

# Characters of the Bible

4<sup>th</sup> Annual Lectureship  
Bellview Preacher  
Training School

1978



# Characters Of The Bible

Fourth Annual  
Bellview Lectures

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# STEPHEN, A MAN FULL OF FAITH

*W. Emery Hardin*

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## INTRODUCTION

- I. Review (Acts 6; 7; 8:2; 11:19; 22:20).
  - A. Regarding the text
    1. At a glance we have the **ministry**, **message**, and **martyrdom** of Stephen.
      - a. Concerning his **ministry**—He was chosen from among the people to be about the business of serving tables.
      - b. Concerning his **message**—He made a great defence for the faith by referring to Jewish history and showing how the Jews had always rejected God and now God was rejecting them.
      - c. Concerning his **martyrdom**—Stephen was the first recorded Christian martyr. Usually we think of one becoming a martyr when he suffers death as the penalty of witnessing to and refusing to renounce his religious beliefs. But really those who have died for the truth were not made martyrs by their dying; they died because they were already martyrs.
    2. Stephen's name means **Crown**. Indeed what a crowning he was to come to.
      - a. In Acts 6:5 Stephen is referred to as a man full of faith.
      - b. He was faithful unto death, and thus would receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).
    3. At this time let us discuss the character **Stephen, a man who was full of faith**. Let us show some of the lessons

about faith that can be learned from Stephen. It will be my prayer that all may better understand this great character, that they may strive to imitate his faith.

**Discussion:** We see a man full of faith in—

I. **Stephen's Deaconship** (Acts 6:1-7).

A. The election of Stephen as **one of the seven** due to the grievance of the Hellenistic Christians (vv. 1-6).

1. "There arose a murmuring." As with all murmuring in the church the **reason** for it must be found and the **remedy** must be applied that it might cease.

a. Illustrate by defining a **heart murmur**. It is an uncertain and abnormal sound that should not be present.

b. The reason for the murmuring of the Grecians was that "their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

c. As soon as this became known the twelve with the help of the disciples immediately enacted a plan that the murmuring might stop.

2. They were to choose seven men that were to meet certain requirements.

a. One of the requirements was a "good [honest] report" (Acts 6:3).

b. What is meant is one who is a man of integrity, faithful, trusted, well attested, or approved of.

c. They were to be men who had by their past conduct proved themselves to be honest and trustworthy.

d. Do we not need this type of character today? (Leaders especially).

e. Look at the ways in which Stephen was honest. With—

(1) God—He obeyed Him.

(2) The Word—He preached, defended, and lived it.

(3) Others—He told them what they needed to hear.

f. Are we honest? Are we well approved of? Do we have a good report? Applications:—

- (1) On the job.
  - (2) In school.
  - (3) With our friends, neighbors, family, etc.
  - (4) Those not Christians (1 Tim. 3:7).
  - (5) Ourselves.
  - (6) God.
- g. These men were to be select men, filled with the Holy Spirit. They were to be men of wisdom and good judgment.
  - h. All true Christians should seek to develop these characteristics.
  - i. The church should select the best men it has to do any work. Even the smallest task for the Lord deserves our best.
3. The Seven were to fulfill their responsibility so that the twelve could devote their time to prayer and the word.
- B. By the election of the Seven the disciples were pleased (the murmuring ceased), but more than this the church was unified in its work. They were united in **service**, **strength**, and **success**. When the **remedy** was applied observe the **result** (cf., v. 7).
- ## II. Stephen's Debate (Acts 6:8-15).
- A. Stephen again was "a man full of faith." When one is faithful he will be ready to stand and speak the truth and defend it to death if he needs to.
  - B. Stephen met with wisdom and power those who did not believe that the "Crucified Carpenter of Galilee" could be the long expected Messiah. He was said to be "full of grace and power."
    1. Note the times the record reveals Stephen being full of something.
      - a. Full of the Spirit.
      - b. Full of wisdom.
      - c. Full of faith.
      - d. Full of grace.
      - e. Full of power.
    2. Stephen was one who was **fully** dedicated to Christ. We need those today like Stephen who are **fully**, **wholly**,

**completely** converted to Christ and dedicated to His cause.

- C. Stephen being full of faith (being so faithful, or having such an enthusiastic faith) did not restrict his activities to the functions of his office. He was not content to confine himself to the business affairs of the church, but he took every opportunity possible to speak the truth and work for the spread of the gospel.

