

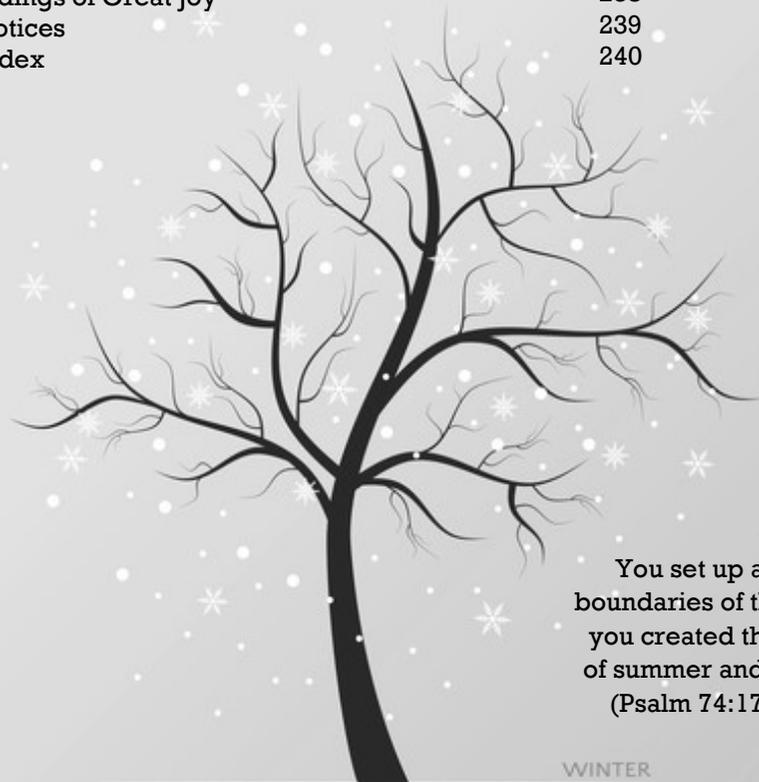
BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

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You set up all the
boundaries of the earth;
you created the cycle
of summer and winter.
(Psalm 74:17 NET)

WINTER

BIBLE STUDY MONTHLY

FOUNDED 1924

The Bible Study Monthly, published to promote knowledge of the Bible, sees the Scriptures as a true record of God's dealings with the human race, needing to be understood in our generation. It stands for the pre-millennial advent of our Lord, and His reign of peace and justice on the earth.

“Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.” (Ephesians 4:15 NRSV)

The Bible Study Monthly is sent free of charge on request to all who are genuinely interested. It should never be sold for money.

Secretary & Treasurer: Nicholas Charcharos

UK Renewal Notices with this issue

Overseas renewal Notices with January / February 2022 Issue

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

“As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.” (Gen. 8:22 NLT)

The seasons of the year are a feature of living in this world. In Genesis God promises that the seasons will remain and this is borne out by Psalm 74:17 and shows God created this feature. We have four seasons but as far as the Bible is concerned there are two seasons, summer and winter.

Winter is associated with bad weather. In Britain it leads to low temperatures with frosts. Summer bedding plants get killed off in the first frosts and hardier plants stop flowering. Some animals hibernate. Homes need heating in the winter which increases the energy costs. Snow makes travel hazardous. In Israel, Turkey and southern Europe where the New Testament was written the climate was different. Winter in Israel was cool and rainy from October to April. This still meant travel was difficult and roads muddy and the daylight shorter. This is the sense when Paul asked Timothy to come before winter. (2 Tim. 4:21) Travel by sea was more dangerous in winter. Some harbours were not suitable for winter such as Fair Havens off Crete. Acts 27 records in the early part of winter that Paul was ship-wrecked on Malta when the Aegean and the Mediterranean Seas can be very rough even for modern sea vessels. It appeared that Paul remained in Corinth for the winter to avoid travelling in the winter weather. (1 Cor. 16:6)

Jesus said “pray your flight be not in winter.” (Mark 13:18) In the first century A.D. the instruction was to get out of Jerusalem and the land of Israel. Those who did not get out before AD 70 ended up getting killed when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. None survived the last stand at Masada in AD 73. We can see that the disciple John heeded that message and we find him on the Greek island of Patmos writing Revelation after AD 70. Recently there have been desperate scenes in Kabul of those who were planning to leave Afghanistan frantically trying to board the last planes out and many failing to get out at all who may never be able to leave. This is an illustration of leaving it too late and lack of planning.

What immediately precedes winter? It is the harvest. Throughout the Gospel age the church has been selected out of the world. This must come to a close and there will be the consummation of this Gospel age (Christian era). This is also what Jesus is talking about in Mark 13. There will be a tribulation such as never was since creation. (v.19,24) The import is to make ourselves ready and make our calling and election sure before the wintertime of the consummation of the age. There are many signs of tribulation for the world with the pandemic and the climate which affects the global economy to indicate it may come quickly.

Nevertheless what follows winter? Here in Britain with four seasons its spring. Spring brings new life, the end of stagnation, sowing. So with the tribulation it will end and new age will be evident on earth. The opening scene will be the resurrection of the dead. This is cause for rejoicing for those who rest in the promises of God.



*The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.*

*Soon, soon from out the dust
Shall all come forth and sing;
Sharp has the frost of winter been,
But brightly shines the spring.*

Magazine content; What is published is believed to have a wide interest, but everything printed may not necessarily be the opinion of the editor and his colleagues.

LEAH AND RACHEL

Two sisters, both married to the same man, both desperately in love with him, each contending for his favour; this is the story of Leah and Rachel, wives of Jacob progenitor of Israel. The story is recounted without passion or sentiment, but passion and sentiment there must have been. The unfortunate Jacob was called a prince with God (Gen. 32:28) on account of his place in the Divine purposes, but in domestic life he knew little peace and must sometimes have been hard put to, in order to hold the balance between the two sisters who became his simultaneous wives.

It was not altogether Jacob's fault. He had been deceived by his father-in-law Laban. He wanted Rachel for his wife and only Rachel. The story makes clear that he had no eyes for the elder sister Leah. But there was an element of poetic justice in the situation, for Jacob's very presence in this land was in consequence of his deception of his father Isaac in the matter of Esau and the birthright. Following that episode he had set out for his uncle's establishment five hundred miles away to get out of Esau's sight, and immediately upon arrival fell passionately in love with his cousin Rachel. She was about seventeen and he was fifty-seven (which, considering the longer lifespan of men in those days was equivalent to mid-thirties today). Laban, perceiving which way the wind was blowing, proposed that Jacob enter his service on the stock farm for seven years, after which he would consent to the marriage, and this Jacob accepted. So the story runs; "*Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.*" (Gen. 29:20)

Came the end of the seven years and time for fulfilment of the contract. Laban, however, had been thinking. Rachel was apparently a very attractive girl, but there was the older sister, Leah, who, if the Hebrew term is correctly translated, was what we today would call dull-eyed. Laban would like to get her off his hands; Jacob had proved a very useful member of his workforce but once he had married Rachel he would want to be off home again with her. With a little astuteness he might bind Jacob to him for another term of years. So he called all the menfolk of his acquaintance to the wedding-feast. When it was over Jacob was conducted to his quarters and his bride brought to him. Not until next morning did he discover, to his consternation, that the woman beside him was not Rachel, but Leah.

This time it was at least partly Jacob's fault. For this kind of deception to have worked it could only be that Jacob had imbibed much too freely at

the feast on the previous evening—Laban had probably seen to that anyway—and was in no condition at its end to differentiate between one and the other. Only when he sobered up in the morning did he realise the truth.

Of course, he expostulated, but Laban was ready with an excuse and a fresh proposal. It was not the custom of his country, he explained, to permit the marriage of the younger daughter first. It seems a bit feeble; he had had seven years already to have acquainted Jacob with the marriage customs of the country and only when it was too late did he think it necessary so to do. But he went on soothingly, Jacob could have Rachel also if he would consent to remain another seven years in Laban's service. He must give Leah the first seven days, then the second marriage could take place.

One wonders what part the two sisters took in all this. Leah must have been a consenting party. The narrative shows that she also was in love with the handsome stranger who had come into their household and since she could not get him by fair means was not averse to becoming his wife by trickery. Rachel also must have known about it, and she certainly would not have consented willingly. A distinct impression is given that both the girls had to do as they were told; Laban is pictured as a rather unscrupulous and domineering personage who intended to have things his own way. Women were of little account in those days, and it was very much a man's world; Rachel was probably told she could have Jacob on her father's terms or not at all. The sequel shows that she never forgave Leah. And Laban's dominance over his daughters is highlighted by the alacrity (eagerness) with which they seized the opportunity to get away from him when, much later on, Jacob proposed that they all migrate to Canaan and the home of Isaac his father.

The second seven years passed. Leah had given Jacob three children, Reuben, Simeon, Levi. Rachel was childless. With each child Leah reiterated her belief that her husband would be reconciled to her on their account, but it was a vain hope. Jacob was indifferent; he performed his duty as a husband but that was all. Rachel was his one and only love and he could not forget Laban's deception. But Rachel was getting desperate. In accord with the beliefs of the times, her only hope of retaining Jacob's love was to give him children. So she pleaded with her husband "*Give me children, or else I die.*" (Gen. 30:1) It is possible that the Hebrew term is better rendered "Give me children, whether or not I die" and casts a better reflection on Rachel's character; she was prepared to give her life if need

be to experience the happiness of bearing a child to Jacob. His rejoinder sounds harsh and unsympathetic in the A.V. rendering; his “*anger was kindled against Rachel*”—“*am I in God’s stead?*” (Gen. 30:2) he asked, but this attitude and these words are quite likely the outcome of his own feelings of disappointment and frustration. He was probably quite as bitter at the turn events had taken as was Rachel.

