in what men would call circumstances but in fact are the machinations of sovereign providence. We have no concept of what tomorrow may bring or even if it will come and we cannot know if we will be lifted up or cast down. This week Deb and I have been lifted up with the news that our beloved daughter is leukemia free and that lifting came at the end of being cast down at the news that she had the disease. Both, the degrees of humbling and the degrees of rejoicing were of God and served to cause us to camp at mercy's door perhaps as never before. Though I struggled with fear and realized the profoundly negative limits of my ability to affect anything, the Lord was with me, ordering my steps. Joseph's life thus far has been one of sudden temporary exaltation and sudden and prolonged humiliation. He was the favored son and was cast into a pit and sold into slavery. He was the CEO in Potiphar's house and was suddenly cast into prison in fetters and chains. He was the interpreter of a dream and forgotten by the dreamer. Two full years have passed since he asked to be remembered and I'm sure that thoughts of dying in prison entered his mind. How far might the dream of his brethren bowing to him must have strayed from his thoughts?

The butler's forgetfulness was ordained. He will not receive credit for Joseph's deliverance. God alone must be glorified for it is He that sent the dreams into the mind of Pharaoh and brought the butler's memory to bear. The dreams troubled the mind of Pharaoh, and those who were purported to have mystical abilities, the magicians and the wise men, had not a



clue as to their meaning. Dreams are the fodder of hucksters and soothsayers, but the best in Egypt had no answer. It is clear that God gave men dreams, and they portended future events. This is how he spake to some prior to inspiring men to write down His words. I know folks who swear that their dreams have come true, and I do not doubt it. But since the written Word of God has been completed, dreams do not enter into the realm of spiritual truth (Jer. 23:28).

The Pharaoh's dreams were from God, the very God who holds the hearts of kings in His hands and as the rivers of waters, turneth them whithersoever He will. There is but one interpreter in Egypt, in fact in all the world, that can tell Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams. There is but one, in all the world, that is worthy to loose the seals and open the Book thereof...one among a thousand, the chiefest among ten thousand. Joseph's interpretation will preserve Egypt for destruction, save Israel, deliver them by the blood of the Lamb and glorify God in the salvation of his elect.

The butler remembers his time in prison and dreaming a dream and the interpreter thereof. Joseph takes center stage, and the interpreter becomes the beginning of the interpretation of another man's dream (Gen. 41:12-14). Joseph is called before Pharaoh and tells him the meaning and preserves Egypt in order to save much people alive. The prayer of our Lord comes to mend, "as thou hast given Him authority over all flesh that he would give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him."

Joseph is here a type of the preacher of the Gospel, and some points he makes reveals it. The first point that Joseph makes clear is that it is not he that has the answer. That power belongs only to God (v. 16; 1 Cor. 3:6-7; Matt. 11:27). Pharaoh had dreamed two dreams, but Joseph told him it was just one (v. 25). It was just different ways of saying the same thing. Is this not true of the Gospel message? Regardless of the text, it always comes to one thing, Jesus Christ and Him crucified (John 5:39; Eph. 4:4-6) He is the way, the truth, and the life. Moses wrote

of Him; Abraham saw His day and was glad. All the law and the prophets gave witness of Him (Acts 24:14). Then, in verse 32, Joseph declares the source of and the reason for the 2 dreams being one and the effect of it. The dream was doubled to reveal it was a thing established by God. When God doubles a thing, it is not willy-nilly, it is to establish it. How often, when setting forth a truth, did our Lord say “Verily, verily,”– amen, amen; truly, truly. Look at Galatians 1:8-9.

## SUCH A ONE AS THIS

### Genesis 41:33-41

33, Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

34, Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

35, And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

36, And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

37, And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38, And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

39, And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:

40, Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

41, And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

Joseph has impressed the Pharaoh with his ability to interpret the dreams of 7 prosperous years followed by 7 years of famine. What follows in verses 33-36 is a kind of business meeting wherein Joseph advises the Pharaoh to seek out someone with discernment and understanding (discreet and wise) to manage the days that were to come in order that Egypt would survive. When Joseph gave the advice to seek out a discreet and wise man for the task, he was not applying for the job or tooting his own horn. He was a servant, a felon in the economy of Egypt and had proven himself a faithful servant in every dire situation he had been placed. He was offering sound advice based on the experience of one who, though a prisoner, had prospered wherever he had been.

Many years ago, in my early days in the meat business one of my bosses took me aside and told me that I would be the boss one day and that I needed to know something important. He told me to never ask or tell an employee to do something that I was not ready to do myself. He told me that if I was to be a leader, I must first experience what it is to follow and to serve. That advice has informed me in my entire life since.

Henry Mahan took me aside, as a young pastor, and told me to remember when I entered that pulpit that the people I ministered to lived and worked in a world that cared not for the things of God in order that I might spend my time in studying and preaching. Comfort them with the Gospel; be a leader who understands what they go through to care for you. Joseph will be a leader in Egypt, and he will prosper because, in great part, he had learned what it is to serve. The Lord is our leader and though He is Lord over all, he is the Lord that is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and was tested in all points as we are. Though He is God incarnate, He came not to be ministered to but to minister and give His life a ransom for many. The King of Kings was the ultimate servant and even though, enthroned by the Majesty on High, lives...lives to intercede for His people. He is our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

When Pharaoh heard the advice of Joseph, he knew that there was but one man in all of Egypt that fit the bill, one man who had proved himself in Potiphar's house and as manager of the prison and especially a man who had a gift from God to interpret dreams, the gift of prophecy (v. 38). This is the first time, in scripture, that it is said that "the Spirit of God" is in a man. Pharaoh used the word "God" in the plural "gods" because the Egyptians worshipped a pantheon, but he spoke a truth he did not know. Many times in this record, it had been said of Joseph, "The Lord was with Joseph." Other translators have written these words as "The Spirit of prophecy", which attributes ability outside themselves. Speaking of Joseph, Pharaoh proclaimed, "Can we find such a one as this." This is the description of Christ in Job, "an interpreter, one in a thousand." In the Song of Solomon, He is called, "the chiefest among ten thousand." "Can we find such a one as this." Pharaoh uses Joseph's own words to describe him (v. 39)— wise and discreet. Christ is our wisdom and understanding. He is the wisdom and power of God. He is the interpreter and the interpretation of Holy Writ.

Pharaoh's proclamation in verse 40, concerning Joseph's exaltation, speaks of the glories of Christ. "Thou shalt be over my house." Christ is the Son over his own house. "According to thy word shall all my people be ruled" (Ps. 110:2; Lk. 1:33; 5:4-5; 1 Cor. 15:25). One of the meanings of the word "ruled" is "kiss" (Ps. 2:10-12). "Only in the throne will I be greater than thou" (1 Cor. 15:25-28). "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is." Read verse 40 (Ps. 2:6; 105:17-22; 1 Chron. 29:11-12).

## GO UNTO JOSEPH

### Genesis 41:42-57

42, And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43, And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

44, And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45, And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

46, And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

47, And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48, And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49, And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

50, And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

51, And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52, And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

53, And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54, And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55, And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56, And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57, And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

This is the account of Joseph's deliverance and exaltation, the preparation of Egypt for the 7 years of famine, his success in that endeavor, his marriage, his children, and the arrival of the famine in the land.

In verses 42-43 we see Joseph exalted to be second only to Pharaoh. In the last message we saw that this pictured Christ being exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high. In these verses as well as verse 55 our Lord is yet prefigured in that every knee is to bow to Joseph. There can be no doubt that this

pictures Christ (Is. 45:23; Phil. 2:10). This is the command of God Almighty and the destiny of every creature that God has made. Pray God we bow on this side of eternity, but regardless, you and I will bow. Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. In verse 55, when all the land was famished and the people cried to Pharaoh for help, his instructions were short and to the point, "Go unto Joseph; what he saith unto you, do." At the Lord's baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration the heavens open and God said of Christ, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." There is a famine in the land, a famine of the Word of God, a hunger and thirst for righteousness. What instruction shall we give? One singular and absolute pronouncement, "Go unto Christ, what he saith unto you, do." There is no other bread and no other water.

Also vv. 42-43 are a picture of the sinner saved, lifted from the miry clay, and set upon the rock, plucked from the dunghill to dwell among princes, translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His dear Son...risen, resurrected from the dungeon of captive slavery to glorious halls of royalty. In a moment, in the twinkling of the eye the elect sinner's chains and fetters, and the iron on his neck is replaced with the ring of familial relationship, the pristine robe of imputed righteousness, the gold chain, adornment for the bride, and the Lord's chariot to transport us to heavenly places in Christ. This is the stupendous display of God's grace. Grace abounding to the chief of sinners...sovereign, unstoppable grace.

In verse 45, Joseph is given a new name, a name that is a description of what he can and will do. At our Lord's birth, He was given a name that described what He could and would do (Matt. 1:21). Joseph's new name meant "the revealer of secrets" or "the man to whom secrets are revealed." We have seen that this first points to Christ are the interpreter, one in a thousand who alone, reveals the Gospel to whom He will. He is the key of knowledge. But this also reveals the believer, to whom God's secrets are revealed (Deut. 29:29; Matt. 13:11). Though Pharaoh



knew not God, he did know that this gift that belonged to Joseph came from a power far beyond the capabilities of humanity. Joseph also took a gentile to wife. At this time in Israel's history there was no prohibition of marriage outside the tribes of Israel. Here also he pictures the lineage of Christ. That lineage contains gentile women (Tamar, Ruth, Rahab, and Bathsheba-Matt. 1:1-6). Paul, said of the bride of Christ at Ephesus, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

Verses 46-49 are the declaration of the fulfillment of Joseph's interpretation and solution of the first part of Pharaoh's dream. He did his job well living up to the accolades of discreet and wise.

Joseph's wife bore him two sons. These sons will play prominent roles in the Holy Scriptures in days to come. The first was named Manasseh. His name means "forgetting." Joseph gave his firstborn this name because God had made Joseph to forget all his previous sorrows. The second born was named Ephraim, which means "fruitful" because God had made Joseph fruitful in the land of his affliction. These two names picture the life of the blood bought sinner. What they lost in Adam, they fully regained and much more in Christ. They can forget their past and become fruitful as they are attached to the true vine (John 15:1-5, 16). It is their testimony (Phil. 3:13-14).

Finally, the promised famine comes, and the bread is found in only one place in the hands of one man (v 55). Israel is beginning to starve, and they must "Go unto Joseph; what he saith unto you, do" (John 2:5).

## FAMINE'S RESULT

### Genesis 42:1-2

1, Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?

2, And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

In the Word of God, there is the record of numerous and varied famines, and they always have a specific result— people get hungry, and they do whatever is necessary to feed their famished bellies. This is the universal response to famine. An illustration of this fact is seen in Amos 8:11-12. This is a prophecy of a time to come when there will be a famine for the hearing of the word of God. Such famines have dotted the timeline of world history and are the expressed intent of global politics in the world of today. People, at large, do not value the word of God and they will not value what does not change until it is no longer available. When that day comes, so will the prophecy of verse 11. The greatest revivals have occurred during the greatest persecutions. A thing will increase in value when it is suddenly removed and the memory of it comes into the mind. It is the basic human trait, a hunger for something that cannot be found. Its absence creates a need and need does not go away. True need is for the staples, the things that are necessary for survival, for preservation, for life itself. The mark of every wounded, sick and sorrowful soul that came to Christ is that they did so out of great need, great need that could only be met by one man, the Lord Jesus, the Christ of God. The mark of such need is that its source is God (Is. 3:1). For those He intends to save, to deliver,

He creates a hunger, a thirst, a great need, and the answer to that need is entirely by His supply.

The LORD created this famine; foretold it's coming in a doubled dream to Pharaoh that could only be interpreted by His chosen interpreter. The Lord has sent the famine; His interpreter has laid up store to remedy the situation. The plenty in the land of Egypt would serve to benefit many surrounding nations but it was designed for the salvation of one family that God will make into a great nation in this very land. The world benefits from the plenty that God provides for His elect (Sun and rain). The continuing existence of the world is due only to the fact that there are, in the world, those whom God has yet to reveal their salvation to them. This famine was created so that Jacob and his family would come to the feet of Joseph to be fed and delivered. There is no one else, anywhere in the world that can meet the need. Likewise, if you are having a famine in your soul, there is but One in all the world that can meet that hunger and thirst for righteousness. Many preachers tell everybody that they need Christ. If that were true, everybody would come to Christ. Great need always seeks a remedy and will not cease to seek until the remedy is found or death ensues. To this there is no exception. When famine struck the land of Canaan, when food consumed the minds of Jacob and his family, only one thing matters...they must eat or they will die (v. 2).

Verse 1 says that Jacob "saw" but he had not been to Egypt, had not beheld the innumerable store of grain. Verse 2 clarifies how Jacob "saw." He heard and having heard, he believed and believing, he saw. This is how faith operates. It comes upon hearing, the hearer believes and believing, he sees (Romans 10; 13-17; John 6:68-69; 2 Cor. 4:18; 1 Peter 1:8-9; Eph. 1:13). He heard (1 Kings 20:31; Ruth 1:6-7). When he heard where the corn was, he sent his sons to get the corn and, in the end, would go there himself. If God sends the famine to you, you will seek any and every measure to preserve your soul. You will come to Christ believing that He is and that He is the rewarder of them

who diligently seek him. The preacher of the Gospel makes no pleas to emotion or sentiment. He knows that he cannot create hunger or thirst, but what he can do is tell folks where the corn is, knowing that if the Lord had created the famine, the elect will come for the corn. The table is set with wine on the lees and well refined. It is a feast of fat things, if you are hungry, come and dine (John 7:37-38). Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream; all the fitness he requireth is to feel your need of Him.

## ALL OR NOTHING

### Genesis 42:3-20

3, And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

4, But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.

5, And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6, And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.

7, And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8, And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

9, And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

10, And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.

11, We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.

12, And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

13, And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.

14, And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies:

15, Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.

16, Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.

17, And he put them all together into ward three days.

18, And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:

19, If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:

20, But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

This book is an amazing account of the history of the world. It records that there is nothing new under the sun— what has been is now, and what shall be has already been. It is no wonder that those whose interests fall into the realm of eschatology and major on apocalyptic thinking can find what they call biblical support for their interpretation of current events. They may be totally unaware of the fact that the theme of this book is spiritual, that historically recorded events, in some way, point to, picture, and reveal Christ and Him crucified, yet they can find natural application to support their carnal theology. If one fails to read this book with an eye on Christ and His work, he will

miss the meaning of the book altogether. One thing helpful in reading the Bible is to read it for yourself, seeking to imagine yourself to be where and when the story takes place and among those who are represented in the story. This is that story of men being brought to Christ. No type in the Old Testament is an exact representation of the truth it typifies but is a revelation of Christ shrouded in mystery and it is the believer's delight to look for and see his Savior. There is much of Christ and His people in this text.

First, we'll consider Joseph's brothers. Their journey, unbeknownst to them, is the fulfillment of Joseph's first dream but not completely (v. 9; 37:5-8). Only ten of the brethren come. Benjamin is left behind because as far as Jacob knew, Benjamin was all he had left of his first love, Rachel. But these ten sheaves do bow down to the sheave that has been lifted up. They had no idea who they were bowing to, obeisance was not their purpose in coming. They came to Egypt for three reasons, things they knew and believed. They knew they were hungry. They knew they had no food, and they knew that there was food in Egypt. I cannot remember when I began to hunger and thirst. I can remember that something was going on inside my heart and soul that longed for something that the world, religion, and systematic theology did not fill. I did not find it; it found me. The Gospel found me, and my hunger and thirst was assuaged. The brethren did not know that they stood and bowed before their savior. They did not know that He was their brother. What they did know was that they were hungry, and this man was their last and only hope. Providence brought these men to Joseph. They knew of Joseph, his history, what they thought was his demise, that they had sinned against him, and it was the cause of their troubles (vv. 22-23). They did not know that their sin was, in fact, the reason for his exaltation (2 Cor. 5:21).