**Note:** Many today are exact opposites in character to Stephen. They do not even fulfill their assigned responsibilities much less look for something else that needs and should be done.

- D. Those that debated with Stephen “were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake” (v. 10).
1. Thus they suborned false witnesses.
  2. The only thing that can be arrayed against the truth is falsehood.
- E. It is certain that all faithful Christians and preachers of the gospel especially will excite against themselves hostility and falsehood. For all whose interest the gospel threatens will array themselves against it.
- F. Although falsely accused Stephen looked and probably acted like an angel (v. 15).

### III. **Stephen’s Defence** (Acts 7:1-53).

- A. Stephen was charged with blasphemy against God and against Moses, and of stirring up the people. He was brought before the court and allowed to make his defence.
- B. In his defence Stephen knew and used the Scriptures. Stephen’s address was not so much a defence of himself but of the truth. Again Stephen was a man full of faith.
- C. Before the Sanhedrin Stephen gave answer to the question, “Are these things so?”
- D. Briefly he told the story of the nation’s history. He vividly showed how, again and again, Israel had rejected the witness of God’s Spirit, until at length, under the influence of their perverted leaders, the people had gone to the ugly extreme of murdering the Messiah Himself.
- E. Stephen pointed out that all their great leaders had first been rejected by: the men of their day, but afterward proved to be

deliverers whom God had chosen, and sent. Those like Joseph and Moses adequately illustrate Stephen's point. Even though Jesus is not mentioned by name there is still a hidden reference to him throughout Stephen's speech as God's chosen deliverer that was rejected as those before him.

- F. Stephen's history review was the Jews' final trial and indictment of the nation that had been God's people. Now that they had rejected Him; He was rejecting them.
- G. Stephen abruptly ends in substance by saying: You people of this day are just like your ancestors, you always resist the Holy Spirit. Only you are worse than your fathers; they killed God's **messengers** who prophesied of the **Messiah**, but you have killed the **Messiah Himself**.
- H. Not only did Stephen accuse them of murdering the Messiah but he said **they had received God's law and had kept it not**.
- I. Stephen was trying to open up their eyes to the purely formal character of their worship, which far from being true worship had become a mere ceremonialism (cf., Mark 7:6-9).  
**Note:** What of those today who have the word of God and keep it not. Formalism and ceremonialism will be condemned by a faithful man of God.
- J. It took a man full of faith to say these words, and Stephen was that man.

#### IV. **Stephen's Death** (Acts 7:54-60).

- A. At the point of death Stephen took his eyes off of his suffering and the cares of this world and looked steadfastly into heaven.  
**Note:** Let come or go what may, the faithful Christian must never loose sight of heaven.
- B. At the beginning of his defence Stephen had spoken of the "God of glory," now he was ending with a vision of that glory itself.
- C. Stephen's martyrdom was the desperate, deadly, decisive expression of the Jews' further rejection of Jesus as **Messiah**, **Saviour**, and **King**. Yet in death Stephen saw and spoke of the Lord standing at the right hand of God reigning and ruling in fulfillment of and attesting to what Stephen had preached.