At this point Rachel, evidently fearing that, although still only thirty-one years of age, she would never become a mother, invoked the old Sumerian and Hurrian laws which still prevailed in Syria, and took the same action as Sarai the wife of Abraham, in similar circumstances, more than a century previously. She exerted her legal right and privilege of giving her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob so that any resulting children would be accredited to Rachel as the legal wife. The next few years saw two sons and perhaps a daughter or two result from this union and Rachel was more content. “*God...hath also heard my voice*” she said, “*and given me a son.*” (v.6) Rather less worthily, perhaps, when the second of Bilhah’s sons was born, she gloated over her victory over Leah; the old jealousy was still there. Leah was not slow to retaliate. She had a fourth son, Judah, by now and probably a daughter or two also, but then came a halt and in the endeavour to maintain her advantage and not be outdone by Rachel she followed her sister’s example and gave her own handmaid Zilpah to Jacob. This brought two more sons into Jacob’s growing family so that after about seventeen years of married life he had eight sons and an unspecified number of daughters, together with four wives between whom he had to keep the peace. Quite enough for one man! When his mother Rebekah sent him to her brother’s home to find a wife from her own family she could hardly have expected this denouement (conclusion).

At this time there occurred the incident of the mandrakes. (Gen. 30:14-16) Reuben, the eldest child of Leah, now about sixteen years of age, found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother. Rachel, seeing them, coveted, and asked Leah for some. Leah struck a bargain; if she could have Jacob’s company that night Rachel could have the mandrakes. Rachel assented, and the result was the birth of Leah’s fifth son, Issachar.

No one knows for certain just what plant is represented by the Hebrew *dudaim*, translated mandrake, only that the term means love-plant or love-apple, but there is every probability that the botanical mandrake is the one. Had the writer of the account any idea that thousands of years later his story would still be read he might have given an explanation but as it was everyone in his day knew what the term implied. The mandrake is a

tap-rooted plant bearing small flowers and apple-like fruits, native to countries in the Middle East and carrying a superstition that it is conducive to fruitfulness when eaten by barren women; this might very well be the plant referred to. The association in this particular case is obvious. Apparently the finding of the fruits was something of a rarity and Rachel grasped at this straw of hope that by this means the dearest wish of her heart might be fulfilled.

Another son, Zebulun, was born to Leah, and the one daughter of Jacob whose name is mentioned, Dinah; at forty-nine years of age Leah seems to be content with six sons of her own and two by Zilpah. A comparison of Gen. 29:31-34 with 30:18-20 appears to indicate that she had by now given up all hope of winning Jacob's love, and had settled down to an acceptance of the position. Her eldest sons were approaching manhood and with Rachel still childless Leah must have been increasingly looked upon by Jacob's servants and retainers as the matriarch of the clan.

Ten years after the incident of the mandrakes, and twenty-seven since the date of Jacob's two marriages, the unexpected happened. Rachel, at last, gave birth to a son.

At fifty-one years of age she must have long since given up all hope. Now her native faith came to the top and she acknowledged the goodness of God; in a flash of prophetic insight she voiced her belief that He would give her a second son. Jacob, at ninety-one, must have felt a sense of overwhelming satisfaction. This was the son he had always wanted, and it is clear that he looked upon Joseph as his principal heir and possessor of the birthright. The well-known jealousy of the older brothers at a later date stems directly from this fact. Joseph, the son of his beloved Rachel, was always the dearest to Jacob's heart.

From this point of time Jacob began to fret to go home. He had got the wife he came for, he had got his heir, but he was still in Laban's service. He had little of his own. Whether his intimation to Laban that he now wanted to return to Canaan was as sincere as appears on the surface or merely a ploy to facilitate some bargaining of his own with Laban is impossible to say but at any rate by the time the two men had fenced around the position and come to terms Jacob had secured an extremely favourable agreement. The details of that agreement form no part of this story; suffice that within the short space of six years the older sons of Jacob, now in their twenties, were managing an increasingly prosperous stock farm on their father's behalf while Jacob, sixty miles distant,

continued to supervise Laban's interests. The story says of him that during those six years "*the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.*" (Gen. 30:43)

Not unnaturally, Laban's own sons began to grumble. They saw their father's and so their own prosperity begin to diminish as that of Jacob increased. "*The countenance of Laban*" was "*not toward him (Jacob) as before.*" (31:2) Although the agreement had looked on the surface as though Laban would reap the greater advantage he now realised that he had been outwitted by a man who knew a great deal more about stock-breeding than he did himself, and this he did not like. Jacob formed the opinion that it was about time to pack up and go. His wives agreed with him. They saw a better future for themselves and their sons five hundred miles away from Laban in Canaan. It remained only to organise a quiet and successful departure.

The opportunity came at the annual sheepshearing which was an occasion of much ceremonial feasting and ritual, when normal work ceased for a week and all the outlying workers came into the headquarters of the establishment to participate. Jacob assembled his people on his own territory which was already sixty miles in the direction of Canaan from Laban, and set out. By the time some local busybody had got to Laban to tell him what had happened Jacob had already something like a hundred miles start. By the time he had cleared another hundred miles Laban and his men had caught up with him and there ensued the acrimonious altercation which is recorded in Gen. 31:25-55. Of the many complaints that Laban had, the one which annoyed him most was that Jacob in departing had, so he thought, stolen his "gods"—his *teraphim*, to use the Hebrew word—an accusation which Jacob hotly denied. And this is where Rachel comes back into the story.

Rachel—who like everyone else in her family, seems to have had an eye to the main chance—had packed with her belongings the "images," the *teraphim* which belonged to her father. Says ch. 31:19 "*Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.*" She had a purpose in so doing which overshadowed all considerations of morality. These "*teraphim*" were miniature figures of ancestral family gods which were handed down from father to son and esteemed as guardian deities warding off illness and danger to the house and its occupants. The predominant race occupying and ruling the land in which Laban lived was the one known today as the Hurrians, and by Hurrian law physical possession of the family *teraphim* entitled the holder to a share in the father's estate. It would seem that

Rachel's object in stealing and concealing them was that upon Laban's death she could claim a share of his estate, perhaps fearing that her young son Joseph might be deprived of any share in that of Jacob by the older sons of Leah. At any rate, when Laban, at Jacob's demand, searched his wives' tents for the missing treasures, Rachel adopted a successful subterfuge by reason of which he went away empty-handed. Not that it did her much good. A little later Jacob had all the teraphim and other symbols of idolatrous worship throughout his establishment given up and buried. For him and his people there was to be only one God, the God of Abraham. The incident does reveal that for all their professed worship of God, the religion of Laban and Leah and Rachel was tinged with idolatry.

Now the sands were running out for Rachel. The long five hundred miles journey to Canaan, encumbered as it was with flocks and herds, occupied three years. They must have been three tedious years, and Rachel was no longer young. Added to that, she was to know motherhood again. The climax came when they were almost within sight of their destination. At a little country place which afterwards became Bethlehem, Jacob's twelfth son, Benjamin, was born and simultaneously Rachel breathed her last. She was sixty-three.

One can only guess at the thoughts of Jacob, as he buried her there by the wayside and erected a pillar of stone to mark the spot, a spot which is still marked today by a monument. For her, and for him, and for Leah, life had been a long disappointment and frustration. Later history has shown that they were all instruments in the hand of God, but sometimes it is a hard thing to be an instrument in the hand of God. They all were subject to the shortcomings which are common to all men, but at any rate they did their best. Of Leah we hear no more. When Jacob and his family migrated into Egypt thirty years later to escape the famine her name is not mentioned; she probably died quietly in the interim. Her passing severed the last link binding the family of Abraham to that of Nahor his brother. When Israel returned from Egypt four centuries later the descendants of Laban were enemies. He must have fathered an influential nation, for in the 8th Century B.C. the Assyrians called North Syria the land of Labanu, and in fact his name survives in the name Lebanon applied to part of that land today. Unworthy as his character may have been, the crowning glory of Laban the Syrian was that his two daughters became the mothers of the Divinely chosen nation of Israel.

AOH

In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. (Matt. 2:18)

THE WINTER TIME

“Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matt. 24:20-21)

“I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree...till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” (Rev. 7:1-3)

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” (Jer. 8:20)

Under the figure of *winter* our Lord aptly describes that period of time termed the “great tribulation”—the time of the world’s greatest adversity and sufferings. Like the natural season, winter quickly follows the period of special favour and blessing which is known in the Scriptures as summer. (Jer. 8:20) The Bible reckoning of the seasons is somewhat different from the present method, for instead of dividing the year into four seasons, as we are accustomed to do, the Bible divides the year into two—summer and winter. During the summer the work of *sowing and reaping* is done, while the winter of adverse conditions is a period of enforced inactivity and general discomfort.

This very suitably harmonizes with the developments of the Divine Plan, so far as the Ages are concerned. The hope of joint-heirship in the Kingdom which has been proclaimed amongst the nations throughout the present Age, is likened unto a *sowing work*, and the *gathering home* of the results of the Gospel Call, at the end of the Age, is called the harvest. The sowing and also the reaping take place during the summer of favour and opportunity, but like the natural season, the work of reaping and of gathering the fruitage of this Age, will scarcely be over, ere (before) the ploughman of tribulation and general disorder will quickly follow the efforts of the reapers. (Amos 9:13)

THE FOUR PROTECTING ANGELS

The Four Winds. It is generally conceded that even the worst form of government control is better than no government at all, for it provides for its subjects, a measure of protection, at least, from general lawlessness and anarchy. The Scriptures inform us that at the close of this Age, every form of governmental control and every organisation comprising part of the present world system, will be consumed and pass away in a general outburst of human wrath and anarchy. Law and order, having then come

to an end, human passion and lawlessness influenced by Satanic depravity will know no bounds—it will be wintertime, so far as the human race is concerned. (Matt. 24:21-22) So long as the four supporting pillars—social, financial, political and ecclesiastical—remain, upon which the present social order and world arrangements are built, they afford a measure of comfort and protection for the human family. When any one of these pillars, however, is shaken or disturbed by human discontent or lawlessness it means suffering and distress generally as a consequence. When the time comes that all the four pillars are overthrown it will mean trouble from all the four corners of the earth—social, financial, political and ecclesiastical—from which there will be no protection whatsoever. It will be a whirlwind—the beginning of winter. (Rev. 7:1-3)

WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND?