But Joseph knew them. He knew his brethren and knew He was where He was because He was to save them (Heb. 2:14). Christ came into this world to save his sheep, His brethren. He

was hated without a cause, despised, rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was imprisoned, humiliated, bore our sins in his body, rose, was exalted, and saved his people (Rom. 4:25). He knew his brethren even though they did not know Him. He knows His sheep.

It is recorded that Joseph spoke harshly with His brethren, accused them of being spies and used the fact that they left one of their brothers behind as proof of it (vv. 13-17). There are two reasons for this. The first is that they must come clean about their guilt. The Gospel is only good news for sinners. Joseph knew what these men had done and what they were capable of, and they must be reminded of it. The Gospel is good news because it continually is a rehearsal of the reason why Christ came. He came to save us from our sin. Directly related and proportional to our appreciation and enjoyment of salvation is the persuasion of the extent of our sin. The Gospel cannot be preached, nor can it be appreciated without addressing our sin (Rev. 5:9-10).

The second is the truth of particular redemption, the successful accomplishment of the salvation of all the Israel of God. Benjamin must come and so must Jacob. The harsh language rendered was about arraigning circumstances so that Benjamin will be brought to Joseph (v. 20), All for whom Christ was crucified must be brought to Christ. No brother can be left behind. None shall be lost (John 6:37-39; 10:15-18, 25-30; Heb. 2:10-13). In the matter of the salvation of the elect, it is all or nothing.



# THE STING OF CONSCIENCE

## Genesis 42:21-28

21, And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

22, And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.

23, And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

24, And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

25, Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.

26, And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.

27, And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth.

28, And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?

Memory is a fine thing. Our brain seems to have the make-up that puts most bad memories in a box hiding them away to have us dwell on the pleasant ones. But on occasion we are made to rehearse our errors, failures and frailty and our conscience rears its ugly head for a time and the sting is painfully felt. Such is the case here as Joseph, being the sovereign, in this report, manipulates the events to bring his brethren to recall what they had done to him. He did this by imprisoning them for a time, which caused them to recall the vile way they had treated him. The pit of the prison reminded them of the pit into which they had cast Joseph. What Joseph did to them and for them causes their conscience to engage their minds and stir their memories. Little is recorded about the brother's minds for the past two decades, but I have often wondered what they thought as day by day they saw the continual, obvious grief of their father at the loss of Joseph. To that there can be but speculation, but here in this text the memory rolls in like a mighty torrent.

We know that the only thing that will quiet the conscience is the knowledge that a perfect sacrifice has been offered and accepted by God to the end that the conscience has no grounds upon which it may accuse. For the brethren, their conscience is in full force.

In verse 21 we see the brother's conscience engage their memory, but we also see that their thinking is skewed. They are afflicted with the "works for reward" mentality, which looks at the present circumstance and assumes it is a reward or punishment for something they did in the past. It is the false notion of "karma" or "what goes around, comes around." Many a fine and noble person have suffered an ignominious demise and many a vile human being have died in peace as David said, "having no bonds in their death." The natural thinking, born of natural religion, runs along this line; if something good happens to me, it must be the result of me having done something good and being rewarded. Likewise, if something bad happens to me it must be punishment for some bad act on my part. This is the

religion of works and is the mindset of carnal humanity. It is clearly revealed in the words of these brothers.

Ruben's response is also a product of natural religious thinking, he is saying that if the brother's had listened to him, none of these troubles would have visited them (v.22). He is also employing the Adamic excuse ploy, blaming the troubles on the other brothers and excusing himself. This is religion in spades, blaming sin on whisky and wild women and every societal evil, effectively removing it from the guilty party.

Joseph was speaking to them through an interpreter so they would not know that he understood what they were saying...but he did understand (v. 23). What he heard brought him to tears and he turned away from them to hide his sorrow. Though their words were full of personal error, they were heard in grace and mercy. To him they were words that the brethren were confessing their guilt for their ill treatment of him. How often have we confessed because we were in a fix and the Lord heard us in grace because of Christ? Perhaps we, like the Prodigal son even rehearsed our confession, tweaking it to somehow move our Lord to be mollified for us, and when we arrived, we were hushed with a multitude of kisses.

Joseph's heart was revealed toward his brethren. He will have Benjamin and Jacob, so he binds Simeon until his brethren return with them. He is in control of the outcome. We are not privy to the workings of providence, but the Lord is in control of all the events to bring in every last one of the elect (Is. 43:3-4).

Joseph graciously fills their sacks with food for their journey and slips the money in their sacks for them to find later. This is grace abounding to the chief of sinners, handfuls on purpose, pressed down and running over. What grace gives, you do not pay for (Is. 55:1-3). But something for nothing does not wash with us human beings. Our thinking is there must be some strings attached (vv. 26-28). Grace is a spiritual principle that cannot be carnally understood. To the carnal mind grace is suspicious and so when the money was discovered, their hearts

failed them, and they were afraid. They did not praise God for his goodness but believed that God had done something to them that would bring them harm, “What is this that God hat done unto us.” This, too, is the sting of conscience. May God show us mercy to believe that where sin has abounded, grace did much more abound.

## SURETY FOR BENJAMIN

### Genesis 42:29-43:14

Gen. 42:29, And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying,

30, The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.

31, And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies:

32, We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

33, And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone:

34, And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.

35, And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

36, And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

37, And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.

38, And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Gen. 43:1, And the famine was sore in the land.

2, And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.

3, And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.

4, If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:

5, But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.

6, And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

7, And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?

8, And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.

9, I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:

10, For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.

11, And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds:

12, And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight:

13, Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man:

14, And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

This is the record of the dialogue between Jacob and his sons upon their return from Egypt with ample corn in their sacks, the money had taken to buy the corn and the demand from the hard man in Egypt to return with their younger brother of Simeon would not be released from prison. Jacob was not going to go along with this plan, his reason being that Joseph was not (believing him to be dead), Simeon was incarcerated and there was no way he was giving up Benjamin. He was the only son left that was born of his true love, Rachel. He maintained his intractable position until the corn ran out. It is easy to be strong and stalwart when there is bread on the table, but when the belly is empty, and the need is great, strong positions can suddenly be debatable and inflexibility can turn to malleability. Great need will turn the mighty into a beggar. In the end, Jacob finally

relents and agrees to send his children with Benjamin and hopes to regain Simeon and feed his family.

Three things stood out to me as I read this report:

First, is Reuben's effort to assuage Jacob's fears concerning sending Benjamin back with them and the recovery of Simeon (42:37). It is hard to wrap one's mind around this statement. What kind of offer was this? Was it hyperbole? I read several commentaries that gave numerous explanations of Reuben's declaration. Some say that he was sincere and was willing to sacrifice two of his four sons to assure Jacob that he would bring back Benjamin. Others say that he was counting on Jacob's love for his grandsons believing that such an offer would assure Jacob that he would succeed in his effort. Jacob's prophecy concerning Reuben in Genesis 49 is that he is as unstable as water and will not excel. I believe that prophecy explains this bold and strange statement. Water always takes the shape of the container it inhabits. Reuben's reactive words are what he feels fits the situation. Another property of water is that it always takes the path of least resistance. Reuben's statement, he felt, was the easiest path to win Jacob's approval and create confidence in his commitment to the task. Another aspect is that it always seeks the lowest place. Considering the statement, I think this property of water definitely plays into his audacious words. His words are suspect in that he offered the lives of his sons and not his own life, which would have been a more reasonable and believable offer. Jacob did not buy it (42:38). He refused, though at this time, there was still food on the table and corn in the sacks. The effects of the famine were stayed temporarily but its devastation would soon visit again (43:1).

The second thing takes place after the famine had emptied the cupboards. Judah again argues to go back to Egypt with Benjamin. Jacob, not quite ready to relent, blames Judah for telling the man in Egypt that he had another brother. After Judah explains the man had asked if his father was alive and if he had another brother and he answered him straightly, never



thinking that the man would require Benjamin to be brought down (43; 6-7). Judah explains that if he does not return with Benjamin, the family will die. Then Judah does what the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the only High Priest from the tribe of Judah did in eternity past. "I will be surety for him, of my hand shalt thou require him, if I bring him not unto thee and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever." It is as if we have our ear to eternity's door and hear the Savior guarantee the salvation of every one of the elect. Christ is the surety of a better covenant, ratified by the blood of the everlasting covenant. As surety, He assumed the debt owed by His people and they were never responsible to pay it. If He failed, if He did not bring his elect and set them before the Father, the blame would be His forever, but God be praised, He cannot fail. Hear Him proclaim, "All that the father giveth me shall come to me, of them I have lost nothing...Behold, I and the children God hath given me." "I will be surety."

The third thing is realization. Providence had created the hunger. Providence had softened the will. Jacob relents and does what the elect do when faced with the fact that what is to transpire is entirely outside their ability to control. They fall on God (43:13-14). "I can do nothing. If I am to grieve, then so be it. I pray Almighty God will do what I cannot do and return my sons to me. It is the LORD, let Him do what seemeth good in His sight."

The best place for a child of God is at the end of his rope.

# BRING THEM HOME

## Genesis 43:15-34

15, And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

16, And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon.

17, And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

18, And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.

19, And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house,

20, And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food:

21, And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

22, And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

23, And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your

sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

24, And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

25, And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26, And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.

27, And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?

28, And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

29, And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

30, And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.

31, And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

32, And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

33, And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.

34, And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

This is the record of God's providence continuing to bring to pass the fulfillment of the prophetic dream that He gave to Abraham in Genesis 15. If one is given grace to meditate on the providence of God, he will soon find himself in awe as he catches a glimpse of the intricacies of God's workings. These can only be seen in hindsight because God does not give account of His matters. We can but look at what has taken place and with confidence and peace declare that the Lord has done it (Ps. 118:23; Is. 44:23). From the cleft of the rock, we can see His hinder parts, but we cannot see his face. As the record is revealed in His Word, an account of recorded events, we can see the motivations and manipulation of men and events that have taken place and get a hint of the machinations of divine providence. It is one of the reasons that I love preaching from the Old Testament. These amazing books, these amazing records reveal how that God rules and reigns in the affairs of men for the singular purpose of revealing the glory of His Son, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Being a record, it is a thing that has been done and cannot be undone. The record stands and it is our privilege to glean the hand of God controlling this thing we call history.

Before us, in this passage, is the account of Joseph's brethren returning to Egypt with double the money, the money that Joseph had put back in the sack and an equal amount along with it to purchase more food. They also brought the present that Jacob had ordered, fruit and spices to give to the hard man in Egypt. When they arrived, Joseph told his steward to bring them into his house and prepare a feast. The brethren knew

nothing of this and were afraid that the hard man in Egypt was up to no good. They once again pleaded their case that they were not spies or thieves. The steward assuaged their fears, and they came into the house. When Joseph saw Benjamin for the first time in 22 years he was overcome to the point of weeping. After he cleaned up, they shared a sumptuous feast where Benjamin received 5 times the amount of food. This was a common practice in Egypt. For an honored guest, members of the party would often take food from their own plates and give it to the honored guest. Joseph asked them of the welfare of their father, and they ate, drank, and made merry.

There are several things here worthy of notice. One thing is revealed in how Joseph seated his brethren at the feast. He seated them in their birth order, Reuben being the firstborn was seated in the prominent place and the rest according to when they were born. This was the revelation that Joseph knew more about these men than he ought to. It was a hint and though the brethren may not have picked up on it, it is recorded that they wondered at it (v. 33). Here Reuben, though in no other way, pictures Christ as the firstborn, the only begotten Son of God having preeminence (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:23).

Another thing is the repeat of the prophecy of Joseph's dream fulfilled. Once again, the brethren bow down to Joseph (v. 26). We know of a surety this is a picture of not only Christ's brethren but the future posture of all mankind (Is. 45:23; Phil. 2-11). The Lord has spoken. "I have purposed it; I will also do it."

Another thing is the steward response to the brethren to quell their fears (v. 23). Whether this steward was an Egyptian or a member of Joseph's household family is not revealed. What is revealed is that this steward had been taught of the God of Israel. That information could have come from but one source, Joseph. It is God who has given you treasures. This is also revealed in Joseph's words to Benjamin, "God be gracious unto thee my son" (v. 29).

Finally, we see the elect, the church and the Gospel. The record is that Joseph saw Benjamin (Ps. 34:15). How often do we see the Lord looking for and seeing His own in the midst of the multitudes? The record also declares that this view had two results. The word says, "when" he saw Benjamin, it caused him to act. He said, "Bring these men home." What sweeter words can be spoken and are true of every child of God. They are brought home, to the Lord's house, to his holy temple, the church, the body of Christ, the high and holy habitation of God. And Joseph said "slay." Killed the fatted calf and prepare the feast, today we dine on wine on the lees, well refined and the feast of fat things. When Christ sees his brethren, He takes them home, to His house, and prepares a place for them at his table and feeds them on butter and honey, the bread and water of life, the Gospel, the Word of God.

## CONFESSION

### Genesis 44

Please read chapter 44.

One may view this record and wonder at the actions of Joseph in what amounted to a set up. It is obvious, plainly declared that the entire episode was orchestrated by Joseph. We have the privilege of the end of the story, and we can see that this was a plan to get Jacob to come to Egypt. But this episode did not eventuate in Jacob's journey to that kingdom. He came because Joseph finally revealed himself to his brethren, as we will see in the next chapter. Clearly, this set up of Benjamin was Joseph's intention in getting Jacob down to Egypt but since it did not actually accomplish that, the question must be asked, why is this so accurately described in Holy Writ. The answer is always the same as we read and study the Old Testament. The answer is found in the fact that the Old Testament scriptures speak of and are about Christ. And if they are about Christ, they are about the sinners He saved by His sacrifice. Our Lord said that they testified of Him and when He said that, the Gospel and the epistles were yet to be written many years in the future. Our Lord said Genesis to Malachi testified of Him (Lk. 24:26-27, 44-45; John 5:39; Acts 10:43; 24:14). This story is about the savior, the sinner, and the means employed to bring his beloved to find themselves utterly at His disposal.

Time and time again we find sinners finally brought to the end of themselves, to the place where all hope is suddenly and truly ripped for their grasp. This is where we find Joseph's brethren in this passage. Joseph's actions are a picture of our Lord's manipulation of events to bring a thing to its appointed. We know what the end is by observing what has taken place.

The placement of the cup in Benjamin's sack and the plan to accuse him of theft resulting in perpetual servitude brought about the brethren's confession of sin to the point that Judah was willing to take the punishment that was due Benjamin. One can only marvel of the employment of the sovereign will over its dependent subjects.

The first thing we see is the confession of sin. Like David before Nathan, Simon upon the cock crowing three times, Mephibosheth before David or the prodigal desiring the husks that the pigs ate; the sinner is brought to the end of himself. Their confession is found in the three-fold statement in verse 16. The confession is not only are they found out, but it is God who has found them out. That being the case, there can be no argument, not evidential hearing, no defense, "What shall we say, what shall we speak, how shall we clear ourselves." The result is to fall on their faces and say, "we are your servants." This is saying, "We are guilty, and you are clear to judge us, as you will" (Ps. 51:4). Before, this they had admitted their wrongdoing to themselves (42:21). Now they confess before their sovereign. Also, in their immediate denial of guilt when previously confronted, their bold and hyperbolic and audacious language revealed that they had some understanding of the penalty due sin (v. 9). Though this was part of their denial of guilt it was a declaration of the fact that sin is worthy of death.