- D. “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *the Lord*” (Acts 7:59—ASV). Stephen like his Lord had a dying prayer. In death and in no matter what the conditions, let us never forget to pray and to commune with our God and Saviour.
- E. Stephen not only in death but in many other ways, was like the Lord. His life and the life of Jesus are strikingly similar.
1. Stephen like the Lord had **grace and power**.
    - a. Grace, all that is beautiful, tender, compassionate, etc.
    - b. Power, strength, all that suggests vigour, determination, dignity, and authority.
    - c. Coming into the presence of this man one was at once welcomed by his grace, and at the same time aware of his power.
  2. Stephen like the Lord **suffered for strenuously rebuking sin**.
  3. Stephen like the Lord **triumphed in death**.
  4. If we are going to be faithful (full of faith) like Stephen then as he was like Christ, so must we be (1 Pet. 2:21-23).
- F. Stephen’s conviction (**faith**). Do we know of it and have it today? It is a little difficult to answer this today, because no stones are waiting for us outside of the city. But there are subtler things than stones. We must ask, “Have I the courage that will make me true in the place of criticism and opposition, of haughty disdain for the name of Christ?”
1. Is the quote “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me,” really true for you?
  2. The persecution of Christians is like ringing a bell to call all to see what Christianity will do. What will you do?
  3. If and when persecution comes will we be like Stephen (faithful)? Faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).
- G. The impression made by Stephen’s death was even greater than that made by his life.
1. Just prior to Paul’s great work was Stephen. In fact, Paul known as Saul was present at Stephen’s stoning (Acts 8:1).
  2. Later Paul was to write in Philippians 1:20: “that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as

always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.” These words adequately fit the character of Stephen.

3. The references of the New Testament to Stephen are divided this way.
  - a. What he did with his life.
  - b. What took place because of his death.
4. We have our lives now, are we using them as Stephen that man full of faith used his? Will what we have done while living continue to further the cause of Christ after we die?
5. Is our character like that of the steadfast faithful servant, Stephen? (Rev. 14:12-13).

### CONCLUSION

1. **In conclusion** (Acts 8 :1-4).
  - a. There arose a great persecution. But instead of achieving the purpose of the Jews to end the preaching of the gospel, it only served to give it momentum (cf., v. 4).
  - b. We thus learn—
    - i. Persecution promotes that which it seeks to destroy.
    - ii. Persecution develops strength and determination on the part of those who experience it.
    - iii. Persecution may scatter the church, but cannot destroy it.
  - c. Now, go back and look at (Acts 5:41-42) and see how it ties in with the account of Stephen and this great persecution that arose.
2. We have sought to emphasize the life and character of Stephen by studying his—
  - a. Deaconship,
  - b. Debate,
  - c. Defence, and
  - d. Death.
3. In summation of these points, when one looks at **Stephen** he sees **a man full of faith**. Let it be our prayer that we will imitate this great man of faith as he imitated his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

# A MAN NAMED—PHILIP

*Joseph A. Ruiz*

Joseph A. Ruiz was born in Lima, Peru, on August 1, 1951 to Mario Arnaldo and Mania Ines, one of ten children born to them. They came to the United States as immigrants in 1957 and settled in Miami, Florida in 1958. Joseph became an American citizen on April 1, 1970 at the age of 18. He is married to the former Bonnie Whitehurst and is the father of two children: Kevin Joseph, 7 and Melissa Lynn, 4. He was converted from Roman Catholicism on November 11, 1971, and was baptized by Tuck Andrews during a gospel meeting held by William S. Cline. He began preaching part-time on April 15, 1973. He is a graduate of the Bellview Preacher Training School in Pensacola, Florida, and is currently serving as the minister of the Westwood Lake congregation in Miami, Florida.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Read Acts 21:7-9.
2. Regarding the text.
  - a. Paul's third missionary journey is nearing a close. Luke, at this time, is his traveling companion.
  - b. In Acts 20 he had met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus and had given to them that wonderful, that magnificent farewell address.
  - c. Acts 21 opens with Paul and Luke leaving Miletus and setting sail unto Cos, "and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara" (v. 1).
  - d. In Patara they found "a ship sailing over unto Phenicia" and so they sail unto Syria by way of Cyprus and landed at Tyre; "for there the ship was to unlade her burden" (v. 2).
  - e. "And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days: and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. And when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way till we were out of the city: and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed, and bade each other farewell; and we went on board the ship, but they returned home again" (vv. 4-6).
  - f. This brings us to our text—"And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we saluted

the brethren, and abode with them one day. And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Caesarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters, who prophesied” (vv. 7-9).