Worthy to escape. It would appear from many Scriptures that the harvest, or gathering time, will be *over before* the full winter conditions break upon the world, and that the Lord's followers who pass into the winter of tribulation will not be of the overcoming class. Our Lord, in exhorting His people who would be living at the end of the Age, and having in mind the great tribulation now at hand, declared—"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be *accounted worthy to escape* all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36) The only ones to escape will be the overcomers, who will be gathered home into the Kingdom, before the winter sets in upon earth. The same thought is conveyed by the Revelator, when he tells us that the four winds of trouble are held back until the angel from the sun-rising has sealed the servants of God in their foreheads. (Rev. 7:1-3) These winds represent the same disastrous trouble and it is evident that our Heavenly Father, in His providence, has so timed the work of sealing and gathering His servants during this Harvest period, that this important work will be *completed before* the protection afforded by law and order is completely overthrown.

WE ARE NOT SAVED

The harvest is past. The prophet Jeremiah calls our attention to those who having been asleep in the harvest time, will then awaken to the true position of matters and realise too late that the harvest is past, the summer (of favour) has ended (winter has come) and that they are not saved. (Jer. 8:20) Those, it would appear, are composed of those who have been begotten by the Spirit, but whom the Lord does not regard as overcomers, or worthy of rulership in the Kingdom. (Rev. 3:21) These are represented by the "foolish virgins" of the parable, who lacking oil in their vessels, are not fitted to meet the Bridegroom and to enter into the marriage before the

door is shut. Shut out from the marriage, they are therefore, left to pass into the winter of tribulation. (Matt. 25:11-12) Our Lord makes reference to the same, when, in prophetic vision, looking down through the Age to this day He exhorts His followers to pray that their flight be not in the winter. (Matt. 24:20) The reference here is to the call out of Babylon during the harvest time. If under the enlightening influence and leading of the present truth, we do not realise the need to flee from Babylon and to separate from every form of bondage, it is indicative of a condition of *spiritual slumber* and drowsiness, on our part. To remain in Babylon would mean to be accounted partakers of her sins, and worthy, therefore, of her plagues. (Rev. 18:4) When the winter of disorder and anarchy comes Babylon will be destroyed and the Lord's people in her will no longer be deceived, but it will be too late for the (rulership of the) Kingdom—the door will then have been shut and winter will have begun.

IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Washing their robes. The wintertime will be the period of hard and bitter experience, not only for the world, in general, but particularly for the great multitude of the Lord's people, whose garments of faith have not sufficiently separated them from the world and its spirit. Their love of the world's approval will have previously hindered them from completing their sacrifice willingly, but then, with the world's neglect and every fond ambition gone, their *spiritual nature* will have the opportunity of ripening into life. If rightly exercised by the experiences, their spirits will be saved and they will be privileged to be servants of the Temple. (Rev. 7:14-15)

It is evident that the tribulation to which reference is made in Rev. 7, does not refer to the trouble which came upon the nation of Israel at the end of the Jewish Age, for the Revelator sees this great multitude after the sealing of the 144,000 of the elect. The sealing of this elect—the heirs of the Kingdom—takes place during the *entire Age*, whereas the great multitude only come into prominence when the winter of the great tribulation begins.

THE FLOOD A FIGURE OF WINTER

The days shortened. It is apparent from many Scriptures that the flood of Noah's day may be regarded as a general figure of the great tribulation which is shortly to come upon the human family. Indeed, our Lord in His great prophecy compares the *days before the flood* with the days of our Lord's parousia, before the winter of tribulation begins. (Matt. 24:37-39) The special point of comparison is that while in both cases there were and are sufficient signs of approaching disaster, so far as those exercising faith

in God are concerned, yet the unbelieving world in Noah's day knew not what was coming, and likewise the world today knows not the trouble at hand. Like those of Noah's time, the world at present is too preoccupied with its pleasures and attractions of this life. The disaster was both *sudden and complete* in Noah's day and it will be both unexpected and overwhelming in this day—"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them...and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. 5:3)

In the case of the flood its days were not shortened, nor was its natural course impeded in any way, consequent upon which all flesh perished upon the face of the earth. (Gen 7:21-24) In regard to the approaching days of great tribulation however, our Lord records that unlike the days of the flood, they will not be allowed to run their full course uninterrupted. Through the intervention of the Kingdom, these days will be shortened and thus all flesh will not again perish. (Matt. 24:22)

There are indications on every hand today that so far as the hope of this Age is concerned summer is drawing to a close, and signs are not wanting that winter is approaching. It is high time, therefore, to awaken out of slumber and to flee from every form of bondage whilst the opportunity remains. When the winter breaks, flight from Babylon will be enforced, but it will then be too late for the Kingdom.

The Old Paths

Flowers Under the Snow

MANY of us find life hard and full of pain. The world uses us roughly. We suffer wrongs and injuries. Other people's clumsy feet tread upon our tender spirits. We cannot avoid these things, but we should not allow harsh experiences to deaden our sensibilities, or make us stoical or sour. The true challenge of living is to keep our hearts sweet and gentle in the hardest conditions and experiences.

If you remove the snow from a hillside in the late winter, you will find sweet flowers growing there beneath the cold drifts, unhurt by the storm and by the snowy blankets that have covered them. So should we keep our hearts tender and sensitive beneath life's fiercest winter blasts and through long years of suffering, even of injustice and wrong treatment. That is true victorious living.

A. C. Frey Collection

Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook

THE PLAN OF GOD IN BRIEF**STUDY 6—The Day of Judgment**

“He (God) hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained”—“Jesus Christ the righteous.” *“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son”*—Acts 17:31; 1 John 2:1; John 5:22 (NKJV).

A very vague and indefinite idea prevails in regard to the day of judgment.

The term *judgment* signifies more than simply the rendering of a verdict. It includes the idea of a trial, as well as a decision based upon that trial. And this is true not only of the English word judgment, but also of the Greek word which it translates.

The term *day*, both in the Scriptures and in common usage, though most frequently used to represent a period of twelve or twenty-four hours, really signifies any definite or special period of time. For instance, we speak of Noah’s day, Luther’s day.

Then again we read of the “day of Christ,” the “day of judgment,” and “His day”—terms applicable to the Millennial age, in which Messiah will reign over, rule and judge the world in righteousness, granting trial as well as rendering sentence. And of that period it is written: He will judge the world in righteousness, and in His times (day) shall show, who is that blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. (Acts 17:31; 1 Tim. 6:15) Why any should suppose this day of judgment to be of but twelve or twenty-four hours, while recognizing the wider meaning of the word *day* in other similar cases, is beyond comprehension, except upon the supposition that they have been influenced by tradition, without proper evidence or investigation.

Those who will carefully consult a complete concordance of the Bible with reference to the Day of Judgment, and note the kind and amount of work to be accomplished within that period, will soon see the absurdity of the common view, and the necessity for giving to the term *day* its wider significance.

The first great judgment [trial and sentence] was at the beginning, in Eden, when the whole human race, as represented in its head, Adam, stood on trial before God. The result of that trial was the verdict—Guilty, disobedient, unworthy of life; and the penalty inflicted was death—Dying

thou shalt die. (Gen. 2:17 margin) And so “In Adam all die.” That trial time in Eden was the world’s first judgment day, and the decision of the Judge (Jehovah) has ever since been enforced.

But God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world individually. We are informed that when God gives the world this individual trial it will be under Christ as Judge, whom Jehovah will honour because of His obedience even unto death for our redemption. God has highly exalted Him, even to the divine nature, that He may be a Prince and a Saviour (Acts 5:31), that He may be able to recover from death and grant judgment to all whom He purchased with His own precious blood. God has committed all judgment unto the Son, and has given Him all power in heaven and in earth.—John 5:22.

It is then the highly exalted, glorified Christ, who so loved the world as to give His life as its ransom-price, who is to be the Judge of the world in its promised future trial. And it is Jehovah Himself who has appointed Him to that office, for that very purpose. Since such are the plain declarations of the Scriptures, there is nothing to dread, but on the contrary there is great cause for rejoicing on the part of all, in looking forward to the Judgment Day. The character of the Judge is a sufficient guarantee that the judgment will be just and merciful, and with due consideration for the infirmities of all, until the willing and obedient are brought back to the original perfection lost in Eden.

This coming judgment will be on exactly the same principles as the first. The same law of obedience will be presented, with the same reward of life, and the same penalty of death. And as the first trial had a beginning, progressed, and culminated with a sentence, so also will the second; and the sentence will be life to the righteous, and death to the unrighteous. The second trial will be more favourable than the first, because of the experience gained under the results of the first trial. Unlike the first trial, the second trial will be one in which every man will stand the test for himself alone, and not for another. None then will die because of Adam’s sin, or because of inherited imperfections. It shall no more be said, “The fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But every...man *that eateth the sour grape*, his teeth shall be set on edge.” “The soul that sins, it shall die.” (Jer. 31:29,30; Ezek. 18:4 JUB) And it will be true of the world then, as it is of the Church now, that a man will not be judged according to that which he hath not, but according to that which he hath. (2 Cor. 8:12) Under the reign of Christ, mankind will be gradually educated, trained, and disciplined until they reach perfection.