On a side note, much is made of this cup and divination by some commentators. Joseph's steward said the cup was used in divination but there is no evidence of Joseph ever using it for that. Its value was that it was silver. When Joseph spoke of divining, the word used means "observant" and Joseph was saying that the evidence obviously proved their guilt. This probably had to do with Joseph's Egyptian name which meant, "the revealer of secrets."

Also in verse 17, though the entire scenario was a purposed ruse, Joseph's words tell a Gospel truth that speak to the efficacy of Christ work. The guilty must be punished and the innocent



must go free and in peace. The Lord said He would, in no wise clear the guilty, and no one would stand before Him guilty. The sacrifice of Christ was so effectual that those for whom the sacrifice was made have no guilt before God; their sins are gone and remembered no more...no charge can be laid against them and no sin will ever be imputed to them...the verdict for everyone for whom Christ died is “not guilty.” Go in peace to your father.

Finally, we see substitution. Judah offers himself to Joseph in the room and stead of Benjamin. Why (vv. 32-34). He is surety for Benjamin and the glory of the father is tied up in the life of His Son (vv. 30-31). If one for who Christ was surety shall not be brought to the Father in heaven, then God would be made a liar and would cease to be God (Is. 43:5-7; 45:22-25).

# JUDAH'S SURETY

## Genesis 45

Please read chapter 45.

In a previous lesson we looked at Judah being surety for Benjamin. We know that points to and pictures the suretyship of Christ addressed in Hebrews 7:22 where our Lord is said to be the surety of a better covenant. Before we look at Genesis 45, I want us to spend a bit more time on the biblical aspect of suretyship.

A surety takes full responsibility for another person or that person's debt. When surety is assumed, from the moment of that agreement, guarantee is made. Only the surety is considered responsible for the payment of the debt. That one is no longer, in any way, responsible for the payment of the debt. Surety is described in scripture as striking hands (Pro. 17:18). This is seen in the Judah's suretyship for the return of Benjamin. If Christ does not bring his elect to glory, he alone bears the blame.

In Genesis 43, we find the declaration of promise (guarantee). Judah declared that he would be surety for Benjamin and that Jacob must require Judah to produce him. He also declared that the entire blame would be upon him if he did not produce. This is the heart of what it is to be a surety... full responsibility and only the surety can bear blame for failure.

In Genesis 44, we see another aspect of what it is to fulfill surety engagements. Read vv. 30-34. In this we see that the honor of the Father is tied up in the life of the one for whom Judah is a surety. If Judah does not return with the beloved son, the Father will be brought down. For God to be glorified, for His name to be honored, those for whom Christ became surety must all be brought home.

Finally, this matter of surety is singular and personally accomplished. A surety can offer none but himself. This is seen in the refusal of Jacob to allow Ruben to be a surety for the lad. Ruben's effort at surety did not meet the requirements (42:7). A surety may not offer the payment of another. He must act alone and voluntarily. Christ is the surety of a better covenant.

Most of what is written in the Bible about suretyship is found in the book of Proverbs. The words are the words of Solomon. He was given wisdom, great wisdom, and his words are of great import. An idea or principle that stands the test of time, is said to be proverbial and worthy to follow as a principle. Solomon, in reference to financial transactions between men, warns against becoming a surety.

The first thing he declares is that surety agreements are binding and cannot be undone (Prov. 6:1-2). He calls it a snare and refers to it as being taken. Note that he holds the practice is to be avoided among friends. Secondly, he declares that a man who becomes surety is void of understanding (Prov. 17:8). Thirdly, he states that if a person becomes a surety that it will prove a painful experience, and a wise man would be wiser still if he despised the idea of surety altogether (Prov. 11:5). As further warning against becoming a surety, those who know the guarantor are to take his coat just in case that is all he has left (Prov. 20:16; 27:13). The general principle set forth is that it is unwise to become a surety (Prov. 22:26).

Hebrews 7 glorifies Christ as the surety of a better covenant. Solomon's warnings hardly seem to apply them to the suretyship of The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the only priest ever to spring from the tribe of Judah. But we know that the scriptures, all of them, testify of Christ. In Solomon's warnings we find that what is a warning to men concerning surety, is a wondrous description of the sufferings of our substitute as He undertook the execution of the responsibility of being surety of the better covenant.

When our Lord assumed the debt of His elect before the world began, He bound Himself to the task by the word of His

mouth. His promise bound Him because He is not a man that He should lie. His glory is bound in the perfect execution of His surety engagements. His Honor is singularly there. He is our Surety and thus he is “snared and taken with the words of His mouth” (Prov. 6:2).

Upon executing His suretyship, He suffered at the hands of men and the hands of God. His physical pain was great but His spiritual suffering was unimaginable (Is. 53:0-12). He made His soul and offering for sin. just as Solomon promised, Suretyship is painful (Prov. 11:5). In those three hours of darkness and His voluntary death (payment of surety), the Lord fulfilled His guarantee, ratified the covenant, and redeemed His elect, and He smarted for it. The spiritual pain of being made to be sin and being forsaken by the Father in the moment of His greatest triumph cannot be measured.

When our Lord executed His suretyship His garment of flesh was taken, better yet He gave up Himself for the salvation of our souls. He left nothing behind...He took nothing with Him. He, by himself, alone, naked and betrayed put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself. That garment also speaks to the glory of Him being our righteousness. With His holy garment on, we are as holy as God's dear Son.

# REVELATION

## Genesis 45:1-8

1, Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2, And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3, And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4, And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5, Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6, For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

7, And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8, So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Rolf Barnard said that one of the statements that got him in trouble with religion was that salvation was by revelation. And

this is, according to scripture, the absolute truth. Because man, as he is born into this world, possesses neither ability, inclination nor affinity toward the things of God, his only hope is that Christ would be revealed to him. Being a natural man, he cannot receive the things of the spirit and can only mind the things of the flesh, spiritual things being foolishness to him. His carnal mind is enmity against God. God is not in all his thoughts. John the Baptist was sent to bear testimony that there was light, and this is only needed where men are blind. There is no positive description of any son of Adam in the entire word of God, not one. Men and women will not come to Christ willingly unless they are made willing in the day of the Lord's power. Man must know God, even Jesus Christ whom God has sent because this is eternal life. For this to take place, Christ must be revealed to him; otherwise, he cannot know and will not be saved (Matt. 11:25-27). The way this occurs is singularly through the preaching of the Gospel (Rom. 10:13-17; 1 Cor. 1:21). It is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Worthy Lamb as it had been slain, that, alone, is worthy to open the Book and loose the seals thereof. Salvation is by revelation.

Before us is the lovely record of Joseph revealing himself to his brethren. The revelation is attended with terror and with joy and the declaration of the work of the sovereign God. This is the good tidings of good thing, the publishing of peace, the proclamation of salvation that says to Zion, "thy God reigneth." This passage is Gospel full, pressed down and running over.

In verse 1 and 2 we see the manner of this revelation. First it cannot be kept from happening. It must take place. Joseph could not refrain himself from making himself known to his brethren. Christ must reveal himself to his elect because He shall save His people from their sin. He must needs go to Samaria. He has other sheep that He must bring. All that the Father has given him will come to Him. All that are taught of the father will come to Christ. Salvation is not a crapshoot on the feckless will of carnal humanity. Salvation cannot be restrained. Secondly,

the revelation of salvation is for the elect. Joseph cleared the room save for those to whom he would reveal himself. Salvation is one on one, a personal confrontation with the savior. It is always the sinner and the Savior. Joseph sent everyone away while he made himself known to his brothers. In verse 2 it says he gave forth his voice in weeping and it was heard by all. There is no doubt that these were tears of joy for what he was about to do. It was loud and highly audible; I suppose it is like the joy expressed in heaven over "one sinner that repenteth." Joseph was about to give his brethren some really good news.

In verse 3 the Word records the revelation. His revelation was twofold. It was first a revelation of himself and secondly a revelation of his relation with his father (John 10:27-30; 17:6). One can only imagine what went through the brother's minds when they heard these words. Their response was silent terror. They could not speak, and their soul trembled within them. Their reaction was much like the demoniac of Gadara (Luke 8:28) or that of Simon Peter after the Lord filled his nets with fishes after he had quit the ministry, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." What might have been in the mind of those thousands that were saved at Pentecost when Peter declared, "This same Jesus whom ye crucified, god hath made both Lord and Christ"

Seeing their reticence, he tells them to come near to him and gives the reason why (vv. 4-8). First is the declaration of love. "I am Joseph, your brother." You are my family. You sold me into Egypt but it was all according to purpose. When you sold me, unbeknownst to you, it was to preserve your life. Oh, how my sinful soul cried in the courtyard, "Crucify Him," and oh how my sins put Him on that cross! Unbeknownst to me, all that was done to save my soul, the preserve me. Don't grieve over it, rejoice in it (Is. 44:23). The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's table are a joyous commemoration of his death. God sent me; God sent me (v. 7; John 6:38). How often did our Lord declare this! He is the sent one.

In verse 8, God's sovereignty is proclaimed. "It was not you that sent me here." You were but an instrument in the hands of the Almighty. God made me prosper and made me ruler for your good and His glory to preserve you a posterity in the earth and save your lives by great deliverance (Ps. 118:21-25; 2 Tim. 1:9).



# COME UNTO ME

## Genesis 45:9-28

9, Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

10, And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11, And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

12, And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13, And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14, And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15, Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

16, And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

17, And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;

18, And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.

19, Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20, Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.

21, And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

22, To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.

23, And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24, So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

25, And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,

26, And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27, And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived:

28, And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

This is the record of the final and full revelation of the purpose of God in the salvation of his elect nation and a picture of Christ revealing Himself to His elect. The children of God are referred to in Galatians as “heirs according to promise.” In this passage we see the promises that attend the Gospel, the promises that are Yea and they are Amen, in Christ. As I read these words, my mind immediately saw the Lord as He spoke to His beloved and promised them all the benefits that attend knowing Him. These things mirrored the words of our Lord in Matthew 11:28. There is, in Canaan 12 impoverished tribes, and the father of them all. They must be made to come to Egypt because that is where the food and the riches rest entirely in the hands of Joseph, the one whom the Lord sent before, the forerunner, to save his family. The language that Joseph employed, the action he took, the promises he made are as if the Lord Himself was speaking to those He came to save.

Twice, Joseph said come unto me. Though they will venture to a new world, they will be there because of him. He said make haste and tarry not. These words reflect the fact there their need was great and death, as it were, was at the door. The urgency that attends the Gospel speaks only to those who are hungry and thirsty and overcome with languishing need. The kingdom of the Lord suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. Also, and primarily, Joseph’s words are born of great love that causes him to speak of haste. Love requires immediate relief of the loved ones. This love is expressed in tears and kissing. He smothered his brethren with tears and kissing. This is commonly understood (soldiers returning). When Our Lord stood outside the tomb of Lazarus and wept, this was the response of the gathered crowd (John 11:35-36).

Joseph made promises to his brethren. The first was a promise of where they would dwell. They would dwell in Goshen. That word means “near’, which is illuminated by Joseph’s own words, “thou shalt be near unto me.” The poet said,

“Nearer to God, nearer I cannot be;

for in the person of His Son,

I am as near as He.”

The Lord said, “Lo I am with you always.” The Word declare declares, “Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto thee” He is in the midst of His people (Zep. 3:14-17). Our Lord said, “I will never leave thee or forsake thee.” “Thou shalt be near unto me.”

Secondly, Joseph promised to *nourish* them. This not only means to “provide” for. The word means to “contain, sustain, maintain, support and provide.” The Lord has promised bread and water that will cause his people never to hunger or thirst. Christ is the heavenly Manna, and He is the water of life. His Gospel is the feast of fat things, wine on the lees and well refined (Phil. 4:19). Note that Joseph, alone, takes responsibility for their care (V. 11). They are not to concern themselves for the attainment of these benefits. As they are near to him, they will be nourished (Matt. 6:25-34).

The assurance that the promise will be fulfilled is the word of Joseph. He is bound by his words (V. 12b), “it is my mouth that has spoken it.” The gravity of this statement is that it is spoken with authority to back it up (v. 8). Our Lord speaks and it is the force of intrinsic authority (Matt. 28:19-20; John 17:1-3; John 6:63, 8). Christ is Lord over all, and His words are truth. The Father said, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.”

Note the word of encouragement. “Regard not your stuff for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.” Your stuff has not sustained you, fed you, saved you. Leave it be. Let it go. That which is exceeding above what you could think or ask is yours as you come near to Christ. Regard not your stuff. Is this not Paul’s language to the Philippians (Phil. 3:13-14; 1 Cor. 3:21-23). Even your raiment is supplied (v. 22). Is this not that pristine

robe of Christ's righteousness, the garment of salvation (Is. 61:10; Ezek. 16:8-14).

But because we are sinners and our faith is often frail, we are fraught with unbelief (vv. 25-26). We may receive a rebuke, "oh ye of little faith." But sometimes the Lord takes pity on us and lets us look at the evidence with our eyes. We walk by faith and not by sight but sometimes the Lord shows us (v. 27-28). When he saw the wagons he said, "It is enough." If we believe not, He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself. (Luke 24:36-39). Read Ps. 103:10-14)

## A CONTINUAL REMINDER

### Genesis 46:1-2

1, And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

2, And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

The journey to the place of great deliverance has begun. As in every story of redemption, certain elements always occur. The beginning is good, the middle is slavery and sorrow, and the end is redemption by blood. As it was in the Garden of Eden, so it is, to some degree, in every instance of a sinner being saved. Jacob and his entire family, the twelve tribes of Israel, begin the journey that is recorded in the first 6 books of the Bible that will end in possession of the Promised Land. The journey begins with wagons fully loaded and hope and sustenance on the horizon.

The journey first stops in Beersheba, a place the family often used for worship (V. 1). There they offered sacrifices unto God. The sacrifices were like those that would later be designated as peace offerings. They were blood offerings of thanksgiving and praise for the peace that God had established between enemies and the good news that the one who would save much people was alive and reigning. The imagination does not require stretching to see this is a picture of that singular sacrifice offered by every believer for the things that God has freely given him (Heb. 13:15). The sacrifices are made to the God of Isaac. It is in Isaac that the seed of Abraham is called. The seed of Abraham is a scriptural designation of those chosen to salvation, heirs according to promise and, as believers, children of

Abraham. These are those that Christ came to save (Heb. 2:14-17).

In verse 2 after the sacrifice has been offered, God speaks to Jacob and His manner of speaking is a continual truth throughout the Word of God. First, God speaks to those who are represented in that sacrifice. One man said, God will not speak to or be spoken to except through a mediator, the one mediator between man and God, the man Jesus Christ. As Abel approached God with blood, so does every believer as he speaks to and worships God. The sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise are “by” Jesus Christ. He offered the perfect sacrifice, Himself, finished salvation, and we pray, preach, ask and worship in His name. Because of His sacrifice, the believer has free access into the veil, the very presence of God; free access into the grace wherein he stands.

The Word records that God spoke to Israel. This is the new name that God gave to him in chapter 32, when Jabbok became Penuel, after the wrestling match that put his hip out of joint and forever changed his walk, that night that he learned that his supplanting schemes had come to nothing and that God rules in this old world. The Word says that God spoke to Israel, his elect, his saint, His child. But when God spoke to Israel, he addressed Him and said Jacob, Jacob. The Lord addressed his saint but addressed him in a manner that would remind him of the pit from which he was plucked. God doubles the name as he did with six others in scripture (Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Martha, Simon, Saul). This is recorded for us so that we will remember and be continually reminded that we are sinners saved by grace. Often in the Old Testament, the Lord called upon His people to remember that they were once slaves in Egypt, but they had been delivered by His great power through the blood of the Lamb. Jacob, Jacob is a reminder of what he was and a reminder that God had made him Israel. Though the Lord will remember the sins of His people no more, every aspect of their understanding of the Gospel is a reminder of their sin. Scott

Richardson said that if you ever graduate from being a sinner you've missed the Gospel altogether. Nothing can be preached, concerning the Gospel, that does not reference our sin. We cannot say the name of our savior without reference to our sin (Matt. 1:21). Substitution, imputation, satisfaction, propitiation cannot be preached apart from declaring our sin. Our joy in the Lord is in reference to our sin, "my sin, O the bliss of this glorious though, my sin, not in part, but the whole; is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more; it is well, it is well with my soul." What is called the new song of heaven cannot be sung without reference to or sin (Rev. 5:9-10). Every consideration of the cross is consideration of our sin. Every thought of grace and mercy is a reminder of our sin. Grace and mercy are for sinners. Every death that occurs in this word is a reference to sin (Romans 5:12). We cannot speak of law and justice of redemption, sanctification, justification, righteousness or even salvation without addressing our sin. The Lord refers to Himself twenty times in scripture as the God of Jacob. God spoke to Israel and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And Jacob said, "Here am I"—the confession of every Jacob.