- g. We notice three things from this reading concerning Philip—
  - i. He was one of the seven.
  - ii. He was an evangelist.
  - iii. He had four virgin daughters—a family man.

**Discussion:** in this connection, let us notice Philip as—

I. One of The Seven.

A. This statement takes us back to Acts 6:1-7.

- 1. From this reading we notice that the church was progressing wonderfully until someone was neglected.
  - a. Somehow in the feeding and caring for the many widows of this congregation, some of the women of the Grecian Jews were overlooked. Why? We are not told. Perhaps, this was the first sign of prejudice in the church.
  - b. Nevertheless, no one carried the news of this neglect to the apostles, no word was spoken directly of the trouble, they just “murmured.”

**Note:** How murmuring can and has stopped the progress of the children of God through the centuries.

- 2. The solution to this problem lay in selecting seven men from among the congregation who would be qualified according to the divinely given qualifications. One of the requirements was—they must be “of good [honest] report.”
  - a. What is meant here is that they, must be men free from scandal, that were looked upon by their neighbors as men of integrity, and faithful men, well attested, as men that might be trusted, not under a blemish for any vice, but, on the contrary, well spoken of for everything that is virtuous and praiseworthy.

- b. To put it very simply he was to be honest. Do we not need this today?
- B. Notice the ways in which Philip was honest. He was honest with—
  - 1. God—he obeyed His every command.
  - 2. The Word—he not only knew it but he lived it and he preached it.
  - 3. Others—he proclaimed the good news to them because he loved their souls.
- C. The question is—“Are we honest?” Are we honest—
  - 1. On the job? Do we give our employer an honest day’s work? Do we steal from him and then say “that’s fringe benefits.”
  - 2. With those who are not members of the church—our friends, our neighbors, our family (cf., 1 Tim. 3:7; Tit. 2:8).
  - 3. With our christian brethren (Col. 3:9).
  - 4. With ourselves (Jam. 1:22, 26).
  - 5. With God (Gal. 6:7-8).
- D. We may have the truth—but unless we are honest, it will not do us any good:

## II. An Evangelist.

- A. Definition.
  - 1. An evangelist is one who proclaims or brings good tidings to the people—a messenger of good, good news, etc.
  - 2. It is used in the special sense of one who preaches “the good news” or “the gospel” of the kingdom of God; and of the salvation to be obtained in it through Christ, and what relates to this salvation.
- B. Read Acts 8:1-13; 26-35.
  - 1. One of the tragedies with so many of us who claim to be evangelists (and every christian is) is the tragedy of the **closed mouth**; when we, instead are suppose to be proclaiming good tidings.
    - a. We open our mouth to do a lot of things; we open our mouth to talk to each other, to eat, to buy and sell to carry on commerce, and sometimes to gossip or criticize.

- b. We do a lot of things with our mouth open, but not often enough do we open our mouth **to preach** Jesus.
  2. This was an extremely **courageous** thing for this man Philip to do; it took a lot of bravery for him to do this.
    - a. It had just been a few days since Philip had seen an ugly murder committed in Jerusalem because a friend of his, a fellow deacon in the church at Jerusalem, had insisted upon opening his mouth. That man's name was Stephen; and he had gone into the streets of that great city to share his convictions with people who did not know the Lord.
    - b. The pay-off of that was a stoning outside the gates of the city—and so if Stephen would have just kept quiet if he would have just kept his mouth shut, he would not be now lying in that shallow, untimely grave outside of Jerusalem.
- Note:** Don't you know that "prudence" is probably pulling on the coat tail of Philip and saying to him, "It's alright if you want to believe in Jesus and all that but keep your mouth closed about it. You can get yourself into trouble in a hurry if you open your mouth and tell people about this—You know; you remember what happened to Stephen—he's dead now."
- c. It took a lot of courage for Philip to go down to Samaria and preach Jesus unto those people, and also to the Ethiopian nobleman.
  3. There is something else we find in what happened with the conversion of the eunuch—I think we learn something about the **spontaneity** of this man in his actions.
    - a. Philip is not the kind of man who has to drive himself to do this; he doesn't have to push or force or coerce himself. He is just like the other disciples of our Lord who said, "for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (Acts 4:20).
    - b. This good news is in his heart and it's clamoring to be let out. There is a niagara of gospel beating against the gateway of his lips and demanding to be