And when they have reached perfection, perfect harmony with God will be required, and any who then fall short of perfect obedience will be cut off, being judged unworthy of life. The sin which brought death to the race through Adam was simply one disobedient act; but by that act he fell from his perfection. God had a right to demand perfect obedience of him, since he was created perfect; and He will demand the same of all men when the great work of restoring them is complete. None will be permitted to have everlasting life who then in the slightest degree fall short of perfection. To fall short of perfection, then, will be to sin wilfully against full light and perfect ability.

Any who sin wilfully, against full light and ability, will perish in second death. And should anyone, during that age of trial, under its full blaze of light, spurn the offered favours, and make no progress toward perfection for a hundred years, he will be reckoned unworthy of life and will be “cut off,” though at a hundred years he would be in the period of comparative childhood. So it is written of that day: “As a lad shall one die a hundred years old; and as a sinner shall be accursed he who dieth at a hundred years old.” (Isa. 65:20—*Leeser*) All must have at least one hundred years of trial; and, if not so obstinate as to refuse to make progress, their trial will continue throughout the entire day of Christ, reaching a culmination only at its close.

The conclusion of the world’s coming judgment is clearly shown in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31-46), in Rev. 20:15; 21:8 and in 1 Cor. 15:25. These and other Scriptures show that at its close the two classes will have been completely separated—the obedient and the disobedient; those in harmony with the letter and the spirit of God’s law, and those out of harmony with it.

We do not wish to be understood as ignoring the present responsibility of the world, which every man has, according to the measure of light enjoyed, whether it be much or little, whether it be the light of nature or of revelation. “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,” and “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.” (Prov. 15:3; Eccl. 12:14) The good and the evil deeds of the present time will receive a just recompense of reward either now or hereafter. “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some...they follow after.” (1 Tim. 5:24) No others than the Lord’s favoured “little flock” have as yet sufficient light to incur the final penalty, second death.

Under the sophistries (fallacies) of the great deceiver, Satan, both the world and the Church nominal have been robbed of the blessed assurances of the coming time of righteous judgment. They know that the Bible tells of a coming judgment day, but they regard it with only fear and dread; and because of this fear, there is to them no more unwelcome tidings than that the day of the Lord is at hand. They put it far away from them, and do not wish to hear it even mentioned. They have no idea of the blessings in store for the world under that glorious reign of Him whom God hath appointed to judge the world in righteousness. Among the greatest of the blinding influences which Satan has devised to keep men in ignorance of the truth regarding the judgment day have been the errors which have crept into the creeds and hymn books of the various religious sects. Many have come to esteem these errors as of paramount importance to the Word of God.

How differently did the prophets and apostles regard that promised day of judgment! Note the exultant prophetic utterance of David (1 Chron. 16:31-34). He says:

“Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
 And let them say among the nations, Jehovah reigneth.
 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
 Let the field exult, and all that is therein;
 Then shall the trees of the wood sing for joy before Jehovah,
 For He cometh to judge the earth.
 O give thanks unto Jehovah, for He is good;
 For His lovingkindness endureth forever.” (RVIC)

To the same day the Apostle also points, assuring us that it will be a glorious and desirable day, and that for it the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together—waiting for the great Judge to deliver and to bless the world, as well as to exalt and glorify the Church—Rom. 8:21,22.

In John 5:28,29 a precious promise for the world of a coming *judgment-trial* for life everlasting is, by a mistranslation, turned into a fearful imprecation (curse). According to the Greek, they that have done evil—that have failed of divine approval—will come forth unto resurrection [raising up to perfection] by judgments, “stripes,” disciplines.—See the Revised Version.



If winter comes, can spring be far behind!

Deep Waters and a Bubbling Brook

SEE AMID THE WINTER'S SNOW—A HYMN

Carols have been around for centuries and originally the word “carol” applied to a song with any seasonal connection and into the early part of the last century could be applied to Eastertime as well. Many of the older carols began to be compiled in Victorian times. However this traditional carol was written by Edward Caswell in Hampshire in 1858 a county in Britain where winter often means snow and hence the first line unlike Israel where the climate is always warmer and merely wet in winter. This was the season when Mary’s pregnancy started.

See, amid the winter’s snow,
Born for us on earth below,
See, the Lamb of God appears,
Promised from eternal years.



*Hail, thou ever-blessed morn!
Hail, redemption’s happy dawn!
Sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ, is born in Bethlehem!*

Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies,
He who, throned in height sublime,
Sits, amid the cherubim.



Say, ye holy shepherds, say,
What your joyful news today;
Wherefore have ye left your sheep
On the lonely mountain steep?

As we watched at dead of night,
Lo, we saw a wondrous light:
Angels singing, ‘Peace on earth!’
Told us of the Saviour’s birth.



Teach, O teach us, holy child,
By Thy face so meek and mild,
Teach us to resemble Thee
In Thy sweet humility.

Here are some verses which may have inspired the writer:

1 Timothy 1:15 (Diaglott) True is the word, and worthy of All Reception, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save Sinners.

John 1:36 Looking upon Jesus...he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

Acts 13:32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers.

Psalms 30:5 (NKJV) But joy comes in the morning.

Luke 2:36-38 (RSV) There was a prophetess, Anna...of the tribe of Asher... She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Micah 5:2 Bethlehem Ephrathah...out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

John 1:1-3 (Diaglott Interlinear) In a beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and a god was the Word. This was in a beginning with the God. All through it was done; and without it was done not even one, that has been done.

Colossians 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him.

Isa 6:1-3 I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Luke 2:9-14 Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them...I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord...Ye shall find the babe...lying in a manger. And...heavenly host praising God...saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

2 Corinthians 8:9 For our Lord Jesus Christ...though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Phil. 2:3-8 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who...took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE BOOK OF RUTH

Many years ago, the BSM featured a suggested identification of the unnamed kinsman who declined to carry out his obligation, related in the Book of Ruth. Since then a more exhaustive investigation, generally confirming the original findings but including additional evidence offered by historical records not considered at the time, makes possible a revision which offers a more detailed picture of the probabilities.

* * *

The Book of Ruth attaches no dates to the events it records; the only indication of when they occurred lie in the statements “*in the days when the judges ruled*” (Ruth 1:1) and that Boaz, a principal figure in the story, was the son of Salmon who was prominent in the tribe of Judah at the Conquest, the entry into the Promised Land. Hence the story has its setting during the first generation of Israel’s occupancy of Canaan. It is possible though to fill in this general picture quite a bit by a process of deduction from allusions in the story.

Positive data leading to the building of a timescale is very meagre, only that Caleb was 80 at the Entry to the Land and therefore 40 at the Exodus (Josh. 14:6-11), so that Joshua, his comrade in arms, the only other man over twenty years of age at the Exodus was probably about the same; he died at 110. (Josh. 24:29) The Oppression under the Aramaic invader lasted eight years (Judg. 3:8), and Mahlon the son of Elimelech had ten years of married life in Moab after his father died. (Ruth 1:4) Elisheba daughter of Amminadab the last “prince” (leader) of the tribe of Judah in Egypt, was the wife of Aaron the High Priest who was 83 at the Exodus so she must have been about 80 years of age at that time, with four sons born in Egypt. That is about all; not much on which to build conclusions. It is surprising however what careful attention to apparently unconnected fragments of Scripture can yield. In piecing together, the available data it must be borne in mind that recorded life spans differed from that which is usual today. The normal lifespan at the time of the Exodus was 100/120, not to speak of the redoubtable Caleb who at 85 had the strength of a 40-year old and was still chief leader of the army (Josh. 14:10-12) besides being the father of the (probably) teenage daughter Achsah. Moses died at 120, Aaron at 123, Miriam at 137, Joshua at 110 and in secular history of the time there is Ahmose el Kab, Admiral of the naval fleet of Egypt in the time of Moses, who ended a strenuous naval career at 110 just after the death of Joshua, and Amen-hotep son of Hapu, distinguished Egyptian statesman, who died at 130 just before the Exodus.

At this style of lifespan, the childbearing age of the women must have extended up to 75 or so, as is evidenced by Elisheba who, 80 at the Exodus, must have been the firstborn of her father since her brother Nahshon had already succeeded him as “prince” of the tribe at the Exodus; and two of her four recorded sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, were both under twenty at that time since they both entered into the Land forty years later. Salmon the son of Nahshon was prince of the tribe at the Entry so Nahshon must have died in the Wilderness and he himself have been born there, hence could only have been in his twenties at the siege of Jericho as is also evidenced by his marriage to Rahab of Jericho (Matt. 1:5) who both from the nature of her calling and the fact that her father, mother, brothers and sisters are mentioned but no husband, could well be as young as 20.

The first time-period noted at this stage of Israel’s history is the invasion and oppression of Chushan-Rishathaim the ruler of Aram-Naharaim, which is stated to have lasted eight years (Judg. 3:8), but how long after the Conquest is not said. Under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant, however, invasion and subjection to enemies was one of the penalties of apostasy. Apostasy reared its ugly head during the later lifetime of Joshua, was suppressed, but returned in force after his death and that of “*the elders who overlived Joshua*” and “*all that generation.*” (Josh. 24:31; Jud. 2:10-11 RSV) Joshua died 30 years after the Conquest aged 110; not many of his generation were likely to have survived him by more than a few years and this gives time for the emergence of “*another (new) generation...which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.*” (Judg. 2:10) Hence the beginning of the Chushan oppression can be put at say year 45 from the Conquest. It was followed by Othniel’s rule as judge for 40 years; Othniel would have been a young man at the Conquest when he married Achsah (Judg. 1:13) but he had just led the victorious assault on Kirjath-Sepher so could hardly have been less than 30; this would make him 118 at his death. Such age corresponds well with some of his contemporaries.