# THE MESSAGE FOR JACOB

## Genesis 46:3-4

3, And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:

4, I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

In the last study, we saw the Lord addressing Jacob and that it was the sinner that God has graciously changed by giving him a new name (saint, Israel) but calling upon Him as a sinner saved by grace (Jacob, Jacob). In this passage we are privileged to see the message that God has for his elect. By referring to him as Jacob, God has put things in their proper order. By addressing him as Jacob, there is a built-in reminder that what will follow must be a message born of grace and mercy. “Jacob, Jacob” is at the very least a reminder that God knows his frame and remembers that he is dust. The Gospel is good news because it is the report of the only thing that will create a new creature out of dust, that since inanimate dust can do nothing, if anything of substance occurs, it must be by the hand of God.

What is the message for blood-bought sinners? It is the message that reveals what God has done and what He promises for His people. If you are a child of God, one who has tasted that God is gracious, one who has received the benefits of the work of Christ, then these promises are yours.

It is a manifold promise. The first thing and paramount in importance is He who is making the promise. The Lord said, “I am God.” For those who are aware of who God is, the matter is eternally settled. If God, the sovereign God, has entered into

any equation, the outcome is sure. Whatever may come falls in the purview of His absolute reigning power. What He says must come to pass and what he has purposed will stand. He describes Himself as the God of Jacob's father, Isaac. Isaac is he in whom the seed of Abraham is called (Rom. 9:7; Gal. 4:28). This is God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The word of the Lord to every Jacob is, "don't be afraid in a world that hates you" (v. 3). Egypt was the natural enemy of Israel. They despised the Hebrews for various reasons but the core reason for the animus was Israel's allegiance to one God, the Lord over all, and the fact that the Lord had chosen Israel and no other nation. The hatred was real (43:32; 46:34; John 15:18-19). The promise is that He will make of His people a great nation. The church at any given time seems an insignificant gathering, a remnant, a scrap of humanity. So must have seemed the seventy or so that made up the nation when they journeyed to Egypt seem to the Egyptians. But in Goshen, over the next four centuries. they would number in excess of a million souls. But that number is tiny when you compared it to the innumerable company that makes up the church, the body of Christ (Stars of heaven, sand of the seashore).

Also, the accomplishment of that promise is not up to Jacob and his family. They will not be sent out and left to their own devices, nor is their abilities, capabilities, or potential even a consideration. God promises that He will go down with them and will surely bring them up again. All the while they dwell there, God was with them through plenty, slavery, deliverance, 40 years in the wilderness and in Canaan. Goshen was a pit stop, howbeit, a 400-year pit stop, between "I will go down with thee" and, "I will surely bring the up again" (Deut. 6:23). Even when they were steeped in idolatry God was with them because this promise was first made to their father Abraham (Gen. 15:13-14; Is. 43:1-7; Ps. 139:1-18).

The final and sweetest promise is that Jacob will not be alone in his death. When he dies, Joseph will close his eyes. He

who has been sent to Egypt to save much people alive, the savior shall be with him in death and close the lids of his eyes. I think often of those dear brothers among us that we have committed to the ground and my heart is warmed that our blessed Savior was there put His hand upon their eyes. “e’en down to old age, all my people shall prove, My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love.”

# HIS FACE

## Genesis 46:29-30

29, And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

30, And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.

Most of the remainder of this chapter is taken up with the genealogy of the sons of Jacob and their progeny. Many of the characters mentioned have prominent roles in the Scriptures; others are rarely, if ever, referred to again. The seventy or so persons recorded will make up the tribes that will, in four centuries, grow to approximately one million, destined to be delivered from slavery by the hand of God through the blood of the Lamb. Every story, every bit of history in this blessed tome, in some way plays a role in the revelation of the salvation of the elect. The scriptures testify of Christ, and it is our privilege to spend time in these pages discerning His glorious persons. One might ask what such rosters of genealogy have to do with the message of salvation. It is simply this; in the matter of salvation, everyone to be saved is accounted for, by name, and there is not one that is missing (John 10:3, 14).

Also, when reading the Word, a phrase, word, or the way a thing is worded may pop out at you, stirring memories of other passages that are likewise worded, other stories that are akin in topic or express the same response or sentiment. This happened to me as I read verse 29-30. My mind went to another passage where the same sentiment and almost the same language were expressed.

In this text, Joseph reveals himself to Jacob. It is a joyous reunion. As far as Jacob knew, his son Joseph was dead. And now he sees his face and feels his embrace as his living son weeps on his neck “a good while.” The joy is the same as that expressed by the father of the prodigal when he saw his son and ran and fell on his neck with much kissing (Lk. 15:24). Jacob had seen his son, but he had also come face to face with his savior, the one who had been sent into this pagan world to save much people alive. His response to seeing Joseph’s face says so much about what is truly important. Having beheld the face of his savior, Jacob’s response puts things in proper perspective. Having seen the savior’s face, there could be nothing in this world that could even vaguely compare to the exaltation of that sight. The old hymn says, “look full in his wonderful face and the things of the world will go strangely dim, in the sight of his glory and grace” (v. 30).

Moving forward in time many centuries, 33 days (the days of purification after the birth of a son) after the circumcision of the child Jesus, Mary brought the infant child to the temple for presentation. This presentation was according to the law that declared that the child born was holy unto the Lord (Ex. 13:2). On that occasion there was an old saint, a devout man who was waiting for the consolation of Israel, which is another way of saying that he was looking for the Messiah, the Savior, the Christ. He was a spiritual man of whom it is said the Holy Ghost was upon him. He was looking for the Messiah because it had been revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. On the day that Mary brought the infant Jesus for presentation, Simeon took the child in his arms and as he looked into the face of the Savior, He blessed (praised, thanked) God and said practically the same words as Jacob had said centuries before, “lettest thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation” (Lk. 2; 21-30). Seeing the savior, there was nothing in this

world to compare. Better to leave this world and be with Christ forever.

In Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, he said that the glory of God was seen in the face of Jesus Christ. Jacob, in type, and Simeon in substance, had seen the glory of God. Where? In the face of the Savior. God's glory is the salvation of His elect (Ex. 33:18-19).

It is the Savior's face that puts all things in their proper perspective, in the proper order. John, in his general epistles to the church has somewhat to say of the subject (1 John 3:2). He says that when Christ appears, those to whom He appears will be like him. John qualifies that fact with a "because." We will be like Him because we will see Him as he is. The only way a person is like Christ is if he sees Him as He is. He only sees Him as He is if he sees him as He is revealed in the Scriptures. The primary source of reprobation is a refusal to see and acknowledge Christ as He is (Rom. 1:21, 28). The child of God is given the gift of faith so that he would acknowledge God as He is (Eph 1:17). The believer, by faith, sees Christ as He is (Heb. 11:6). The believer is thus "like Christ" (1 John 4:17). Read Genesis 46:30; Luke 2:29-30)

## PROVIDENCE AND BREAD

### Genesis 47

Please read chapter 47.

This chapter covers the time of famine, the seven lean years in the history of Egypt and the surrounding lands. It addresses no central theme save that of Joseph being the savior of his people, his family, and the provider for all that consider his people an abomination. This is the truth of history in every age. The Lord sends the sunshine and the rain upon the just and the unjust so that the benefits ensure that the just will be provided for. Once Jacob and his family, his flocks and herds were safely in the land of Goshen, the most fertile place in Egypt, the economic famine that followed did not touch that blessed family. Joseph, while dealing with the general populace in an economic manner (trade, and barter) is said to have given bread to his family (v.12). While others bargain with everything down to their last possession, even their lives, the savior of much people alive, graciously provided for his own (Phil 4:19).

This chapter is set up in 3 sections. First is a conversation between Jacob and the Pharaoh. Second is the economics of crisis and third is Jacob's request concerning his death.

The conversation with Pharaoh is congenial. Pharaoh's generosity toward Jacob is because Joseph, his son, had saved Egypt. Naturally, Egypt hated the Hebrews, would not even sit at the same table with them but now they speak as friends. Herein we see the sovereignty of God. Scripture says that the king's heart is in the Lord's hand and, as the rivers of waters, He turns it wherever He will. God has providentially manipulated time, tide, and people to fulfill the promise He made to Abraham. How will the descendants of Abraham be found in a

strange land, stay there 400 years, becoming a great nation, be brought into slavery and be delivered by the power of God through the blood of the Lamb (hated brother, sold into slavery, legally wrongly imprisoned, providentially positioned, Pharaoh dreams, hated brother interprets and is put in charge of saving Egypt from purposed famine, hated brother saves Egypt and his family, brings family to Egypt, family grows to great nation, savior dies, Israel is enslaved, God delivers). Why all this? God is setting forth the glories of His Sons substitutionary death. For that to take place, Pharaoh must have a cordial relationship with Jacob, so his heart is turned. In this conversation, two things stand out. First when Pharaoh asks Jacob how old he is, Jacob calls his age a “pilgrimage.” Whether Pharaoh understood does not matter. Jacob was saying that he was just passing through—this was not his home— he looked for another city. His life had been a hard life (V. 9). He fled from Esau’s face lest Esau should kill him, in Laban’s house, he served fourteen years for a wife, and endured great hardships; at Shechem, his daughter was raped; his sons slaughtered of the Shechemites, he had buried his beloved Rachel at Ephrath, at Hebron, his sons had told him his beloved son Joseph was destroyed by a wild beast. Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of troubles. Secondly, Jacob twice blessed Pharaoh. This means he praised him and thanked him for his benevolence. When the heart of the world is turned to do you good, it is not a time for a theological treatise, it is time to be grateful, though you know the true source of their kindness. The Lord said, many times, “Be ye thankful” (Luke 16:9).

The second part of this chapter deals with the economics of crisis. If you read verses 13-25 you will see the decline from wealth to servitude. It is a process governed by self-preservation. The people sold their corn to Egypt in the seven years of plenty. When the seven years of famine came, they took the money they had garnered and bought back some of the corn they had sold. When the money ran out, they traded their cattle for corn.



When the cattle ran out, they traded their land of corn. At last, they traded their lives for corn. They were now tenants of their landlord Pharaoh and from that day forward, after the government had given them seed, twenty percent of what they produced belonged to Pharaoh, and the remainder was to be used as the government designated (v. 24). They had become willing servants, the property of Pharaoh. Verse 25 reveals a basic truth of carnal humanity. Natural man believes grace to be a bargain or a barter or a trade for service. "If you save me, I'll serve you" (Rom, 4:1-8). This entire part of history had nothing to do with Israel. Verse 27 begins with the word "And" not "But." This declares that while the rest of the world was bartering their lives, Israel, the people of God, were doing just fine. This is a picture of the lives of the children of God, in the direst of circumstance the people of God live in eternal hope and assurance (Is. 3:1-10).

Finally, after seventeen years in Goshen, Jacob begins to consider the end of his days. He calls Joseph to him and has him swear by an oath (hand under the thigh) to return his body to be buried with his wife Rachel. This is where he desired his earthy pilgrimage to end...not in the land of the enemy but with the Lord' saints.

# JACOB WORSHIPS

## Genesis 48

Please read chapter 48.

This entire chapter is summed up in the New Testament in one verse of scripture. In Hebrews 11, that great chapter declaring the absolute necessity of God-given faith, the Lord records for us this account in these words, "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." Leaning upon his staff aligns with Jacob stirring himself upon the bed, sitting up and strengthening himself when he was told that Joseph was coming to see him. Joseph came because he had heard his father was sick. Jacob had rehearsed his death with his son in the previous chapter and news of his failing health prompted Joseph's visit. But there was something else involved, a matter of some urgency. Joseph brought his two sons, Ephraim, and Manasseh to receive the blessing of the patriarch. Unbeknownst to Joseph, these two sons would finalize the makeup of the twelve tribes of Israel. Were it not written for our belief and understanding, this incident would probably not be considered worship, but this is the Lord's account of the matter. It is worship in the sense of declaring the will of God and the revelation of his providence and the revelation that God does not act in the manner of men, nor in the manner that men might think right and reasonable. It is not unlike preaching as it is the proclamation of what God has done and what He has promised concerning His family.

The makeup of the numbered family of God is pictured in type by natural Israel and is realized substantially with the salvation of the elect as a thing ordained of old and secured by the will of God. Rueben's status as firstborn has been set aside

because of his incest and the 12 tribes destined to possess Canaan are now 10, because Levi's tribe, being the designated as the priesthood will not possess land. The two that will make up the difference are Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph.

The declaration of this fact is first seen in Jacob's words recorded in verse 5. Jacob says your sons are mine. What he meant by this was that they would not be counted as grandsons but as sons, as heads of the tribes of Israel. This is what Jacob meant when he calls Joseph a fruitful bough in the next chapter. God's providence is unfolding.

Joseph approaches Jacob with his two sons and afterward Jacob embraces the young men (twenty years old or so) and kisses them. Jacob's eyes are dim with age and cannot really see the faces of the children. He knows that Manasseh is the firstborn and relies on Joseph's placement of the young men for him to know who is who. As was common practice Manasseh is placed before Jacob's right hand, the hand that blesses the firstborn and Ephraim is placed of the left hand of Jacob, the hand off blessing but not of the firstborn. The record says that Jacob wittingly (He knew what he was doing) crossed his hands placing the right hand on Ephraim and his left on Manasseh (v. 14). This was not a new thing to Jacob because he had been blessed as the firstborn in the place of Esau who had actually been born first. That action will ever stand as the exemplar of God's electing love (Rom. 9:10-13). After Jacob did this, he blessed Joseph by glorifying God (v. 16). Note that the word "angel" is capitalized. This designated the Angel as not a created being but none other than the Christ, the redeemer (compare v. 16 with Isa. 43; 1).

Joseph was incensed at Jacob's switching of hands and tried to switch his hands back (vv. 17-18). Jacob assured Joseph that this was not a mistake. It had been done on purpose; he knew what he was doing. Though his eyes were dim he could see, by faith, what Joseph could not see with his eyes. Centuries later there would rise one from the tribe of Ephraim, a savior named

Joshua, to take his people into the Promised Land. The Greek name for Joshua is Jesus, the savior of the Israel of God. The Lord's promise uttered in verse 20 is actually the promise of the Messiah (Ruth 4:11-12; Matt. 1:3-5, 16).

The portion of land promised to Joseph in vv. 21-22 would be his burial place. The word "portion" is "Shechem" and relates to a parcel of land in Shechem, in Samaria (Josh. 24:32; John 4:5).

Ephraim and Manasseh will occupy much of Old Testament scripture and are recorded in often less than a flattering manner. They are the Lord's and thus sinners saved by my grace. We will look at them next time.

As for this chapter, it is about worship, "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff".

# IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

## Genesis 49:1-7

1, And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

2, Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

3, Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:

4, Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.

5, Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.

6, O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.

7, Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

This is the account of Jacob, on his deathbed, calling his sons to tell them the future of them and their progeny. I have often thought of this meeting and have preached from this chapter many times, mostly about the prophecy concerning Judah as it pictures the glories of Christ. I have also thought of the fact that

what is said about the brothers is spoken in the presence of all the other brethren. I have wondered what went through the mind of the other brethren as these words, concerning Reuben, Simeon and Levi were uttered. I have a feeling that this was not necessarily a pleasant experience. One might expect that a father in his last moment on earth might salt his words with praise so that he could leave this world in the good graces and benevolent memories of his children. Such a one might temper his words so that only nice stuff would be spoken of concerning his children. It was not so with Jacob. The old man spoke truth about his children and did not hide the aspect of the consequences of their actions visiting the children and their children's children. A poet wrote, "of all the sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest of these is it might have been." In a purely natural sense these words ring true, but we who know something of providence and the sovereign purpose of God, know full well that nothing "might have been" because all things fall within the parameters of sovereign ordination. But as Ruben, Simeon and Levi heard their father's words and considered what they had lost because of their evil deeds, I'm pretty sure they considered "What might have been."

Jacob's words seem to fall into this vein of thinking. What he says to Ruben in verse 3 seems to be full of accolades and praise. But rather than applying these words to Ruben, the application is about what the firstborn (any and every firstborn) ought to be, Ruben, as firstborn, ought to have been Jacob's might, the beginning of his strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of his power. This was the common notion of the firstborn. However, the words that follow reveal that none of the qualities could ever be applied to Reuben.

Reuben is first said to be as unstable as water. The qualities or water are that it always takes the shape of the container it is in, it always flows downward, and it always follows the path of least resistance. This describes Reuben to a tee. His instability was manifest in his incest with a concubine/wife of Jacob's

described in verse 4 as having “wentest up to thy father’s bed; then defiledst thou it, he went up to my couch.” He brought shame to his house. Reuben lost it all because of his deeds. He remained a son and a brother, but he forfeited his inheritance (1 Chron. 5:1-2). But the loss of the birthright proved to mean little to unstable Reuben. His tribe, the tribe of Gad and ½ the tribe of Manasseh are they who refused to inherit their portion on the Promised Land. They rather opted for lands on the wilderness side of Jordan because the land was suitable for their vast herds and flocks. They made promises to fight for Israel and even built a huge altar, visible from the Canaan side of Jordan to show that they were still part of the team. It was to them that the Lord said, “be sure your sin will find you out.” They did fight for Israel but were the first to fall in battle. They picture those of this day who are stalwart defenders of the truth but cannot abide belonging to a church of meeting with the brethren. With some, locality and availability make local church membership impossible, but others will not take what is available to them while defending those who do. Reuben is unstable as water. He never enjoyed what was his by decree. They forfeited their inheritance.

Simeon and Levi were cold-blooded murders (v. 5). They tricked the Shechemites into being circumcised by promising them the world. After they complied and were sore from the operation, Simeon and Levi came into their chamber and slaughtered them. Jacob wanted nothing to do with their deeds (v. 6). He cursed them for their action and promised they would have no land in Canaan. Levi’s descendants became the priesthood, their father’s sin removed from them by grace. They picture every son of Adam who has been redeemed from the sin of their father. They would have no inheritance in Canaan. The tribe of Levi could own no land. As for Simeon the last phrase of verse 7 is applied to them. They were scattered among the other tribes and never possessed a collective plot to call the

tribe's property (Josh. 19:1-9; 1 Chron. 4:42). They never enjoyed what was theirs by birth.



# OUR LORD DESCRIBED PT. 1

## Genesis 49:8-12

8, Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

9, Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

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

11, Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

12, His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk

Verses 8-12 is a portion of Scripture that designates and defines and glorifies and honors the person and work of the Son of God. This is Jacob's prophecy concerning Judah, a prophecy typically fulfilled in the reigns of David and Solomon and every good king in Israel but substantially and fully realized in the reign of Christ, the king of Kings and the Lord of Lord's. Judah's line culminated in Christ as King and great high Priest. Christ was the only high priest from the tribe of Judah; all others proceeded from the tribe of Levi. Judah was he who honored Tamar as more righteous than he because of her respect for the Seed (Christ). It was Judah who became surety for Benjamin. It is Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah who is worthy to open

book, loose the seals thereof and reveal the contents of the Word of God. And here in these 5 verses that Jacob becomes the Gospel preacher, setting forth the glories of our Savior giving unto us that which is good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over. We will pitch our tents and set up our camp here for a while because every word that Jacob speaks concerning Judah bears eternal import.

In this evening's study, we will consider the three things declared about Christ in verse 8. These three things are the foundation of all that follow in the revelation of Christ in this context. The sweet psalmist of Israel said "Let everything that hath breath, praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD." In another Psalm it is recorded that everyone in His temple speaks of His glory. Jacob declares, "Thou art He whom thy brethren shall praise." Praise is the heart of worship, and it never happens without a reason. It is not a tagline at the end of some religious prattle, and it is not a motto, good luck charm, or a mantra. It is given for a reason and is born of thanksgiving (Hebrews 13:15). It is said here that those who render the praise are His brethren. This is a family deal. He laid down his life for His brethren. He is not ashamed to call them His brethren. They are His brethren because they have the Spirit of adoption and because they have been born again, by the Spirit, through the Word. It is they, the brethren, the church, His sheep for whom He died and redeemed every one of them...His family, for whom He is the kinsman redeemer. Praise is rendered for what He has done for His brethren, the many sons that He has brought to glory (Ps. 100).

Secondly Jacob asserts a truth that permeates the Bible in reference to salvation. Salvation, the very concept of salvation, presupposes captivity or bondage of some nature, someone in need of deliverance. Elsewise salvation means nothing at all. Since the only way to exact deliverance of the captive is to defeat the captor, part and parcel with the salvation of the elect is the destruction of the enemy. He says of Christ that, "Thine hand

shall be in the neck of thine enemies.” This describes asphyxiation by choking ((2 Sam. 22:39-41). This is only accomplished by a face-to-face confrontation (Matt. 11:29). For anyone held in captivity to be delivered, his captor must be destroyed. This is the language of salvation and on the cross, the serpent bruised the heel of the Savior, but the Savior bruised his head. “Thine hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies”.

Finally, in this verse, Jacob says of the Savior, “Thy father’s children shall bow down before thee.” In Isaiah 45 and in Philippians 2 God swears that every knee shall bow to Christ and in doing so proclaim His Lordship. It is to this end that Christ both died, rose, and revived that he might be the Lord of the living and the dead. It is because of the absolute accomplishment and unbridled success of His work that this title has been bestowed upon Him. Such humbling and such an accolade would be without meaning if He had not accomplished what he came to do which was to save His people from their sins. Again, this is about family. It is His father’s children that shall bow to Him. Though all men will ultimately bow to Him, this speaks of His children, born of His Spirit, washed in His blood (Is. 8:18, Heb. 2; 13-14).

“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father’s children shall bow down before thee.”

## OUR LORD DESCRIBED PT. 2

### Genesis 49:9

9, Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

In verse 8 the Lord is described concerning His worthiness to be praised and the promise that He will be glorified. That praise is based upon and conditioned upon His effectual work of salvation. He is promised to save His people, described as His brethren and His Father's children, by subduing and destroying their enemy captor and delivering His own.

In verse 9 Holy Spirit fills Jacob's mouth with words that depict our Lord in His might, His humiliation and condescension and His rest after finishing His work. Our Lord is first described as a lion's whelp, or a young lion, a lion in his full vitality, power, and ferocity. In the word of God, He is declared to be mighty to save. He is fully capable to accomplish the work He is anointed to do. He is further described as returning from the prey. A lion does not toy with his prey, as would a house cat. He latches on with deadly claws and vise-like maw until the prey is dead, defeated and turned into a tasty meal. The blood that covers his jaws attests that he is "from the prey" and the carcass of his conquest is no more. The language employed repeatedly in scripture describing salvation is the language of warfare, battle, destruction, and conquering. Our Lord is said to be a man of war. That description was employed to describe the Egyptian army as it lay on the floor of the Red Sea; utterly defeated and utterly destroyed. Sadly, in much of religion, our Lord, in his work of salvation is described in terms that evoke pity and unrequited love; a feckless fellow, frustrated in his bold intentions to save men who might or might not allow him to do

so. Perish the thought! He is the conquering king of beasts, manifested to destroy the works of the Devil, stronger than the strong man and spoiling his house. He is the lion's whelp from the prey.

Because He has conquered the foe and redeemed His brethren, His Father's children, he is "gone up." He alone has ascended to the heights of glory. Other will be caught up to meet Him in the air but he alone, having earned the right to do so, having purged our sins, has ascended to sit at the right hand of the majesty on high. He is "gone up", ascended and led captivity captive (John 3:13).

The words He spoke to Nicodemus, which we just read, are the same as this description that Jacob gives of our Lord. He that ascended to heaven is the one who came down from heaven, the words of Jacob are "gone up" and "stooped down." The condescension of our Lord and what it entailed is beyond human description. Paul said that this great thing was without controversy, the great mystery of godliness; God manifest in the flesh. This mighty Lion of the tribe of Judah stooped down, laid aside His glory, robed himself in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet without sin and was made to be sin for the sure and complete salvation of his brethren and His Father's children. He who is "gone up" is He who has "stooped down." It remains the greatest of mysteries, but He was a real human being with all the frailties that attend the physical body yet without sin, He is true humanity. The rest of us are sin-mutated and are examples of what humanity ought not be. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory; as the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." He is gone up. He stooped down. Note well that the act of stooping down was His own. No one made Him stoop. His condescension was a voluntary act born of eternal love for His brethren, His Father's children.

Finally, He is described as an old lion. We can almost see Him in His regal glory, couched down, on a high place

overlooking the universe, His private, personal domain. This means that He is lying down in resplendent repose, resting after having finished His work, having redeemed His chosen, without one worry line on His lovely royal brow— resting in His love. Though religion paints Him as a solicitous beggar, wanting his creatures to accept him and believing that with enough praying, singing, and shouting that He can be stirred up to do what they want, this old Lion cannot be stirred up. He rests on His Conqueror's couch and "who shall rouse Him up?" He laughs at their calamity, mocks when their fear cometh. He has them in derision. No weapon formed against you shall prosper. The old Lion that cannot be roused up; does according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, what does thou. Fear not, little flock, it is the Lord's pleasure to give you the kingdom. Our Lord is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. Read text.

## OUR LORD DESCRIBED PT. 3

### Genesis 49:10

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

Jacob has been inspired to honor and glorify our Lord as he speaks of Judah's future. The last part of verse 9 has declared that Christ has finished the work and rests in His victory, and no one can rouse Him up. That work has been described in terms of conquering as the Lord is pictured as having his foot on the neck of the enemy, as a young lion returning from having killed His prey and as having such admirable success that He is worthy of praise and glory. In verse 10, our Lord is pictured as enthroned in sovereign majesty, the merited result of having stooped down to earth and ascended to His rightful place as Lord over all. The descriptions in this text are about where Christ is now. When Paul asserted that he determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified, part of that declaration was chronological. He did not preach Christ on the cross. He preached Christ on His throne, having been crucified. The crucifixion was an historical fact, Christ enthroned as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, reigning omnipotent is as He is now and forever more. He is now, the God with whom we have to do. This is the description that is before us in this text.

The first thing revealed is that there is a scepter in his hand, and it shall not depart from him. The scepter belongs to the one who reigns. It can belong to no other than the ruling sovereign. It serves as proof of his sovereignty and in the times that this was written, the scepter was used to show acceptance into the presence of the King (Est. 5:1-2). Metaphorically, God's scepter is Christ (Num. 24:17). The believer is accepted in the beloved.

The requirement for being accepted before God is righteousness, the very righteousness of God, Fear not little flock. What God has required, He has also provided (Ps. 45:6; Heb. 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Secondly, the Lord is described as having a lawgiver between his feet. The word “lawgiver” means one who decrees, a ruler and can even imply the rod of rule in the ruler’s hand. This rod is Christ and is also applied to His sovereign rule (Ps. 2:8-9; 110:2-3; Is. 11:1-4). That rod is the instrument of the destruction of the enemy and likewise the comfort of His people, “Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” Our Lord decrees and rules in a manner that assures that His decrees will come to pass.

The next description of Christ is the prophecy of His incarnation, the coming of the Messiah into the world, “until Shiloh come.” This is the promise of the consolation of Israel that old Simeon waited for in the Gospel of Luke. Shiloh is Christ the one who reveals Himself by His Word (1 Samuel 3:21). The name Shiloh has many meanings and all of them speak of Christ. Shiloh means “to Him it belongs.” Christ is heir of all things (Heb. 1:2; Ps. 24:1). Shiloh means “peace.” Christ is the prince of peace. He is our peace (Eph.2:13-14; Col. 1:20). Shiloh means “the Son” (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 3:35; Heb. 1:1-2, 8). Shiloh means “sent” (John 6:37-38; 7:16; 20:21). Shiloh means “rest” Christ is the rest wherein we find sweet rest and refreshing. He is our Sabbath, having finished the work of redemption (Is. 11:10; Heb. 4:9). Shiloh means “prosper” (Is. 52:13; 53:10). Shiloh is Christ.

Finally, unto Christ “shall the gathering of the people be” (Is.2:2; 11:10; 55:4-5; Matt. 18:20, Acts 4:26-28). This is our magnificent LORD.



## OUR LORD DESCRIBED PT. 4

### Genesis 49:11-12

11, Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

12, His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

Thus far in this description of our Lord and His work as revealed in Jacob's words concerning his son Judah, we have seen our Lord described as the one that the brethren would praise, the one who would utterly defeat His enemies, the one to whom the father's children would bow, the one who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah that had devoured His prey and rests in sublime repose and cannot be roused up, the one who stooped down in humanity and ascended to glory on His merited right to do so. He is also described as the King bearing His scepter, ruling over rulers as Shiloh, the one to whom all things belong, the peace that attends His loved ones, the Son, the sent one, the rest for the weary and the one who prospered and the one to whom the people shall gather. This is our glorious Savior. In the final two verses describing Judah, Jacob sets forth more of the glory of Christ.

In verse 11 we see Christ described as, "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine." The first thing that comes to mind is the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem (Zech. 9:9. Matt.21:1-5). That is a lovely picture of our King, approachable royalty, meek and lowly, giving rest to the weary and heavy laden. The very thought of it causes Hosannahs to rise in our hearts. "Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord." We also see the word, "binding." This

word is not used in the sense of being bound with fetters and chains or imprisoned. It speaks of “being harnessed, attached to” and can even be used as being bound by an oath or promise. This addressed our Lord’s attachment to His people and they to Him. They are referred in the Word as “heirs according to promise”, their eternal destiny and security sealed by God’s oath (Isa. 45:22-25; Heb. 6:17-20). His people are referred to as a foal and an ass’s colt. This most likely refers to His elect among the Jews and the Gentiles. The truly essential aspect is that they are bound to the vine. They are not attached to religion, tradition, law, or personal merit. They are attached to and abide in Christ, the vine; the true vine (John 15:1-6).

Next, we see the representation of His substitutionary, propitiatory work. “He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.” The primary thing to observe is that this is recorded as His act. Though those who wished Him gone did many things to Him, not one finger could be lifted against Him without His voluntary consent or according to His sovereign will. His garments were not awash in blood by overpowering hands. He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to those that pluck off the hair. He did not hide His face from the spitting. He was not a victim. He was doer (Ps. 119:21-24; Is. 44:23). He washed His garments. His clothes are pictured to be soaked in wine and the blood of grapes. This speaks to His bloody, sacrificial death and, in scripture, that magnificent propitiatory act is always declared in terms of absolute success and victory (Is. 63:1-4; Rev. 19:11-16; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 13:20-21).