- turned loose, and he had to preach his Lord to others.
- c. Sometimes we find it extremely difficult to share our faith (the faith) and maybe it is because we lack the **courage** and the **spontaneity** of conduct that is evident in the life of this man—Philip.
4. Someone at this point might ask the question—“How does this character fit into the overall story and message of the Bible?”—Who is this man Philip?
    - a. If we were to make a list, I suppose, of the fifty most prominent characters in the Bible we wouldn’t even list Philip in that group.
      - (1) He is not one of the Apostles. He was not around during the earthly ministry of Christ. We don’t read or know much about him. In fact we know practically nothing about the life of this man.
      - (2) He was chosen actually, as has already been seen, for the job of serving tables. He served the **physical needs** of the Grecian widows in the Jerusalem church.
      - (3) He was one of seven men, servants, deacons chosen to do this work. But when we remember Philip today, we don’t think about him as a waiter serving the needs of the Grecian widows. We, rather, think about him as a Spirit-filled and effective evangelist who was instrumental in the “**transitional period**” of the early church.
    - b. We need to keep in mind that in harmony with—
      - (1) The Great Commission,
      - (2) the obligation to begin at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47), and
      - (3) Acts 1:8, the gospel would next be extended in Judaea and Samaria. Expansion would be geographical, ethnological, and **spiritual**.
- Note:** God overruled even the hatred and “rage of men” to the furtherance of the gospel.

- c. Philip's ministry plays a vital role in helping to carry out this three-fold transition which takes place in the book of Acts.
    - (1) As we have read in Acts 8:1-4 the church was scattered; only the apostles remained in Jerusalem. The scattered disciples became evangelists (v. 4)—Philip was among them.
    - (2) "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ" (v. 5). His message was miraculously confirmed—it involved: the kingdom of God, the name of Jesus Christ, and baptism. As a result, many believed and were baptized.  
**Note:** Recall the Lord's work in Samaria (John 4). For 600 years the Samaritans had been preserved as a distinct people. They were neither Jew nor Gentile, but "between."
    - (3) Philip is next involved in the wonderful conversion of the nobleman of Ethiopia. Consideration of—
      - (a) the plan of Acts,
      - (b) the expansion of the gospel, and the necessarily involved ethnological transitions,
      - (c) the ever-present special evidence of God's approval in such transitions, and
      - (d) the fact that the Ethiopian had gone to Jerusalem to worship—leads us to think that the nobleman was a proselyte—different to the proselyte of Pentecost, a Gentile who had accepted Judaism, and the next logical step between Samaritans and Gentiles.
  - d. Thus we can see that Philip plays an important part in the overall story and message of the Bible.
5. Furthermore, Philip was the kind of man who could do any thing, any where that needed to be done.

- a. If someone needs to sweep out the building—old Philip can do that. If someone needs to wait on tables—he can do that.
  - b. Philip is the kind of man who has the proper **humility** and love for the Lord that he can do any thing, any where that will serve to further the interest of the cause of Christ. He didn't have to have a big job to do a job—he could do any job.
6. I imagine if you could talk to Philip and you would ask him what had been the most rewarding part of his ministry? He, perhaps, would have told you that it had been times when he could talk to men about Jesus, face to face, eyeball to eyeball (Acts 8:26-40).