The famine which decided Elimelech to move into Moab (Ruth 1:1) would also have been a penalty under the Mosaic Covenant for apostasy so that must be taken as occurring at the same time or probably several years before—famine came first, with loss of crops and herds due to drought and so on, followed by invasion and subjection to their enemies. The “*elders who outlived Joshua*” (Josh. 24:31; Judg. 2:7-10 RSV) must have been under 20 when they left Egypt but even so would all be gone in another fifteen years or so after his death. The new generation which

knew not the LORD, nor the works which he had done for Israel (Judg. 2:10), now in their thirties and forties, were the ones who apostatised. The death of Joshua was the signal and before long idolatry appeared among the people. Hence year 45 from the Conquest could well be the start of the Chushan oppression with Elimelech taking his family into Moab four or five years before, when the famine struck. It is significant that there was apparently no famine in Moab only just next door, demonstrating that there was more than climatic deficiency in the matter. And it is clear that Elimelech was a man of no faith or an apostate or he would not so soon have abandoned the Land of Promise.

The first oppression of Israel by a foreign power after the Conquest was that of “*Chushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia*” (Judg. 3:8), which lasted eight years. Until comparatively recent times the identity of this king with the terrifying name was quite unknown; none of the usual commentators so much as make a guess at it. With modern knowledge of the history of the times however it is known that at the time of Joshua’s conquest of the Land there existed a powerful state called Mitanni, situated between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, more or less on the present Iraqi/Turkish border. This state eventually gave way before the rising power of the Hittites soon after the time in question. Its last but one king, Tushratta, died fighting the Hittites, but there are letters from him in existence to the Pharaohs Amen-hotep III and IV, and since the latest findings give the best dates for the reigns of these two Pharaohs as 1430 to 1360 B.C., and the entry of the Israelites into Canaan was in 1413 B.C., it is tolerably certain that “Chushan king of Mesopotamia” of the O.T., was in fact this Tushratta who oppressed Israel for eight years until driven out by Othniel. (“Mesopotamia” is the Greek form of the Hebrew “Aram-Naharaim”—“Aram of the Rivers,” the name by which Israel and Syria knew this land of Mitanni). After the defeat of Tushratta and his son and the Hittite annexation of their land, Suppiluliumas I king of the Hittites went on to attack Egypt and ten years later won a resounding victory at Carchemish. Attacked by the Hittites from the north and Othniel from the south, Tushratta obviously had little chance, hence Othniel’s victory. “*And the land had rest forty years.*” (Judg. 3:11)

On this basis the Chushan oppression ended in year 53 of the Conquest by the military prowess of Othniel, who delivered the nation and assumed rule. This deliverance, however, again under the terms of the Covenant, can only have been because the nation had repented and returned to God, and this is in fact so stated in Judg. 3:9-11. Likewise the news coming to Naomi, away in Moab, that “*the LORD had visited his people in giving*

them bread” (Ruth 1:6) implied the same thing; the famine was over and the land was giving its increase in consequence of the nation’s return to the Lord. Naomi, perhaps unlike her husband, was definitely a woman of faith, and it only needed the death of, first, her husband, and then her two sons, to decide her to return to the land of Israel.

If, then, Joshua died at 110, 30 years after the Entry, and the elders who overlived him during the next 15 years, a period of about 45 years between the Entry and the Oppression as indicated by the former considerations would seem just about right. The hero of the Oppression was Othniel, who led the forces against Chushan-Rishathaim. Othniel was the son of Kenaz, younger brother of Caleb. (Jud. 3:9) Caleb, 40 at the Exodus, would most likely be say 10 years older than Kenaz, so that Othniel, born in the Wilderness when his father was about 45, would be 25 at the Entry, perhaps up to 30 when he led the victorious assault on Kirjath-sepher and married Achsah (Judg. 1:13), about 78 when he defeated the Mitannian king and delivered Israel, and about 118 at death like so many of his compatriots.

Elimelech had died in Moab and at an unspecified time after his death his two sons had married Moabite girls and had ten years’ married life (Ruth 1:4) and then, both of them, also died. Ruth, one of the widows, is described throughout the story by a word which means a maiden or a young woman so that at this time she could not have been more than in her late twenties. If married at 18 she would have been 28. On the assumption that the two husbands were say 20 at marriage they could have been born in year 36 of the Conquest and their father Elimelech during the wilderness wanderings.

With Ruth’s arrival at Bethlehem at, say, the age of 28, Boaz comes into the story. Boaz was the son of Salmon (Ruth 4:21) and was also a blood relative of the dead Elimelech. (Ruth 2:3) Rahab probably had several sons, of whom Boaz was probably the youngest, both to fit the time scale and because he was still unmarried. On this basis Boaz could have been born to Salmon and Rahab after about 30 years of marriage when Rahab was in her fifties; this would mean that Boaz was about 35 when he met Ruth.

Boaz was related to, “*of the kindred of Elimelech.*” (Ruth 2:3). Hardly his brother, or the fact would have been so stated; more likely in a different family line. This would have been the case if Nahshon had a younger brother, perhaps ten years younger; (Nahshon as the later “prince” of the tribe at the Exodus must of necessity have been the eldest). This unnamed

son of Amminadab, brother to Nahshon, could be the father of Elimelech, who was thus cousin to Salmon. Mahlon, son of Elimelech, would then be second cousin to Boaz, son of Salmon. (Ruth 4:20-21) Under the Levirate law which obliged Mahlon's nearest living kinsman to marry Ruth and raise an heir to Mahlon's property, such nearest kinsman, in the absence of living brothers (and Mahlon's only brother was also dead according to the narrative) would be a first cousin. It could be then that if Elimelech also had a younger brother (who may not have left the land during the famine) that younger brother's son, Mahlon's cousin, might well have appeared after or about the time that Naomi had gone to Moab with her husband, which would account for Naomi's apparent ignorance of this individual, who as Mahlon's cousin was the "nearest kinsman" with the prior right, and her belief that Boaz was the nearest. Naomi would have known Salmon as the brother of her father-in-law and Boaz, as a young man, before her emigration. This "nearest kinsman," cousin to Mahlon, would then be about 20 at the time of the story, old enough for marriage but perhaps not too well disposed towards a woman nearly ten years his senior, and concerned withal as to the possible effect upon his own inheritance.

On the supposition that Elimelech was the eldest son of the unnamed brother of Nahshon, any further descendants of Mahlon's generation in that line would be too young for marriage, so that upon the refusal of the only eligible cousin the duty passed from that family line into the line of Salmon. Presumably, the older sons of Salmon were already married so that upon Boaz, as the only unmarried son, second cousin to Mahlon although of about the same age, devolved the obligation of the *gaal*, the kinsman who should marry the deceased man's widow, and this is what Boaz did do.

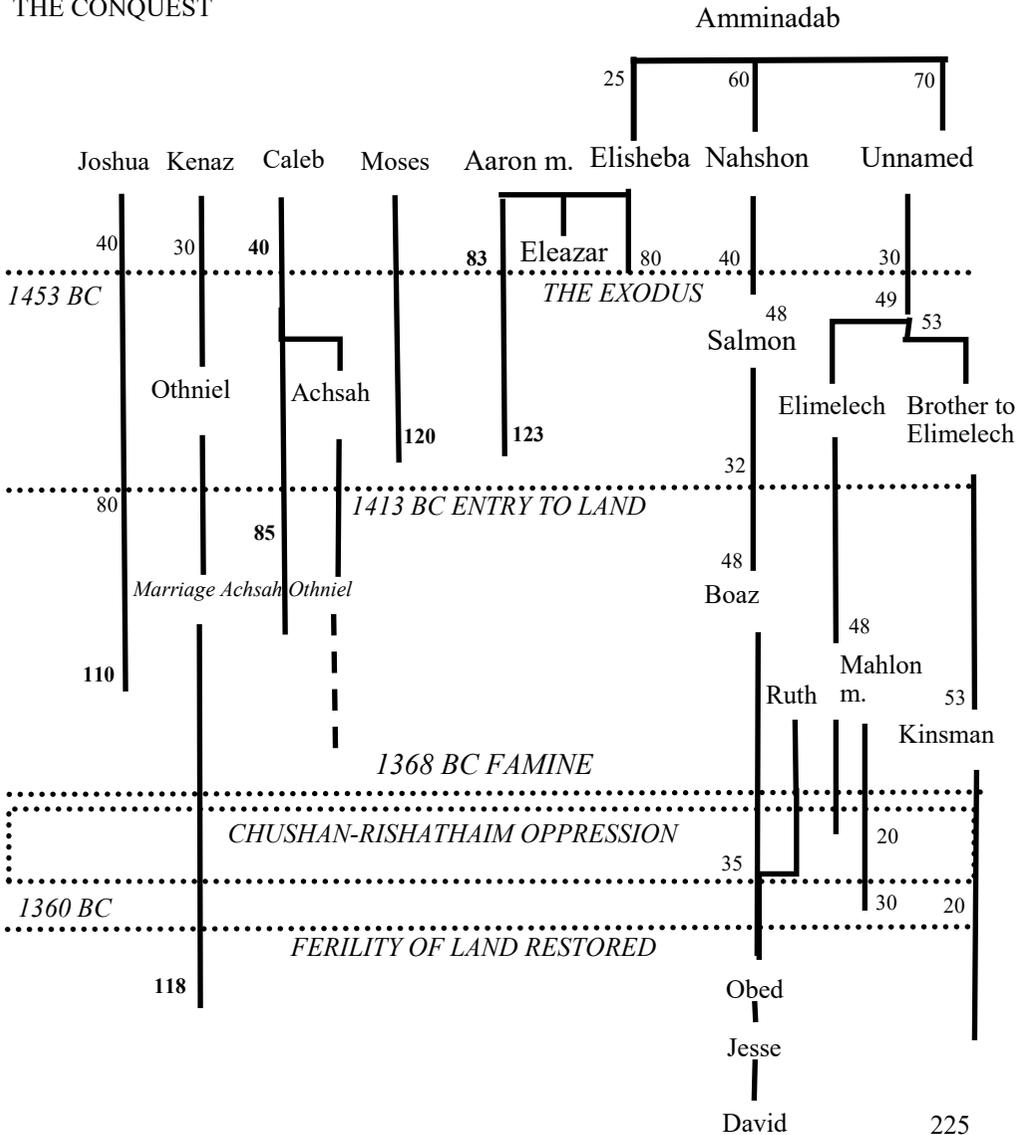
Summing up: the famine and Elimelech's migration to Moab was about 40 years after the entry into the land, some 10 years after Joshua's death, and the invasion of Chushan-Rishathaim 5 years later. Ruth and Naomi returned to Bethlehem about 11 years after that when Ruth was 28 and Boaz 35. Boaz was second cousin to Mahlon whilst the unnamed kinsman was Mahlon's cousin. Obed was the firstborn son of Boaz and Ruth, by which time Naomi, who took him in her arms, need have been no more than 80.