In verse 12, the Lord is described in His joy. “His eyes shall be red with wine.” Though excess use of wine is attributed to bad behavior (Prov. 23:29-30), wine is also used as a symbol of joy (Prov. 31:6-7, Ps. 104:15; Jud. 9:13; Jer. 31:12; Heb. 12:2). “His teeth white with milk” is almost a universal description of youth, vitality, and beauty as the one who is chiefest among ten thousand. But as this refers to joy, seeing these white teeth is

descriptive of a smile on the face of the Savior, the joy expressed over the one sheep found and brought to the fold. It is described in Luke 15 as “joy in the presence of the angels.” This is our Lord described.

# SONS, DISCLOSED AND DESCRIBED PT 1

## Genesis 49:13-15

13, Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.

14, Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:

15, And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

After the glorious description of Judah as he typified and pre-figured Christ, Jacob continues to disclose and describe his son's various places in the world. These descriptions are about their placement in reference to the other tribes as well as their occupations and the place they would occupy in the economy of God. The sons are mentioned in much of the record of the history of Israel and referred to in both favorable and unfavorable lights. Regardless of the accounts of their mentions, they are where they are because that is where the Lord placed them on the map and calendar of His sovereign providence. There is zero unemployment in the economy of God, Everyone and everything has a purpose and will serve that purpose for the glory of God. All things and persons will glorify God in his grace or His justice (Acts 17:26).

In verse 13, Jacob speaks of Zebulun. His name means "exalted." He gained his abundance from the sea. His tribe was not seafarers or sailors. Israelites were people of the land, shepherds, farmers, and vineyard keepers. Zebulun dwelt at the haven of the sea. This means he was on the shore and probably

at a port in Phoenicia. The tribe's economy was gained from the sea trade. Much about the tribe is found in the history of Israel and they are mentioned last in the prophet Ezekiel. There is no reference to the tribe in the New Testament. They are mentioned in Deuteronomy 33:18-19 and the words written are an accolade to the tribe. It is evident that they knew the source of their blessings, which is a fine thing. They offered sacrifices of righteousness, giving thanks to God for their abundance. Righteous offerings are those of thanksgiving and praise. We find, in scripture, the mark of God's saints is the heart of thankfulness (1 Thes. 5:18).

In verse 14-15 Issachar is described. His name means "There is recompense." This alludes to the success of the tribe in their business, which was agriculture. They were placed in an area which had notable dew and plenty of rain, an area of great agricultural supply. The removal of the dew and rain is mentioned in the punishment of King Saul (II Sam. 1:21). He is described as a beast of burden lying down between two burdens. The lying down does not speak to the weight of the burden but a rest amid the burdens and could be said to be resting despite the two burdens. The two burdens could refer to the tribes of Zebulun and Dan or the nations of Samaria and Phoenicia or could refer to the abundance of goods produced in the land allotted to the tribe, as laden upon his shoulder. The key to this verse is not what the burdens are but that Issachar rests, why he rests is revealed in a phrase in I Chron. 12:32, "And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times." This little informative blurb gives one of the important reasons why anyone is able to rest, couch down, lie down between two burdens (Zeph. 3:13). They rest because they have no fear, and their hunger and thirst is assuaged. This is found only in Christ by grace through faith and is what is pictured in this description of the men of Issachar. To understand your times is to know that time and tide are according to God's purpose (Phil 4:11-13; Ecc. 3:1-14). The

believer does not allow time to define him, he understands his time and is able to define them. This is seen in verse 15. Issachar saw that rest was good, or his place of rest was good. That is peace of mind and heart, peace that passes knowledge. When all around is dearth and decay, Christ our peace is our hope and stay. We see the rest is good because the work is finished. He saw the rest was good and the land was pleasant (Ps. 16:6). Because that was so, he bore up under the burden because the yoke of Christ is easy, and the burden is light and he has found rest unto his soul.

And he became a servant unto tribute. Though the language indicates that he became a slave laborer, the previous description suggests a voluntary act. He willingly bore the burden and tribute was given to his Lord. Every child of God emulates his Lord as a willing bond servant to his Master, his Father, his God (Deut. 15:12-17; Is. 50:5-6).

## SONS DISCLOSED AND DESCRIBED PT 2

### Genesis 49:16-17

16, Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

17, Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

In these two verses, Jacob speaks of the future of the tribe of Dan. Dan was the first son born of a concubine wife, a handmaid of Leah. The tribe of Dan was notable for their bent to idolatry. In the 18th chapter of Judges, it was the Danites that stole the idols out of Micah's house and absconded with Micah's Levite priest that he had hired for a pittance. The entirety of the 17th and 18th chapters of Judges is a treatise on false religion and though it comes at the end of the book of Judges is the historical record of the beginning of the times that is accounted in the previous chapters of the book. It was a time that was defined by a single and oft repeated phrase that defined the era of the Judges; "There was no king in Israel and the people did what was right in their own eyes." What was right in the people's eyes was evil in the sight of the Lord as it was a display of blatant and blasphemous idolatry. Later, in the area of the Danites, Jeroboam would build a replica of the golden calf that the Israelites build at the base of Sinai and was the impetus for the Ten Commandments. Dan was notorious for its idolatry.

The name "Dan" means judge and is therefore a kind of tool of language that doubles up on a single theme or word. It comes off, as Judge shall judge. This probably refers to him being a ruler of his people and the first one born of a concubine to be so exalted. The description of his character in verse 17 is more than

likely a symbolic picture or representation of false, subtle, and evil religion that relies of the wisdom and will of men to manufacture their own deities and hire their priests in order to soothe their consciences in vain hope of actual salvation. That religion, the one with which every son of Adam is born, is subtle as a serpent, lying by the way, camouflaged and unseen whose entire existence it to strike, bite, poison, and kill any who pass by. The serpent in the garden is the father of this religion and the sire of all who practice it (John 8:42-44). That religion is the practice of overt disobedience (“and he did eat”), fig leaf covering, hiding from God, and blaming someone or something else for their sin. It is the prevalent religion of every age culminating in Babylon, the great. This is the illustrious and idolatrous history of the Danites.

But there is more to this than meets the eye. There was indeed a Judge from this tribe of Dan whose life and deeds picture and typify the Lord in the salvation and deliverance of His people, the destruction of the enemy, the Gospel, the preacher of the Gospel, the sinner saved by grace and the subtle and sure providence of Almighty God.

There was, indeed, a Judge of Israel, a man of might, endued with God’s Spirit, a man of like passions as we, a sinner/saint, and a savior of the people. One whose name was “Wonderful” announced his birth, who came from heaven and ascended in a flame of fire. The one born was to be a Nazarene from birth, whose hair was never to be cut and his beard never to be shaved...a servant of the Most High until the day of his death. His name was Samson, the mighty hero whose exploits is the stuff of legend. His name, to this day, is synonymous with strength and power. This great and flawed Judge delivered Israel from the captivity of the Philistines. His voluntary death was the destruction of the enemy and the deliverance of Israel. And in that final act he pictured the salvation of the elect as he died to the world and the world died to him.



The language employed in the description of Dan in verse 17 is a description of the mysterious and wondrous providence of God. Unless one knew of the providence of God, the predestinated steps that brought about Samson's ordained "occasion" with the Philistines, one would simply wonder at the riddles, the slain lion whose carcass yielded honey, the decimation of an army with the jawbone of an ass, the cutting of Samson's hair, the blinding of his eyes would all just be a confusing morass of indefinable incidents. But with the subtlety of an adder, the camouflage of a viper, the Philistines were unhorsed when the providence of God bit them in invisible potency. The Philistines scratched their heads as Samson's riddles dumfounded them even as the parables of our Lord confounded the Pharisees, and each was an arrow in the quiver that would ultimately pierce their souls and end their existence. Dan shall judge his people (Ps. 9:8).

# TAKING A BREATH

## Genesis 49:18

18, I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

Generally speaking, commentators whom I read on this verse said that this break in the prophecies of Jacob's sons was a kind of sigh, a longing utterance for relief. It may be attributed to the advanced age of the old patriarch, tired and weary of life and desiring to, at last, leave this world for the joys of heaven. Every saint garners these thoughts if the Lord suffers him to live a number of years.

It is also suggested that Jacob, in speaking of the future of the tribes that have come from his loins, considering that their future is less than stellar. Just a brief perusal of Jacob's words, had we not the revelation of the covenant of grace, would leave anyone with a grim outlook of what awaits these tribes that will become, numerically, a great nation. Maybe the record given of Jacob, as it were, taking a breath here, is an inward desire, verbally expressed, to not be around when these troubles befall this family.

I wondered, as I read this uttered sigh, what it might be like to be a father of these men and have an understanding of what awaited them. What if in this moment, as a father, I was allowed to truly view the tale that was yet to be told. What if I could see past the present joy of the reunification with Joseph and the years of plenty and peaceful occupancy of Goshen? What would I feel if I could see my family brought into abject slavery and helotry at the hand of kings who knew not Joseph? What might I cry when I see Moses stand against the might of the known world and witness the deliverance by the blood of the lamb only to see this great family of mine rebel and wander forty

years in the wilderness? What horror might fill my mind when I saw the earth open its maw and swallow upward of 3000 who had worshipped the Golden Calf and cared not to be on the Lord's side? What sorrow might enter my bosom if the Lord suffered me to see every one of my family above twenty years old when they were delivered from Egypt, become rotting carcasses in the wilderness because of unbelief? What angst would grip my soul if I saw the tribes of Ruben, Gad and one-half the tribe of Manasseh beg not to enter the Promised Land, but opt for the wealth that was to be made in a foreign land? What would become of the joy upon viewing Joshua's deliverance of the family and then to observe the wickedness of my family during the time of Judges, and finally, after numerous kings, both good and evil, to hear the Lord's words of a divorce decree from my family after he had been as a husband to them? Might I not cry with Jacob, "I have waited for thy salvation oh LORD."

Considering this, I see this interruption in the prophecies of his sons as a conclusion of a true and wondrous fact. The conclusion is that sons of Adam, chosen by God naturally, given a covenant by which obedience would bring great blessing and benefit, fed food from heaven, water to slake their thirst, given land which they did not buy, crops that they did not cultivate, homes that they did not build, herds and flocks that they did not breed, a religion complete with ceremony, priesthood, sacrifices and the presence of God in Shekinah glory would not make one bit of difference in their souls. Even with divine instruction, man as he is born will not learn, cannot learn (1 Cor. 2:14-15). Even when endowed with great privilege natural man wants more and believes he is entitled to it. Even with the promise of blessing upon obedience man cannot and will not alter his behavior (Jer. 13:23). Isaiah 1:2-6 is the description of Jacob's family after many centuries operating under the Old Covenant, the conditional covenant of works. Man cannot change and cannot improve. Adam will never get better. He will only wax worse and worse. This is the fact of mankind (Ps. 14:1-3)

Considering this, what singular conclusion can be reached? “I have waited for thy salvation, Oh LORD.” This alone will do. It is as if Jacob pre-parrots the words of John on Patmos, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” My family, the human family can do nothing, will do nothing and desire to do nothing, I wait for the Messiah, thy salvation. He will do what we could never do. When Messiah comes, He will “finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” (Ps. 40:16). “I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.”

## SONS DISCLOSED AND DESCRIBED PT. 3

### Genesis 49:19-21

19, Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.

20, Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

21, Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

In this passage Jacob reveals the future of Gad, Asher, and Naphtali. Each played a part in the declaration of the Gospel, dealing with several aspects in the earthly life of our Lord. I will look at these in a different order than is expressed here, considering Asher last.

The first son mentioned is Gad and the inference is that he will be a warring tribe, will lose in battle and in the end will be victorious (v. 19). This is a synopsis of the history of this tribe and the prophecy will be revealed and accomplished in the books of Numbers, Joshua, and Judges. Gad was a picture of a professed believer who never is able to fully align himself with the local church. He and Reuben and ½ the tribe of Manasseh opted to remain in the lands occupied by the Ammonites on the wilderness side of Jordan rather than occupy their place on the Land of Promise. They embraced the promise from afar but never availed themselves to the benefits of being in the Promised Land.

To assert that they were of Israel they made two gestures. First that erected a giant altar on the other side of Jordan, so imposing that it could be seen from the Promised Land. This was their way of saying that though they had refused what God gave freely, they were still brothers of those on the Canaan side

and most visibly so. This is indicative of those who profess faith but refuse to be a part of the local church. The second thing they asserted was that they would join Israel in every war and would lead the charge. When war came, they kept their charge and were summarily defeated, “a troop shall overcome him.” In the end they overcame because the war was of God and God had promised victory when He fought for Israel (1 Chron. 5:18-22). This may also refer to their ultimate deliverance when Samson destroyed the Philistines, which aligns with the gospel when the people of God were delivered from sin, death, self, and Satan when one man, even Jesus Christ, by himself defeat the enemy in the war ordained of God.

Secondly Naphtali will be considered (v. 21). He is compared to a hind let loose. This sets for the image of a young calf full of life and vigor. We’ve all seen such images and they seem to us to be joyous and full of vitality. The hind is compared to a young hart or deer and is used in much of the word of God to picture different aspects of the Gospel and the believer’s response to it. This is probably the intimation of the phrase “he giveth good words’ as it relates to the word of God. In Psalm 22, that great psalm of the cross of Christ, the words “Aijelet Shahr” can be interpreted to mean “the morning hind” suggesting the suffering substitute in the joy set before Him (Heb. 12:2). Ps. 42:1 pictures the believer’s love and longing for Christ. In the Song of Solomon, the bride of Christ, the church speaks glowingly of her husband (SOS 2:9, 17; 8:14). They are indeed, “goodly words.”

In the category of, “I saved the best for last” we will look at Asher (v. 2). Historically Asher was the food basket of Israel. Occupying the most fertile valley, this tribe supplied kings and royalty with the finest of cuisine. The area of Asher was sometimes called “the fat valley.” The 3 key words in this verse are bread, royal and dainties. Bread speaks of itself. Royal is derivative of the word “king” and one of the definitions of dainties is illumination. We immediately see that these things

speak of our Lord, the Bread of life, the King kings and He alone is the key of knowledge, the illumination of the Word of God. We go forward in time to the day our Lord was circumcised, the day when Simeon held the infant of days, the Lord Jesus Christ and declared “I have seen thy salvation.” On that momentous day there was present an old woman, an octogenarian, a widow, a prophetess. Her name was Anna, of the tribe of Asher, and she had some fat bread and some royal dainties to yield (Luke 2:36-38). What more can be said of one who has seen and heard of the Lord’s salvation. Are you looking for redemption? Are you looking to be bought back and removed from the slave market of sin? Are you looking to have the fetters and shackles, the bondage of the law, Satan, and self, stricken from your wrists and ankles— look no further! She, “spake of Him to all that looked for redemption in Israel.” Look no further. Here is the King. Here is the Bread of Life. Here is the illumination, the revelation, the understanding of the Word of God (Is. 45:21-22). Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. She “spake of Him to all that looked for redemption in Israel”.

## A FRUITFUL BOUGH

### Genesis 49:22

22, Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

The description that Jacob renders of his beloved son Joseph is extensive, covering 6 verses and illustrates the truth expressed in the words, "Joseph is a fruitful bough." Joseph is prolific type of the Lord Jesus Christ, perhaps more so than any other single character in the Old Testament. Joseph is also a picture and type of the sinner saved by grace especially as his life pictures the tribulations and trial that attend faith. Though the language employed in the description is horticultural, the actual description is familial. Metaphorically, Joseph is a fruitful bough, but the words employed designate him as, "the honored son" and the branches that go over the wall as daughters. Both descriptions apply.