**Note:** It's wonderful to preach a sermon before a large audience, but nothing in the world is as thrilling as to see light and hope break on the face of a single person with whom you are studying about the hope that is in you. That is the greatest thrill in all of the world. **The personal evangelism**, the private victories for Christ have the greatest reward.

- a. That is the kind of victory that Philip is going to know in the eighth chapter of Acts beginning with **verse 26**.
  - (1) The wonderful thing about the kind of preaching that Philip is doing here is that it is available to everyone of us. We can **all** do this kind of service for our Lord.
  - (2) We can't all be pulpit preachers. I'm glad we are not all trying to do that—I might not even be here today—I might be completely crowded out, if some of you had decided to try this.
  - (3) However, we can all “preach the word” and lead many people to the Lord if we can just get to the place to where we can all share Jesus in a private and personal way—and that's what Philip is doing.
- b. Philip has the same spirit that motivated the apostle Paul who said, “woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). He knew he had a solemn

privilege and responsibility to preach this truth. Certainly he could remember the words of his Lord “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away” (John 15:2).

**Note:** We must be productive if we are to be well pleasing to God.

c. Therefore, the Lord used this man effectively in this special preaching mission in the eighth chapter of Acts—and He was able to do this because Philip had the proper **humility**, **spontaneity** and **courage** that a servant of His needs to have.

7. His humility, spontaneity, and courage produced obedience—he is an **obedient** man. He is submissive to the authority and the will of God. He is open to divine guidance.

**Note:** That’s not true with all of us. We are just open to divine guidance as long as it goes along with what we want to do—as long as it fits the formula that has already been decided upon—as long as that is the case, we are submissive to God’s will. But as soon as there is some kind of conflict, where our interests are not the same as the interest of God then of course we go our own way and that tells the world and tells God that we are not really obedient at all.

a. Philip is engaged in a wonderful meeting up in Samaria and many people are being immersed into the body of Christ—it’s a very successful endeavor. Yet he is told to set out for a “desert” country miles away.

(1) Superficially it sounds kind of like a “wild goose chase” he is going to go on—way off down there in an uninhabited region where this road intercepts the road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza.

(2) He is sent off on this trip and he is not even told what he is suppose to do when he gets down there. He is just told to go (cf., Abraham—Gen. 12).

- b. This man of God, this intelligent and humble man, he obeys. It may look foolish but he knows it is not. But he is willing to appear to be a fool for Christ's sake—that's the kind of man he is.

**Note:** Few of us are willing to be that way. We not only want God to tell us what to do, but we want Him to tell us why we have to do it—and that is not always done, because we are not always smart enough nor intelligent enough to even understand the answer.

**Note:** There have been many people who have rejected the great commandments of the Word of God on the basis that "I just don't know why in the world I have to do that. Isn't there some way that it can be avoided or isn't there some detour around this particular admonition or instruction."

- c. Philip is not looking for a detour around God's will. He is a man who is obedient to His Lord and he is ready and willing to go on what may appear to be a "wild goose chase" and leave this successful work that he is doing in Samaria (cf., The Walls of Jericho—Joshua 6).

- d. He sets out from Samaria and travels toward the South not even knowing the purpose of his journey but knowing that the Lord is not going to send him on some kind of fool's errand.—And as he travels along his eyes are open and his ears are attentive and he is ready to do anything that he can for the cause of His Lord.

**Note:** Every day of our lives is like that. Hardly a day passes without its opportunities. Again and again friends are crossing our paths that we might help and serve in many different ways. If we were just as eager and watchful as this man was we could do all kinds of wonderful and kind and loving deeds for others.