The value of this kind of Biblical deduction resides only in the testimony it offers to the historic accuracy and the interdependence of Bible narratives. If the Book of Ruth was a work of fiction or at best a compila-

tion of ancient legends made, as has been claimed, in the days of King David, there would almost certainly be points which could not be reconciled with other Bible books written at other times. As it is the narratives can be shown to fit quite reasonably into the framework of Bible history, which is only what is to be expected if, as is declared by St. Peter, the compilation of these writings was guided and overruled by the power of the Holy Spirit.

AOH

SUGGESTED GENEALOGICAL TABLE AT THE CONQUEST



THE BIBLE'S SONG OF LOVE

Verse by verse through the Song of Songs Part 3b Chapters 4:4-4:11

4:4 “THY NECK IS LIKE THE TOWER OF DAVID BUILDED FOR AN ARMOURY, WHEREON THERE HANG A THOUSAND BUCKLERS, ALL THE SHIELDS OF THE MIGHTY MEN.”

“The ‘neck’ in scripture would seem to indicate where the strength of purpose lies. We often read of men being stiff-necked and having hardened necks. The purpose of man is always naturally to carry out his own will. God can put a providential yoke on man’s neck...But when grace comes in and produces its blessed effect, purpose takes on an altogether different form...When he (Paul) said ‘What shall I do Lord?’ he had really taken the yoke of Christ upon his neck and from that moment he was set in purpose to know God’s will and to do it. ‘The Tower of David’ reminds us that David was typical of Christ” of whom God said “a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.” (Acts 13:22 KJV) “What a triumph of grace that instead of the will of man dominating, and manifesting itself in stiff-neckedness towards God the neck should become ‘like the Tower of David.’” (C.A.C)

The context of these verses suggests beauty and strength. In Ezek. 27:11 (KJV) the prophet makes a similar use of the illustration of hanging shields in the words “...In thy towers: they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have made thy beauty perfect.”

If the neck is stiff with self-will it has the effect spoken of by the Apostle Paul when he referred to those who “preach Christ of contention, not sincerely...” but the others, he seems to say, recognise that his neck was “hung with shields” or, as he puts it “knowing that I am set for the *defence* of the gospel.” (Phil. 1:16) “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might...above all, taking the shield of faith.” (Eph. 6:10,16 KJV)

In Chapter 1:10 we see that the neck is also the place for ornaments of honour in the sense in which Pharaoh put a gold chain about the neck of Joseph. (Gen. 41:42)

4:5 We are quite rightly accustomed to compare and contrast every feature of our spiritual being with Christ but, in this illustration, the Bridegroom speaks of special maidenly features. This seems to remind us that we have some features that are special to the Church alone. “THY TWO BREASTS,” He says, “ARE LIKE TWO FAWNS” (or young roes)

“THAT ARE TWINS OF A ROE, WHICH FEED AMONG THE LILIES.”

“The ‘two breasts’ speak of affections that are in even balance. Grace governing the heart would secure this...there would be no partialities as to the truth...We are apt to get one-sided...Unbalanced affections are really a deformity because they are not the ‘counterpart’ of the affections of Christ...” The ‘two young roes’ “set forth symbolically the tenderness and sensitiveness of spiritual affections. These are timid creatures, sensitive to any molestation and ready to flee from it on swift foot. The Lord would have us to cultivate and exhibit affections that are delicately sensitive... This holy sensitiveness can only be preserved as it is nourished upon appropriate food. The garbage of the world is fatal to it. The fawns ‘feed among lilies.’ This...is where He feeds His flock.” (Chapters 2:16; 6:3) (C.A.C.)

What are these twin features of beauty and grace which distinguish the new creature? When God created Eve it was not only as a companion for Adam but also that they might “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” (Gen. 1:28) The spiritual counterpart must surely be associated with the regeneration of the earth during the “times of restitution of all things.” (Acts 3:21 KJV) These maidenly features, therefore, seem to speak of the spiritual affections of faith and love which, when given full expression in maturity, after the marriage of the Lamb shall help throughout the Millennial age to sustain the regenerated life given to mankind by the Lord Jesus.

4:6 These thoughts bring our minds back again to our Lord’s second presence and so we find it no surprise to read the Bridegroom’s next few words “UNTIL THE DAY BE COOL, AND THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY, I WILL GET ME TO THE MOUNTAIN OF MYRRH, AND TO THE HILL OF FRANKINCENSE.” (mar.)

In chapter 2:17 we saw the picture of His second coming in the same phrase as that which opens this verse. To that picture is added the thoughts of a kingdom of suffering (myrrh) and a spiritual elevation of praise (frankincense).

In our Lord’s parables of the Kingdom of Heaven He shows that the embryo kingdom originates in this Age. This verse, therefore, seems to remind us that in this age it is a kingdom of suffering but it is nevertheless more than that for, as the Apostle Paul expressed it in Heb. 13:15, our

sacrificial suffering with Christ is “a sacrifice of praise to God continually...” The spiritual foothills of the Mountain of the Kingdom in this age are the praises of the saints as they share in the sufferings of Christ. “Insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of His glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy.”(1 Pet.4:13)

4:7 This next verse needs to be read with verse 8 for its message is almost in parenthesis. “THOU ART ALL FAIR” (or fair all over) “MY LOVE; AND THERE IS NO SPOT IN THEE.” It is with these words for assurance that He extends the invitation contained in verse 8.

The Lord now recognises not only her special features but that she is “all over beautiful” and without blemish because she is clothed with His righteousness. It is not of our own holiness that Jesus speaks when he says “there is no spot in thee” for “Christ...loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph. 5:25-27) Like those of the Church at Sardis who “did not defile their garments”—had no spot—the maiden also is invited to walk with the Lord for she, like they, is worthy. (Rev. 3:4)

4:8 “COME WITH ME FROM LEBANON, MY BRIDE, WITH ME FROM LEBANON:” He calls “LOOK FROM THE TOP OF AMANA, FROM THE TOP OF SENIR AND HERMON, FROM THE LIONS’ DENS, FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF THE LEOPARDS.”

“Come with me from Lebanon” is emphasised in the original Hebrew text and suggests that it is the same message given in Rev. 18:4 (KJV) “Come out of her, my people.” The Lebanon of this verse seems to portray not that Lebanon associated with Chap. 3:9 but one that had fallen from its original glory. This thought is strengthened not only by the fact that the Bridegroom calls her away from Lebanon but also by other passages where Lebanon seems to symbolise nominal Christendom. In Hab. 2:17, for example, it was foretold of Lebanon, which was once renowned for its excellence, that it would become the habitation of “wild beasts.” These symbolic words appear in a passage which contains messages that clearly point to the days of our Lord’s second coming. (See 2:3 & 14)

Lions are spoken of in symbolic scripture as agents of the devil out to devour the saints. “The mountains of the leopards” may be a further

suggestion of the wild beast influences in the world or alternatively the kingdoms (mountains) of Christendom spoken of in Rev. 13:2 “the beast ...like unto a leopard.” These peaks were referred to in Deut. 4:48 as Mount Zion although they were nowhere near the real Mount Zion. It seems, therefore that these peaks represent the high places of Christendom which some wrongly believe to be Zion.

But the outstanding features of this verse is that the Bridegroom, having observed the evidences of her spiritual beauty, calls her for the first time “My bride.” According to the custom of Israel she is now espoused to her bridegroom until the day when “the marriage of the Lamb is come.” (Rev. 19:7) In the last verse of Chapter 3 we are told of “the day of His espousals.” In this chapter we are admitted into its intimate joy.

4:9 “THOU HAST GIVEN ME COURAGE, MY SISTER, MY BRIDE; THOU HAST GIVEN ME COURAGE WITH ONE OF THINE EYES, WITH ONE CHAIN OF THY NECK.” (mar.)