First, the designation as the honored son, Joseph's history certainly applies. He was the firstborn of Jacob's true love, Rachel. He was beloved above all his brethren (37:3). He was honored with the coat of many colors and was always at Jacob's side. He was honored at Potiphar's house until Potiphar's wife lied about him. He was honored in prison and given an exalted position and was honored by Pharaoh to be second only to the king of Egypt. He was honored to be the single instrument in the salvation of his household. One has only to apply the Holy Writ to see how Joseph pictures the Lord. God the Father referred to Christ as His beloved Son, the son at His right hand. The Father honors the Son and will honor only those who likewise honor his Son (John 5:23). His greatest honor was the honor he received for His substitutionary sacrifice that saved His



people, His household from their sins (Isa. 53:10-12; Acts 2:34-36; 4:11-12; Phil 2:8-11).

Secondly, the term a fruitful bough most likely refers to fact that, though he was a son, he was the father of two tribes, Manasseh, and Ephraim. Those tribes played prominent parts, both good and evil, in the history of Israel. Christ is the fruitful bough. He is the everlasting father of many out of every nation, tongue, tribe, and people. The fruit of this bough is said to be innumerable, more that the sands of the seashore and the stars of the skies. His fruitfulness is seen and displayed in that Christ saved all His elect. Not one for whom He died will ever perish (John 6:37-38). This is the promise of His name (Matt. 1:21).

This fruitful bow is said to be by a well. This insures its fruitfulness. It will bear much fruit because it will be well supplied to maintain its vigor and health. It is said of the Lord, concerning His mission of salvation, "He shall not fail." The same language is used in describing our Lord in Psalm 1:1-3. The word used for well, is of a primitive root and has many applications and definitions. The primary meaning is "eye: or "sight" and suggests mental and spiritual acuity and wisdom. Joseph showed this in his many decisions that eventuated in the salvation of his family. Christ is said to be the power of God and the wisdom of God in the salvation of His people. The 8th chapter of Proverbs is dedicated to Christ as wisdom. A secondary definition of the word "well" is "spring or fountain." Both apply to Christ and His Gospel (Jer. 17:13; Zech. 13:1; Rev. 21:6).

"Whose branches run over the wall" refers to the descendants of Joseph being prolific and spreading outward. Manasseh's tribe occupied both sides of Jordan. His daughters were the first to gain an inheritance, in a sense, overcoming the law of male only inheritance Gal. 3; 27-29). Going over the wall suggest that the proliferation of Joseph cannot be hindered or frustrated. The word "run" carries with it the idea of a march. This pictures an army headed out to engage the enemy with the

single aim of victory as their intent. This typifies the church, marching forward in the name of Christ, with a singular aim and intent. Their weapon is the Word, the Gospel the two-edged sword of truth. Victory is sure for the Lord fights for them and even the gates of hell shall not prevail against them (Rev. 19:11-16). Fear not little flock, it is the Lord's pleasure to give you the kingdom.

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a well; His branches run over the wall.

# GRIEVED, SHOT AT, AND HATED

## Genesis 49:23-24

23, The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:

24, But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

Last time we saw that Joseph, being described as a fruit bow whose branch ran over the wall, was a picture and type of our Savior and His successful sacrifice that saved all for whom He died. His mission was an unqualified success and could not be hindered, frustrated, or thwarted. He came into this world to save His elect and save them He did.

As Jacob has declared the success of Joseph, in these verses Jacob declares that Joseph's grand accomplishment was not done without the opposition of many but to no avail. The grief, the shots fired, and the hatred are different ways of describing the animus of all those that opposed Joseph and picture the venom of those that made it their goal in life to destroy our Lord. Historically Joseph was hated by his brethren as is clearly stated in the word of God (37:4, 5, 8). They, as it were, took their bows and nocked their arrows when they wished him dead and sold him into slavery. Potiphar's wife hated him, born of unsatisfied lust, and lied about him, casting him in prison. He suffered much grief, but the Lord delivered him and made him the savior of his family. As the branches that run over the wall, his family would become a great nation and eventually be saved with a great deliverance from the bondage of Egypt and go on to possess the Land of Promise. As great, miraculous, and glorious as all this was, it was but a picture and type of the true Savior

and His family for whom He was humiliated and exalted to save.

Our Lord was grieved. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The sword of justice was drawn from its scabbard and thrust in the bosom of God's fellow. He was hated without a cause. Men did not despise Him for the miracles that He did or their bellies that He filled. It was when He opened His mouth and spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes and scholars. His words, the Word of God, shattered the veneers of the self-righteousness and cast their vain hopes into the dust. Though His considerable gifts caused them to think He might be a benefit to their religious influence, His words incited them to homicidal mania. He told them, the top cream of religious society, that he didn't come for them, had nothing for them, had chosen the refuse of society for his trophies (This man eateth with sinners). He revealed their religion to be defunct and desolate and amounting to nothing. He was not nice to them, calling them vipers, children of hell, open caskets full of dead carcasses. They hated Him, shot their arrows at Him but their darts never hit the target. Even as they nailed Him to the cross, unbeknownst to them, they had been gathered to do what the Lord had foreordained to be done. So it is with his church. They are His branches running over the wall to the uttermost parts of the earth. They are not despised for the good works they do, the services they provide or the kindnesses they show. They are hated for the words they speak (John 15:18-9). The only way the world could know that the Lord had chosen you is if you told them. How many times have believers been told that if they would just not talk about election or predestination there would be no problem? The Lord and His family, His church, His bride, His flock are hated because they can't keep quiet about how God saved his people by the blood of the Lamb, delivering them from the bondage of slavery to sin, Satan, the law, and self.

The Lord and His beloved suffer grief, hatred and the slings and arrows of outrageous religion, but that is what Paul called “our light affliction.” Our Lord’s bow abode in strength (v, 24). Joseph stood as the only hope of salvation. So it is with our Lord. His weapon, His word cannot fail (2 Cor. 2:14-17). His arms and hands are made strong by the Mighty God (Isa. 52:10). As God, He is the only Potentate. As man he had the Spirit without measure (Acts 10:38). And what of the stupendous promise to His church (John 14:12). Greater indeed (Acts 26:17-18). The mighty God is Christ in His power, and He is the strength of the church. Note well, beloved brethren, blood-bought sinners, sinners saved by grace our God describes Himself as the God of Jacob, the saved sinner’s God, the savior of the supplanter. He is our hope and our help...the Mighty God of Jacob. He has ordained the grief, the arrows, and the hatred to be employed in the salvation of his elect (Ps. 76:10; Isa. 54:17).

“The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob”

## FROM THENCE IS THE SHEPHERD

### Genesis 49:24

24, But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

Sometimes, when studying scripture, the believer is stymied. He knows that the passage he is considering is about Christ, His work, or His church but is unable to clearly see it. This is not the case with this text. This short phrase, “from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel” is a plain, potent parenthetical declaration of the Christ of God. From thence, from the mighty God of Jacob, is the shepherd and the stone of Israel. How often did our Lord say that the Father had sent Him, or that He was of God and was God. These titles, the shepherd and the stone belong to Christ throughout this blessed book and are defining terms of His person and His work.

The word of God makes much of the Christ as the shepherd of His flock. As to pedigree, his human lineage He came from the line of the shepherd, the poet psalmist that the Lord measured all the kings of Israel by, “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd” (Ezek. 34:23; Luke 1:31-33). When Isaiah said, “Behold your God” in chapter 40, the true God to be beheld is said to “feed His flock like a shepherd, and gather them in His arms and carry them in His bosom.” As to His wondrous day of death, on the cross of Calvary, in that 3-hour period of darkness, when the Sun was draped and no human eye could behold, the God of justice laid stripes on our iniquities that had been laid on Christ. In some of the most gloriously descriptive language of scripture, that great transaction was proclaimed (Zech. 13; 7). This verse

was quoted by our Lord in Matthew 26:31. As to the declaration of the doctrine of electing grace, the shepherd is the one who makes the distinction (Matt. 25:31-34).

As to the doctrine of particular redemption or limited atonement, the shepherd designates those for whom He died. In John 10 he said, "I lay down my life for the sheep." As to the fact that He came into this world to die, when only he had the power of life and death, he said "no man takes my life, I lay it down of myself and I have power to lay it down and take it up again."

As to the sure salvation of His elect out of every nation, tribe, tongue, and people the shepherd said that he must bring them into the fold (John 10:16; 6:37).

As to effectual call, our good Shepherd said, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me" (John 10:27). He gives them eternal life, eternally preserving them.

As to reprobation our great Shepherd said to those who believed not, "Ye believe not because you are not of my sheep" (John 10:26).

As to the doctrine of imputation, it belongs to the shepherd and his sheep (Isa. 53:5-6). "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all".

As to the Shepherd's intent, purpose and will, He, according to His own words, will not stop searching until He finds every one (Luke 15:4-6; John 6:39).

As to proof of His under shepherds (pastors) love for Him, the great Shepherd's command is to feed His sheep (John 21:15-17).

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Heb. 13:20 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that

great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant”, 1Pet. 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. 1Pet. 5:4 “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away’.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.



# FROM THENCE, THE STONE OF ISRAEL

## Genesis 49:24

24, But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

Jacob has declared that Joseph is a picture of Christ when he said, “from thence is the shepherd.” This pointed to our Lord as the great, good, and chief shepherd of the sheep and all the teaching that attends this glorious designation. In the last part of the last phrase of verse 24 Joseph is declared to be “the stone of Israel.” From the hand of the Mighty God comes the stone of Israel. This designation is an anthropomorphic description of the one person in all human history that fits the bill. The scripture speaks of Christ as being a stone or a rock, usually following the definite articles “the”, “this” or “that.” The use of the definite article sets forth the uniqueness and singularity of Christ as the stone of Israel. The references to Christ in this capacity, under this terminology, are manifold and gives one pause as to where to start.

The best place to start is the beginning, and if in the beginning, it must be about what God has done in reference to the foundation— what all else is built upon. One declaration concerning this stone is employed three times in scripture and their placement is of great import. That phrase is found in Isaiah 28:16, Romans 9:33 and in 1 Peter 2:6. Isaiah 28:16

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”

This is set forth as the answer to those who have confidence in their religion that they boast is a refuge of lies and a hiding place in falsehood. God has laid a foundation and those who rest on this foundation will remain safe as those who have erected their religious confidence on the shifting sands of lies and falsehood shall be consumed when the overflowing scourge shall come.

The second time this phrase is used is in Romans 9 a chapter that many religionists wish was not in scripture at all, as this chapter asserts in absolute terms that God is sovereign in salvation. Romans 9:33,

“As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

Here the stone in Zion is the singular righteousness that God accepts in opposition to those who have sought to established justification without believing God alone for that righteousness. Such sought it not by faith but rather by law, not believing that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe. The stone (Christ) to them was a stone of stumbling.

The third time this is used is in 1 Peter 2:6,

“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.”

Simon Peter in that passage is dealing with those who have been disobedient to the truth, having disallowed the foundation that God has laid, even His Word. In that passage, Peter also writes of Christ as the head stone, the stone that the builders refused and assert that those who have done so were appointed

to this condemnation. This declares that God is sovereign in election and reprobation. God, himself, has laid this foundation. He makes this clear to Job when Job begins to assert his own righteousness. Job 38:4-7,

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

That foundation is Christ and His Gospel, of which Paul spoke in 1 Cor. 3:11,

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Christ is the foundation, cornerstone and headstone of the building, the temple, the church. Zech. 4:7,

“Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it” (foundation stone, corner stone, head stone).”

Christ is the stone that the builders refused. Ps. 118:22,

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.”

Peter quoted this verse before the high priest when confronted about how the crippled man was healed in Acts 4;

10-12. Our Lord quoted this verse to the chief priest and the Pharisees and told them that this stone was life and death (Matt. 21:42-46).

This stone of Israel is our Rock. He is the doctrine of God (Deut. 32:2-4). Christ is God's doctrine (Heb. 1:1-2). And their rock is not our Rock (Deut. 32:31 (judges...in their estimation)). These words were spoken to those who embraced idols. They *know* that their rock is not like our Rock.

Being placed in this stone of Israel is where we are enabled to see the glory of God in viewing what He has done...back parts (Ex. 33:18-23; 34:6-7).

This stone's Gospel is the Rock upon which the Lord's church is built. Matt. 16:13-18,

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

This stone of Israel is our hiding place.

“And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa. 32:2).

This stone of Israel is the water of life.

“Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.” “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (Ex. 17:6).

“And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (1 Cor 10:4).

## UPON JOSEPH'S HEAD

### Genesis 49:25-26

25, Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

26, The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

In this passage, Jacob ends his prophecies concerning Joseph. He speaks of the blessings that Joseph will receive from God that will surpass those of his brethren. Historically these blessing will be bestowed during the remaining years of Joseph's reign in Egypt. These blessing consist of natural elements, necessities for life, that will be provided for Joseph and his brethren as they take up residence in Goshen and grow into a great nation. These blessings, placed on Joseph's head will assure the prosperity of the household of Jacob for the glorious days that precede their predestinated slavery at the hand of Pharaoh that knew not Joseph and their great deliverance from bondage by blood of the lamb. That nation, though enslaved, will be preserved until the day of redemption. God, through Joseph, will assure that all things will serve this nation, even the cruel hand of Pharaoh.

Spiritually, this is a picture of salvation of the elect. They are preserved until the day of redemption, and they will find that God has ordered all things, even their bondage, to work for their good. And these blessings will flow from the blessings that The

Father has placed upon the head of Christ, the head of the church.

The blessings listed are from a singular source. They are from the source of all blessings. The doxology reads,

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

Praise him all creatures here below,

Praise Him above ye heavenly host,

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.”

All blessings are by God who shall be your help (Ps. 33:20). All blessings flow from the Almighty, who shall bless thee (Num.:4-26). These blessings are described as, “of heaven, of the deep, of the breast and the womb, and of the hills.” Naturally speaking, these have to do with that which supports life and progeny. Rain from above, water from the deep wells, milk or sustenance for the children, the promise of future children and family and the crops and vineyards that the hills produce. Spiritually, from heaven the believer receives “all good and perfect gifts from the Father of Lights” (Jam. 1:17) from the deep, refers to “the deep things of God’ that the Spirit reveals to us. From the breast refers to the “sincere milk of the word” (1 Cor. 2:9-12) . From the womb refers to the truth of the church that the “barren has more children that she that hath a husband” (Isa. 54:1; Gal. 4:27). From the hills refers to the estate of the church that has receives manifold blessings from the hill of Golgotha and the Holy hill Zion (Ps. 121).

These blessings are said to be upon the head of Joseph. Christ is the head of the church, and all blessing are upon Him. The church, being His body, receives all that He receives (Rom. 8:16-17). As all blessings are upon Him, by the Almighty, all believers are in Him. They are said be blessed with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). These blessings, said to be of thy father,

placed on Christ's head exceed the blessings of those who are born of Him as He is the One upon whom all these blessings exist.

Verse 25 asserts that the crown belongs on Christ's head. He is king of kings and Lord of lords. The crown is His glory, and it belongs to Him alone. He, by Himself, has purged our sins, and has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. He, by one sacrifice, has perfected forever them that are sanctified; even to the extent that God will remember their sins no more (Heb. 10:13-18; Isa. 53:10-12).

He was separate from His brethren. Joseph was the one that was beloved of his father. His father loved him above his brethren. He was the firstborn of Jacob's true love Rachel and was separated from his brethren. The Lord gave him dreams, which were prophetic of the glory of Christ. He was given a special coat that distinguished him from his brethren. Christ was beloved of the Father (This is my beloved Son-baptism, Mt. of transfiguration). He was the firstborn, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He was the firstborn of many brethren (Rom. 8:29). They were all sinners saved by grace and He is separate from sinners. He knew no sin, did no sin, and yet was made sin for His people that they would be made the righteousness of God.

“Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.”