- e. After quite a long journey Philip reaches the forks of the road from Jerusalem to Gaza—and it is a barren, desolate country.
- (1) It sure does seem like an unlikely place for God to send a man to preach.
  - (2) I can just see Philip looking around—there is surely not any church building around—there is not even a brush harbor or anything else for them to meet in—but there he is.
- f. Lo and behold down the road from Jerusalem a caravan is coming; and some prominent official is in charge of it—secretary of the treasury, we might say, of the kingdom of Ethiopia—and the voice of the Lord tells Philip to go and join himself to the chariot of this man.
- (1) Now it would have been one thing if Philip had been standing there on the road and some farmer had come along riding on a donkey and the voice had said, “Go and strike up a conversation with that fellow.” That wouldn’t have been very hard—almost anything would have managed for an introduction in that kind of circumstance.
  - (2) However, the voice has just told him to go and join himself to the chariot of this important official.
- Note:** I can just hear us with our timid faith as we begin to tell the Lord, “Lord, I’ll do nearly anything for you but that man doesn’t want to have to listen to me—he doesn’t want to hear what I have to say—I have nothing for him. I don’t mind talking to a fellow whose kind of like I am but I just can’t walk up to that man.”
- g. Philip, you see, knew that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”—whether they happened to be secretary of the treasury or dig ditches for a living—that everyone needs the Lord.

They need His saving message, and he is not ashamed of this truth that he has to present.

- (1) And this Ethiopian, in spite of his position, in spite of all the power and gold coins that are rattling in his purse, he is a man who is thirsting for God and hungry for what this man has.
  - (2) We are hungry a lot of times for something and we don't know just what it is—and we will go off in the wrong place looking for it and never finding it.
- h. So Philip obeys the command of the Spirit and the Scripture says, “And Philip ran” to join himself to this chariot.

- (1) Notice the eagerness of this man—the enthusiasm, the whole heartedness.

**Note:** We need fleet-footed saints of God like this man. We need them in the pulpit—we need them in the eldership—we need them as deacons—we need them as Bible class teachers—we need people in the service of God who are willing to **run a little!**

**Note:** We are so **slow**. We move at such a slow snail's pace. We live in a world that is passing us by people are being born and living on this planet and dying and never knowing about our Lord and His Cause—and we are so slow. We get so little done—it's so easy to put it all off for another time.

- (2) Philip, he gets into high gear and he **runs** to join himself to this chariot.

**Note:** I wish this sentence could be written about all of us—that some time sooner or later we could get into high gear for Christ:

8. Not only did Philip's humility, spontaneity, and courage produce obedience, but this was a man who **knew his Bible**.

- a. The eunuch is reading the passage we read a moment ago and Philip hears it and he is familiar with it; he knows it's from the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah and what it has reference to.
- (1) Therefore he says, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30). And the man replies, "How can I except some man should guide me?"—some man teach me, help me, show me.
- Note:** That is the way the Lord works. He is always using men for the salvation of other men. It has always pleased God by "pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).
- (2) So Philip is familiar with the Word of God and he can get up in that chariot and talk to this man about his Lord—he "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35).
- b. As they travel along together and study together, what is related between them we are not told. But soon the light begins to break on the darkened face of this African statesman and things begin to happen. Somewhere in the course of Philip preaching to this man Jesus, the eunuch had learned about the significance and the value of being baptized—the necessity of this action.
- c. The Bible says, "And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught

away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing” (vv. 36-39—ASV).

- (1) Having learned about the significance of baptism as soon as the nobleman saw water available, he said, “here it is, why can’t I do this now?” He did not have to wait to be urged or coerced—he was not a procrastinator.
- (2) They both go down into the water, after he makes the great confession of his faith, and Philip baptizes him.
- (3) He goes on his way happy, rejoicing. He was about to go back to a dark continent with a dark mind, but now he can go back with hope and with salvation—because of Philip the **evangelist**.

### III. One Who Had 4—Virgin Daughters

A. This makes him a family man.

1. Notice the purity of these daughters—obviously because of the teaching and training from their father (cf., Eph. 6:4).

**Note:** How we christian fathers today need to realize and fulfill our obligation in bringing our children “up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” and stop pawning off our responsibility over to our mate.

2. These daughters prophesied—they were actively engaged in the work of the Lord.
  - a. This does not mean that they prophesied in the public assembly or usurped authority over the man in any way (cf., 1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11-12).
  - b. But simply that they also had the gift of prophecy to exercise in teaching other women and children (cf., 1 Cor. 11:5). They were active in the Lord’s work.