Jewish writers have translated the opening phrase in five different ways: “Unhearted me,” “overpowered my heart,” “given me a heart,” “ravished my heart,” (KJV) and “enchained my heart.” If we combine these then we can say of a surety “the love of Christ...passeth knowledge.” (Eph. 3:19) It seems impossible to grasp or express the wonder of it. This thought of our glorious Lord “enchained” by our hearts’ devotion to Him gives new life to the concept of the indivisibility of the Body with Christ its Head.

“...the spouse is also called ‘my sister.’ It reminds us that when Abraham would have a wife taken for Isaac he said to his servant, ‘Thou shalt go... to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.’ Nothing could be united to Christ that was not morally of kindred nature with Him. There were those whom the Lord could recognise as His kindred when He was here. (Matt. 12:50)” (C.A.C.) We also see another close link, for the bride is spoken of as one of the same family as Christ. She is His “sister” for His Father is hers, His Mother (the Sarah Covenant of Grace) is hers. “Children of God,” “Joint heirs with Christ.” Here also we see a distinction in the family relationship of which she spoke in Chapter 1:6. Those who opposed her desire to cultivate her own vineyard were not referred to as her brothers but as “mother’s sons.” “For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister ...” (Matt. 12:50 KJV) “For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” (Heb. 2:11 KJV)

It is the look from one of her eyes that has captured His heart. “One of her eyes” refers to the old Eastern custom for a woman to unveil one of her eyes when addressing someone. This action would also give a glimpse of the ornaments worn round her neck. It is expressive of maidenly modesty—a symbol of Christian humility—before our Lord. But it is “the light of the eyes” (which) “rejoiceth the heart.” (Prov. 15:30 KJV) In Deut. 32:10 we read that Israel was to God “as the apple of His eye.” The original Hebrew word translated “apple” in that verse means “little man” thus giving us the pleasing picture of Israel looking towards God and being reflected as a miniature figure in God’s eyes. The deep expression in her eyes conveys her love but only because she is looking towards Him. She has in fact become the apple of His eye.

4:10 It is her loving look which has “encouraged His heart.” Now He can speak to her with confidence, without fear that it will turn her head, and so He pours forth His loving thoughts “HOW FAIR IS THY LOVE, MY SISTER, MY BRIDE! HOW MUCH BETTER IS THY LOVE THAN WINE! AND THE SMELL OF THINE OINTMENTS” (anointing oil) “THAN ALL MANNER OF SPICES!”

This might be paraphrased “How much better are your beautiful expressions of devotion than the mere devotion to doctrine (wine). How much better is the fragrance of the Holy Spirit in you than the scent of any other virtues (spices).” Her love is fair because it comes from Him. “We love Him, because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19 KJV)

“If we have the spirit of Christ ought we not to have ‘ointments’? Shall there not be fragrance for Him? ...I suppose we have all been conscious at times that there is something about a truly spiritual person which it is difficult to describe? Something that gives a very agreeable impression to one that can appreciate it, and yet it is neither word nor act? That is fragrance.” (C.A.C.)

4:11 The look in her eyes told of her love because “the light of the body is the eye” but true love does not remain dumb for “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (Matt. 12:34) The maiden opened her heart and her lips and so the Bridegroom also says to her “THY LIPS, O MY BRIDE, DROP HONEY AS THE HONEYCOMB: HONEY AND MILK ARE UNDER THY TONGUE.” (mar.)

As honey is the combined extract from many flowers so this peculiar sweetness of devotion which the Bride offers is the combined sweetness

of all the graces in her, combined in every loving utterance to Him. Milk and honey were among the chief characteristics of the fruitfulness of Canaan. They thus have a special significance to the spiritual Israelite. Honey and milk suggest words of mildness, kindness and sweet tenderness like the “gracious words which proceeded out of *His* mouth” (Luke 4:22 KJV)

Over and over again the Bride or the Bridegroom speak of fragrance. How clearly this tells us that spiritual fragrance is inseparable from the spirit of Christ. This time He tells her that “THE SMELL OF THY GARMENTS IS LIKE THE SMELL OF LEBANON.” Earlier He had called her away from Lebanon but the fragrance He loves is the true fragrance of Lebanon. This contrast is revealed in the history of the Church. The true Lebanon of the early days gradually fell from its former renown and became the habitation of wild beasts—the rejected church of Laodicea. Prophesying concerning the Church, the Psalmist foretold “All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia.” (Psa. 45:8) The garment is the robe of Christ’s righteousness which has the fragrance of the true Church. This contrasts once again with the rejected Church at the end of this age of whom our Lord said “Thou...knowest not that thou art...naked: I counsel thee to buy of me...white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself.” (Rev. 3:17-18)

The apostasy pictured in that message was complete. It reveals a worldly organisation which believes that it is “increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” (Rev. 3:17 KJV) whereas it is “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind...” parading before the Lord in all the shame of its nakedness. There was no loving warmth to commend and so, in place of gracious words, come the biting words of rejection “I will spue thee out of my mouth.” (v.16 KJV) What a contrast to the Bride.

EEA/LB



LEBANON

Lebanon meaning “white mountains” is the country to the north of modern-day Israel. Its roughly half the size of Wales which makes it one of the smallest countries in the world. Its major cities are Beirut, Sidon and Tyre. In olden times they were a seafaring trading peoples. King Hiram sold cedarwood from there to Israel to build the Temple in Solomon’s day and later in Zerubbabel’s day too. The cedars were well-known for being fragrant and having deep roots.

SINNERS IN ZION

“The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised (overtaken) the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isaiah 33:14)

There are indications in some parts of the prophetic Word which seem to foresee a time at the end of the Age when Israel is regathered awaiting its predicted final deliverance, and the hearts of some thus regathered will fail them, and they will abandon the Land of Promise and revert to the outer world from which they came for fear of the enemy threat. It is fundamental that the Lord can only deliver when there is faith; in Old Testament days when the people had apostatised it was always the position *“therefore he brought down their heart with labour...and there was none to help. THEN they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved (heard, and delivered) them out of their distresses.”* (Psa. 107:12-13) So at the end; only those who manifest utter faith in the power of God to deliver, in the face of their enemies, will experience the spectacular deliverance which marks the outward and visible establishment of the Millennial Kingdom upon earth. The remainder will take their place with humankind in general as those to whom the law of the Lord goes forth, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3), at an immediately succeeding time.

Here in Isa. 33 the immediate threat was that of Sennacherib the Assyrian threatening Jerusalem with his forces. The story is recounted in Isa. 36 and 37 as well as in 2 Kings 18. The Assyrian king boasted that the God of Israel was powerless to deliver his people. The besieged ones in the city, inspired by both Isaiah the prophet and Hezekiah the king, *“answered him not a word.”* (2 Kings 18:36) In full faith they waited quietly for the Lord to deliver, and He did deliver. *“And when men arose in the morning,”* to look upon the besieging host, says the chronicler exultantly, *“behold, they were all dead corpses.”* (2 Kings 19:35) Faith had won its victory.

But some there were who did not participate in the deliverance. Sennacherib himself has left behind his own account of this same campaign, inscribed upon tablets which still exist and can be read. And he records a feature of the affair which the Biblical writer omitted to mention, that some in the city, not so sure that the Lord was able or intended to deliver, endeavoured to escape from the city by night, hoping to evade the besieging army and get away, *“and”* says Sennacherib, *“all they that came*

out of the city by night I captured and sent to Nineveh.” They did not really escape after all, and they missed the glory of the deliverance.

Is this event in past history intended to foreshadow a similar position on a greater scale at the end of the Age when the forces of Gog and Magog come against the regathered nation? It would seem that Zechariah, the prophet of the Restoration two centuries later, thought so, for he cast his vision of that final conflict against the background of Sennacherib’s invasion. “*Behold, ... I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle*” he says in Zech. 14:1-3, “*and the city shall be taken*” (encompassed as a bird or an animal in a snare) “*and the houses (shall be) rifled, and the women ravished; and half*” (a portion, not meaning just one half) “*of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. THEN shall the LORD go forth...*” This is just what happened in the days of Hezekiah. A brief account appears in 2 Kings 18:13-16 but a more detailed one in Sennacherib’s own description, in which he says that in his preliminary campaign he took from Hezekiah all the treasures of the palace and the Temple, and of the wealthy men, the king’s wives and daughters and women of the Court, and carried them away to Nineveh. This, with the defection of those who lost faith, is just what Zechariah describes in his chapter 14. It is noteworthy that it is only AFTER all this has happened that it is said “*THEN shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations.*” (v.3)

This perhaps is what the prophet Zephaniah saw in vision when he in his turn spoke of Israel’s coming deliverance. “*Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, ...for all the earth shall be devoured (consumed) with the fire of my jealousy (my fiery zeal)...then I will take away...them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty...I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.*” (Zeph. 3:8-12) The pride and arrogance of present-day Israel is proverbial, justifiably so from the point of view of this world’s standards, when one considers her strength and achievements, but these are values of this world and not the values of God. Suppose by some unexpected turn of events in the political world the strength and power of Israel proves inadequate against those elements hostile to her. Suppose that there is a reversal of the present situation so that those who trust in the arm of flesh depart in fear and are replaced by a directing power much more like those “governors of Judah” in Zech. 12:5 who say “*the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God*”? When such a revolution of

thought and action takes place in the Holy Land it might well be that the introduction of the Kingdom of Heaven is breaking forth upon the world.

Ezekiel also seems to have a word about this. Talking, in his 20th chapter, about the Lord’s intention to regather and establish his people in their own ancient land, he records the Lord’s words *“I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: AND I WILL PURGE OUT FROM AMONG YOU THE REBELS, AND THEM THAT TRANSGRESS AGAINST ME: I WILL BRING THEM FORTH OUT OF THE COUNTRY WHERE THEY SOJOURN, AND THEY SHALL NOT ENTER INTO THE LAND OF ISRAEL: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.”* (Ezek. 20:37-38) This word “enter into” is quite significant. It has the meaning of entering into a close relationship, of a close connection; in this context it quite well indicates that these “rebels,” though physically in the land, are not spiritually wedded to it. They are not really part of the new nation and the new land because on account of lack of faith they are alien from God, and so He describes them as “sojourners,” not really citizens of the land, and He purges them from the land.