## DEVOUR AND DIVIDE

### Genesis 49:27

27, Benjamin shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

This is Jacob's description of the second son born to the love of his life, Rachel. The description is concise and precise and describes Benjamin in two ways. He is described as to what he is, a wolf and he is described as to what he does, he ravens in the day and he divides the spoil at night. There appears to be a distinction as to times, as typology is applied. The tribe of Benjamin proves this to be true throughout the word of God. The wolf is often the stuff of legend, mythology, and scripture. The wolf is almost exclusively described as ravenous, cunning, and powerful. In mythology, the wolf is attached Mars, the warring god and his pursuits are martial. The tribe of Benjamin proved to be great in war when his tribe, with an army of 26,000 destroyed and decimated an army of 400,000. This is recorded in Judges 20:15-25. King Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin and a ravening wolf can certainly be applied to him in his warring and his cunning, though he was an evil man. Jewish writers apply these characteristics to Mordecai (in Esther) as he destroyed the plots of Haman and received all that Haman thought to gain (Esther 10:3).

The second part of the description is what takes place after the wolf has destroyed his prey in the daytime. At night he divides the spoil. This probably refers to the Alpha wolf sharing his kill with the rest of his pack. But, as we well know, every aspect of this grand book in some way refers to Christ, His work, His church, or His Gospel.

The tribe of Benjamin is mentioned 4 times in the New Testament. In the Acts, he is referred to in reference to King Saul as being from His tribe. In the Revelation, he is named as one of the twelve tribes. The other two times are personal references spoken by one of the tribe of Benjamin who ravened in the morning of his life and divided the spoils in the evening of his life. The first time he refers to himself in the lineage of Benjamin is to prove to those who have claimed that the Gospel disallows the Jews, that Christ came to save some out of every tribe, tongue, nation, and people. His proof that God has not forsaken the Jews is that he, a Jew, has been saved (Rom. 11:1). The second time he referred to himself as from the tribe of Benjamin, he was showing that salvation has nothing to do with lineage or any other aspect of the flesh but is entirely by the grace and righteousness of Christ (Phil. 3:3-9). This was Saul of Tarsus, of the tribe of Benjamin was a ravening wolf in the morning of his life. He was a terror to the church, causing havoc, persecuting, imprisoning beating believers and seeking to wipe the name of Christ from the face of the earth. He was relentless in his horrible pursuit, the church his prey, ravening as a wolf in the morning. But on the road to Damascus, he met his nemesis and was summarily conquered and in the evening of his life he divided the spoils, preaching the Gospel to Jews and gentiles alike spending and being spent for the elect's sake. To the law keepers he became the ravening wolf. Destroying their last vestige of hope in the power of their flesh while telling them of the spoils our savior metes out to this elect.

Benjamin, as described in the text, is a type of the Lord, our Savior. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah though He is not described as a wolf in scripture. But these words apply to what our Lord did for us. As we were born in this world, there were three sovereigns that ruled every aspect of our living death. Sin, death, and Satan were our sovereigns. Sin and death reigned over us (Rom. 5:13-14, 20-21). Sin and death were no match for the King of kings and the Lord of lords. (Rom. 8:2-3). He, like

a ravening wolf in the morning, by His death, put death in the grave, put sin away, as far as the east from the west, behind God's back and buried them in the depths of the sea. Having slain His prey, he brought in everlasting righteousness. Having devoured His prey, He brought immortality to light through His Gospel. And Satan ran our show. Too powerful for us to handle, we resided in His palace, under his mighty thumb and his palace was in peace. But though he was at peace in His temporary domain, there was a ravening wolf on his trail, and though he would bruise the heel of the wolf, the ravening wolf would bruise his head (Matt. 12:28-29; Lk. 11; 20-21). The prince of this world is cast out by the substitutionary death of the absolute Sovereign (Col. 2:15; Is. 53:10-12). Now is the evening of the wolf and his pack enjoys the spoils of His victory.

“Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.”

# JACOB TAUGHT US

## Genesis 49:28-32

28, All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

29, And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

30, In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace.

31, There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.

32, The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth.

This is the account of Jacob's last moments on the earth. Having declared the futures of his sons, he tells his sons to bury him in the cave Machpelah where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah and Leah are buried. The first thirteen verses of the next chapter are the record of Joseph carrying out the commands of his father Jacob. My thoughts this past week have been about Jacob and his God. Jacob's earthly life has ended. One of the great and well-documented patriarchs has left this world for the next. Centuries ago, this man ceased to be and yet the record of his life, his weakness, frailties, his courage, and his triumphs occupy the minds of believers to this day. In Southern

vernacular, he would surely fit the colloquial designation saying, “He was a character.” His life is a large lesson and every sinner, saved by grace, can relate to it. Every preacher that preaches the Gospel of sovereign grace treasures the record of this man’s life. Jacob taught us. Actually, God taught us using the life and directing the steps of this man.

Jacob’s life taught us what a sinner is. There are numerous evil men in scripture and may be rightly designated as sinners but who never know the wonder of God’s grace. But there are other sinners, sinners who are made to confess what they are, sinners who Christ came to save, blood-bought sinners whose lives prove the fact. Jacob was such a sinner. His naming at birth had no “el” or “Jah” at the end of it that associates him with God. He was named Jacob, which means “supplanter.” A supplanter is “One who usurps the place of, especially through intrigue or underhanded tactics.” His name predetermined what he would do to his brother Esau. Actually, this was God’s designation, declaring at his birth, “the elder shall serve the younger.” Jacob’s sin was unbelief. He felt that though God had promised him the birthright, it was up to him to make sure God’s promise was fulfilled. He sought to supplant God in the fulfillment of what God had purposed. The lesson finally learned by every believer is that God does not need, want, or solicit help from any of His creatures. Jacob was a con man, a momma’s boy, a usurper, a liar, a deceiver, and a prolific whiner. He was a sinner— and God loved Him. God said that He loved him in Malachi’s prophecy and in Paul’s epistle to the Romans. A consideration of Jacob, of his life, his character makes one know, of a surety, that God’s love is unconditional. There is no condition in the life of this man that made him loveable, but God loved Him. And according to scripture, the only way God’s love is perceived, grasped, or understood is that God laid down His life for Jacob. “He loved us and gave Himself for us.” The thrice-holy God, whose eyes are too pure to behold evil, often

refers to Himself, in His infallible Word as, “the God of Jacob.” Jacob taught us.

Jacob taught us that God’s love is distinctive and particular. The two times that God said He loved Jacob was declared in opposition to who he hated (Mal. 1:2-3. Romans 9:13). Some have said, erroneously, that God didn’t really hate Esau. He just loved him less than Jacob. That is a lie. In both instances in the Hebrew and the Greek, the word “hate” means to detest, to pursue with hate, to count as a foe or an enemy. There is not a hint, a scintilla of affection ever attached to the word hate (Ps. 11:5). God loves His own, His people, His elect, His sheep, His church, His bride, His children, his brethren. They all are, by nature at enmity with him, but He does not count all of them so. The Bible is clear. Those whom God has loved he has drawn to Himself (Jer. 31:3). Those whom God has loved, He saved (1 John 3:16-17). Jacob taught us the God’s love is particular and effectual and not universal.

Jacob taught us of election unto salvation. The result of God’s unconditional love was unconditional election. This truth is set forth in the Word of God more that 140 times. It is clearly declared and the men who were inspired to report it were thankful for it.

“Twas not I did choose thee,  
For Lord that could not be.  
I would still refuse thee  
had thou not chosen me.”

This truth is declared unequivocally in Scripture (Eph. 1:3-6; 2 Thess. 2:13), but in the case Jacob and Esau it is defined, illuminated, an illustrated. In Romans 9:11-13, Jacob and Esau

are employed to teach that election is absolutely unconditional so that there would be no question that God's grace is unconditional and entirely according to His prerogative. Jacob is gone from this world, but he, being dead, yet speaketh. His life and character proclaim that God's mercy and grace are for sinners! Jacob taught us, "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins."

## OUR UNBELIEF

### Genesis 50:15-21

15, And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16, And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

17, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

18, And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

19, And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?

20, But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

21, Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

What leads up to this passage is the embalming and mourning that follows the death of Jacob. The embalming lasted forty days and involved the removal of internal organs and the immersion of the body in a pickling solution that served to preserve the body. This was not a practice among the tribes but was



employed for the long journey from Egypt to the burial place at Machpelah. During that period there was great mourning for Jacob and the Egyptian mourned 70 days out of respect for Joseph (vv. 1-20). After Jacob was buried, we have the account of the reaction of the brethren in their thoughts toward Joseph (vv. 15-17a).

Their words, that reveal their scheming plot, are born of guilt for what they had, long ago, done to their brother. Their hatred for Joseph had perhaps subsided but his exalted position brought about the fear, which, in turn, excited the conscience. The excited conscience accuses them of their wicked deeds and, as the conscience always does, it proposes a plan to remedy the situation and remove the fear of punishment. It always works that way, and it never works. Conscience never operates outside the realm of sin and the law. It never operates in the realm of grace and mercy and therefore has no place in the realm of forgiveness. If found on the realm of grace, it is there as a silent witness to the effectual work of Jesus Christ, which removed any ground upon which the conscience can accuse. The plan that conscience instigated was simple. The boys said, "lets lie to Joseph" (vv. 15-17). They plotted to use name of their dead father, since he could not challenge their words, to gain forgiveness for what they had done to Joseph years before. This flawed strategy was born, as all are, of unbelief. Joseph had, long before, forgiven them (45:1-5). But the words of Billie Shakespeare, "Conscience makes cowards of us all." Believers are often plagued with doubts when they recall their former rebellious, sinful estate. Have we not at times wondered how we could possibly have been forgiven when we look at our life, regurgitate our sin, frailty, weakness, and untoward thoughts. Introspection is the gateway to despair. If the Lord has declared your forgiveness, believe it and do not dwell on yourself but abide in the doctrine of Christ. If He should mark iniquities, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Him. When Joseph heard their ploy, He wept. Probably these were tears of

exasperation. Their unbelief in the face of his obvious kindness was amazing. They were Joseph's brethren, his beloved brethren, and when they saw his tears, they carried their scheme to the next level (v. 18). They bowed down before him and put themselves forth as his servants. This was manufactured humility to gain pity and save their hides. Their bowing intimated worship and Joseph would have none of it (Rev. 19:10; 22:9). Joseph said basically, "Am I God" to whom both forgiveness and vengeance belong (v.19). Jacob said the same thing to Rachel when she blamed him for her barrenness (30:1-2).

Then Joseph settled the matter by declaring God's sovereignty in the sinful acts of his brethren and the placement of Joseph in this point of history in the life of this people. Their sin and hatred against Joseph and His consequent exaltation and all occurrences that brought the 12 tribes to this day, are the result of providential purpose and intent (Job. 23:13-14). Joseph said, I'm not God, but as for me (especially as it relates to you and what you have done) you thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass (as to what has transpired to this moment) to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive. Read verse 21. "Fear not little flock, it is the Lord's pleasure to give you the kingdom." He spoke to their heart (Is.40:1-2)

Is this not the picture of our Savior. He came to His own and they received Him not. He was hated, despised, and rejected and acquainted with grief. He was the stone that the builders refused that has become the head of the corner; has been made both Lord and Christ. He stood accused before the court of Caiaphas and the kangaroo court of Rome, and we stood in the courtyard crying, "Crucify him, crucify Him, let His blood be on our heads." We nailed Him to the cross, mocked him, wagged our tongues against Him, crying, "We will not have this man reign over us." We satisfied our blood lust and vented our venom on him. Now hear His words- "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "But as for you,

ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive”.

# I DIE

## Genesis 50:22-26

22, And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

23, And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

24, And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

25, And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

26, So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

We began this study 3 years ago on the 13th of February 2019. Today we come to the end of the book of beginnings, the book of first things. This great, old historical and spiritual account of God and His people sets forth the glories of Christ, the people to whom He has given faith and their appointed ends. The wickedness of humanity is not hidden but is openly recorded. The weakness, frailty and sin of the Lord's elect is also recorded as is their faith and faithfulness to the promise of God and the grace of God is seen as the only hope of mankind. Human history began, in purpose of God before the world began. It began with the first human being, the true human being, the human being as all human beings ought to be. It began with the man, Jesus Christ, displayed as the Lamb slain from the

foundation of the world, the eternal surety of God's chosen race. This immutable man, disclosed in eternity, superseded the mutable man created and made from the dirt of the ground. The first earth-bound man in this book is Adam and the last earth-bound man in this book is Joseph. He is perhaps the most prolific type of our Savior that is in all of scripture. Now as his life is about to end, so ends the book of beginnings. And it ends on the highest of notes.

The people of God, the 12 tribes of Israel, the sons of Jacob, have arrived at the beginning of a four-century period that will grow them into a great nation whose existence brings fear to the great and powerful Egypt. Now, at the end of Joseph's life they have been in the land of Goshen, many decades and all is well. Their brother, their hero, their savior is about to die, and they are gathered for his last words. He lives to the ripe old age of 110 and all those days except for the first 13 years have been spent in Egypt for the sole purpose of saving a nation that only exists in the loins of 12 men but will reach to what some have conjectured, above a million when they are delivered by the blood of the Lamb. He was prepared for the office of savior through trial, hatred, betrayal, false accusation and God-given wisdom and the gift faith (Heb. 5:8-9).

Joseph is described for us in his final hours. He is described as a kind and loving great-grand-dad (v. 23). He is pictured as living to see his great grandchildren and as holding them or dandling them upon his knees, in his lap. Oh, what stories he had to tell! Oh, what wisdom he had to impart! The mark of a society that is about to become desolate is that they care not for the ancient (Is. 3:5). How well the wisdom he imparted was employed is not recorded as these little ones were also long gone by the time this nation was delivered, but they died knowing the kindness and love of their great granddad.

And as he was about to pass from this world to the next, he reveals what he is. He is a believer, a man to whom God has given faith. He brought his sons together and told them what

he, by faith knew, He first told them of what he knew concerning the promise God had given to Abraham on the night that Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15-13-14). "God will surely visit you." For the believer, there can be no better news than this. And if God visits, there is a reason for it and according to the Word, the reason is predestinated bondage followed by predestinated deliverance. This nation, yet to be fully formed, has every step they take ordered by the Lord. He will visit you to bring you out of this land. At this time, the tribes had it pretty good. They may have thought that being brought out was not such a good idea. It is recorded that after deliverance that many wanted to go back, desiring bondage to liberty. A believer cannot imagine this thinking, but legalist religion fears freedom more than they fear slavery. For some time, the tribes will enjoy the leeks and garlic of Egypt and will have no problem until a king arises that knew not Joseph. Deliverance was probably not in their mindset but long after these gathered here will perish, their progeny will cry to God to be saved. "God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land unto the land which He swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Deut.6:23). And Joseph made his brethren swear that when the Lord visited them that they would not leave his bones in Egypt but carry them with them to the land of promise and bury them there. This is recorded in the New Testament as an act of faith (Heb. 11:22). He believed a vocally rehearsed prophecy from centuries before that would not be fulfilled until centuries later. Is it any wonder that faith is foolishness to the world? But to the believer, the Word of God is sure, true and an unshakable foundation.

So, Joseph died and was embalmed, and his body was put in a coffin. He died in faith. This is the only time this word "coffin" is translated "coffin" in scripture. It means a "chest" and many writers, of old, say it means "hope chest." Many ideas have been put forth as to where his bones were kept. Some historians say he was buried in Egypt and Moses dug up his bones. Some say

he was put in catacombs. Other say his coffin was cast in the Nile. Yet others say his coffin was a sarcophagus and was leaned up against a wall for 400 years. What we do know is that when the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, they carried Joseph's bones with them according to the promise (Ex. 13; 19). What we do know is that Joseph's coffin was buried in the Promise Land (Jos. 24:32). What we do know, if God has given us faith, is that what God has promised, He will perform (Rom. 4:20-21).

Knowing not who the elect are, we preach the Gospel to every creature saying in God-given faith, "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." It is God, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began"