It has to be remembered that in the classic description of the great deliverance in Ezek. 38 and 39 the nation of Israel is depicted as completely defenceless, dwelling in “the land of unwalled villages;” (Ezek. 38:11) and yet in complete peace and confidence, which can only mean that the nation, as in the days of Hezekiah, reposes utter faith in the saving power of the Lord. And that confidence is not misplaced; in the outcome the Lord does deliver. That can only mean that all unbelievers and those who lack faith, together with all whose trust is in earthly weapons and the arm of flesh, will have departed for fear of Israel’s apparently hopeless position.



THEN shall the Lord go forth!

AOH

SOME ESSENTIALS FOR HAPPINESS

For a people who know and are devoted to the Lord it is not necessary to speak of the happiness which may be enjoyed by every human being, but of the happiness which is far superior to it and is not so dependent on circumstances and environment. Jesus spoke of the essentials for true happiness in his introduction to the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew 5:1-12, where we are reminded that the word “Blessed” indicates true happiness.

The lessons in the school of Christ are mainly such as find a response in the heart rather than the head, and these words of Jesus prove an incentive to practical living instead of a statement of doctrine to be accepted. He does not mention faith or works, although there will be no lack of either in those enjoying the qualities indicated. His words do not imply that some are blessed or happy because they have, after much laborious effort, become “poor in spirit,” “meek” or “merciful,” but rather happiness is on account of the possession of these qualities. “Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matt. 13:16) are the encouraging words of Jesus to such.

A visitor to an interesting building may find that the rooms they wish to see are available only by passing through the entrance hall. The first essential for happiness may be regarded as the entrance hall to all the others, for none of the succeeding qualities is possible to the person devoid of the first. It is, therefore, of primary importance to be “poor in spirit,” which means to enjoy the grace of humility and the promise of the Kingdom. Not everyone who is humble will be in the spiritual Kingdom, but no one will be there who is not humble. He that “exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” (Luke 14:11) Next in order Jesus mentions “mourners” as blessed or happy because they shall be comforted. We suggest that Jesus is approving the sympathetic disposition as manifested by Himself—the “Man of Sorrows.” His sorrow was not because of sin in Himself, for He had none, but because of the distress observed everywhere and which could be relieved only by the operation of His Kingdom. Jesus’ sorrow led to action, thus “He went about doing good.” The “God of all comfort” is not unmindful of those who emulate Jesus’ sympathetic disposition. Meekness is the outward manifestation of the sympathetic heart. To be meek is to be self-controlled, not easily provoked, and forbearing under injury, and is impossible without the first essential of humility. A meek man is usually happy and peaceful. The anger of a meek man is like fire struck out of

steel—hard to get out, but soon gone. How beautiful is the expression of the Apostle in 1 Peter 3:4 which reminds us of “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

Only the “poor in spirit,” “the mourners” and the “meek” will be hungering and thirsting for righteousness; others are satisfied in themselves: they cannot hunger for what they do not comprehend. Hungering for righteousness must be based on our love of truth, and needs to be modified by submission to the divine will, for to demand justice, truth and righteousness when God permits the reverse to persist, may lead to unauthorised excesses. The appropriate hunger seeks first God’s Kingdom, and is also expressed by Paul when he writes: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” (Phil. 3:10-11) Jesus lays great stress on the necessity for exercising mercy. Although indispensable it is obtained only in proportion to the mercy we extend to others, for “if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt. 6:15), and “He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” (James 2:13) The same Apostle (5:11) describes our Father as very pitiful and of tender mercy, and failure to be of this character will rob us of some of life’s happiest experiences and finally of God’s approval.

The pure of heart shall see God. Purity of heart cannot mean perfection, for everyone is imperfect, and mercy is not needed by the perfect. Jesus taught the necessity of purity of motive and intention, of sincerity and truthfulness, of transparency of conduct, without ulterior motive. To fully realise the promise, “we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2), assists us in remembering that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) and inspires us to walk as He walked. All the preceding essentials are necessary in order to be a peacemaker. The exhortation “follow peace with all men” (Heb. 12:14) is surely more needed today than at any period in the history of the Church. Only the peace-makers have that happy description—“Children of God.” The combative disposition may be a great asset to the child of God if rightly exercised in warfare against those forces within which are in opposition to the way of righteousness, but is highly dangerous to spiritual progress where used to the destruction of peace. Happy the man who bends his energies to the promotion of peace. Persecution is a cause for rejoicing if it results from faithfulness to God. To invite persecution by foolish conduct is as much to be deplored as the touchy disposition which

assumes persecution where it does not exist. A benevolent disposition does not think of slights. Jesus spoke of blessedness in persecution, but said that our love must be even for our enemies. Surely only a little flock will attain this high standard!

The persecuted are in good company with our Lord, the Apostles and the prophets, and will they not be in good company when the Lord makes up His jewels? If the former essentials persist the more we are persecuted and reviled the more will our good qualities in the grace of the Lord be manifested. To be reviled and persecuted and to have all manner of evil spoken against us falsely “for My sake” are causes for rejoicing. When this occurs we are counselled by Jesus to “be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.” (v.12) What kind of reward is this which our Lord calls a great reward?

JCR



DESOLATION

I miss them in the morning,
When the mist is on the hill:
When no busy hum is heard
And all the land is still.
Oh, the dear familiar faces,
Oh, the void and empty spaces, and the
Longing for the voices that are still.

I miss them in the evening,
By the fireside's ruddy glow:
Its light and warmth seem only
The vacant chairs to show.
My heart then fills with sorrow
For the dawning of the morrow,
Without the loving voices that are still.

When I hear the joyous notes
That hail the coming Spring,
And all around the gladness
Makes wood and valley ring,
Then I miss them even more
Than I ever did before, in the
Beauty and the fragrance of the Spring.

When the dreary cold and chill
Of the winter draweth nigh:
When the sobbing wind is heard,
And the pretty flowerets die,
Then I miss them most of all,
And I seem to hear the call of the
Dear and loving voices that are still.

Oh, the dear familiar faces!
Oh, the void and empty spaces, and the
Longing for the voices that are still.

*W H Pepworth
Poems of the Way*

TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY

Only as we associate the Babe of Bethlehem with the Logos by and through whom all things were made, do we get our mental focus respecting Jesus. His life was not from Adam, through Joseph—a forfeited life. It was a transferred life. The Logos, who was rich in spirit privileges, glory and honour, “for our sakes became poor [The Man Christ Jesus] that we by His poverty might become rich”—that mankind might be redeemed from the curse—the Death Sentence and all it includes of sorrow, pain and alienation from God. “A body hast Thou prepared Me for the suffering of death!” The death of a spotless One was necessary as a Ransom-price for Adam and his race.—1 Tim. 2:6.

No wonder the angels rejoiced to announce to the shepherds the Logos made flesh—the Babe of Bethlehem. “Fear not! Behold, we bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people!” Few have analysed the Message, few have seen how comprehensive its scope. It is for Jews and Gentiles—sinners all—“all people.” Only a few have yet had opportunity to get this great joy; but the Redeemer promises that He will yet be the True Light to lighten every man that cometh into the world.—John 1:9

“For unto you [mankind] is born this day in the City of David a *Saviour*, which is Christ the Lord.” Ah! the meaning of that word *Saviour*! It means *Life-giver*! The right to live had been lost—all are dying. The Life-giver came to provide life everlasting for the dying race. Thank God for a Life-giver, a Great One, able to save unto the uttermost!—Heb. 7:25.

The “Peace on Earth, goodwill to men” prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, but it is nearing. The birth of the Babe was one step toward it; the death on the cross was another; the glorious resurrection and ascension of the Logos again to the Spirit plane were other steps. The selection of the Church as Messiah’s Bride is another, nearly completed. The Messianic Kingdom will complete the blessed prophecy.

CTR



NOTICES**BIBLE STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE**

HIGH LEIGH CONFERENCE CENTRE, HODDESDON

27-31 JULY 2022 DV**With apologies these are not the dates originally planned and published**Gone from us

Mark Charlton
 Marjorie Doidge
 Beresford King-Smith
 Denis Sutcliffe

RESTORATION

You'll see them in the morning,
 When the Sun shines o'er the hill.
 The ransomed hosts returning,
 For 'tis God's unchanging will
 That those dear familiar faces
 Will refill the empty spaces, and praise
 Will grace the voices that were still.

That bright and happy morning
 All the prophets have foretold;
 A glory so entrancing,
 Every eye shall then behold,
 When sounds of joy are pealing,
 And broken hearts are healing, then love
 Will cheer the voices that were still.

Now come, behold the foregleams
 Of that grand and happy day,
 When weeping, sorrow, dying,
 Shall forever pass away,
 Weep not for desolation
 But rejoice in restoration, for the
 Blossoms that will greet us in the Spring.

Oh, sweet and joyous Spring-time!
 What glories over-spread,
 As health and strength and beauty
 Adorn the risen dead.
 Then you'll praise God most of all,
 When you hear the welcome call of the
 Dear and loving voices that were still.

Oh, the dear familiar faces!
 Now thrice happy are the places with the
 Music of the voices that were still.

*W H Pepworth**Poems of the Way**Ezek. 36:33-38; Acts 3:19-21; Isa. 35*

Thank you to the anonymous donor.

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