**Note:** I wonder if the reason why our children are not actively engaged in the Lord’s work any more than they are is because we have never really taught them the true meaning of Christianity—and because they have never seen any real

purpose in our lives—like these four daughters saw in their daddy.

- B. Philip and his family had a home that was opened to others.
1. Paul and Luke entered into his house and abode with him
  2. Philip was a man of hospitality (Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9; Heb. 13:1ff).
  3. Observe who Philip was hospitable to:
    - a. Paul who had been Saul the persecutor—one who had many years ago been an enemy to the cause of Christ and to Philip driving him out of Jerusalem during the great persecution (Acts 8:1-5).
    - b. Now Paul's enemy has become Paul's entertainer.  
**Note:** The only way to rid yourself of an enemy is to make him your friend.  
**Note:** There is no greater friendship than to be brothers together in Jesus Christ.

### CONCLUSION

1. We have studied the life of a man named—Philip. We have noticed that he was
  - a. One of the seven.
  - b. An evangelist.
  - c. One who had 4 virgin daughters—a family man.
2. How does your life compare to that of Philip's?

# DANIEL: A MAN GREATLY BELOVED

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Read Text:
  - a. Daniel 9:23—“At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew *thee*; **for thou art** greatly beloved.”
  - b. And again in Daniel 10:11 we read—“O Daniel, a man greatly beloved.”
2. Historical background:
  - a. In 605 B.C. the prophet Daniel and the three Hebrew children were carried to Babylon by the Babylonian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar.
  - b. Jehoiakim of Judah had unscrupulously revolted against the Chaldean despot. The result was a series of military actions, which culminated in the aforementioned carrying-away of Daniel, his friends, and a great host from among the artisans, and even part of the royal family.
  - c. Judah was a rebellious house and, subsequently, was worthy of the punishment brought upon them by their sins. Jehovah by the mouth of Isaiah declared: “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: **But** your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2).
  - d. Though the punishment would come in three measures, the first carrying-away brought into Babylon perhaps the greatest prophet of the Exilic period in the person of Daniel: for the

very schematic significance of his ministry therein permitted the continuance of his work throughout the Exilic period. Whereas Ezekiel maintained prominence for a while in Babylon by his strengthening didactics, Daniel served not only as a prophet among the people, but also even as a prophet and providentially-appointed statesman in the very court of the Babylonian monarchs and the succeeding reign of Darius the Mede, who secured the Babylonian throne for the Persian Cyrus as the latter's military lieutenant, the Gobryas of history.

- e. Daniel spent a great portion of his illustrious career "in the gate of the king" (Dan. 2:49). Under Nebuchadnezzar, he served even as "ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise *men* of Babylon" (Dan.2:48). Under Belshazzar, a descendant of King Nebuchadnezzar and co-ruler with his father (Nabonidus)—thus acting as regent shortly before Babylon's fall to Darius due to his father's absence from that city, Daniel attained to the position of prime minister, so to speak, having been legally proclaimed "the third ruler in the kingdom" (Dan. 5:29). And when Darius captured Babylon, the Median general set Daniel over the kingdom as the first of three presidents, or regent governors, apparently awaiting Cyrus' ascendancy to the Babylonian throne upon his entrance into the city. Thus, Daniel, who many feel may have been of noble birth, served as a eunuch in the courts of the Gentiles among the most prominent in the kingdom.
  - f. Daniel hence gave the Jews the political security in Exile which would allow them to begin rebuilding themselves under peaceful circumstances into a zealous nation amidst their chastening unto a peculiar people, properly dedicated to God, by whom also the Messiah would be sent for the sins of mankind. This fact demonstrates in principle that a child of God **can** serve acceptably in the governments of those alienated from the divine commonwealth:
3. But from the passage which we have observed, we discern Jehovah's incite into the character of this great man of God. He was in a truth "a man greatly beloved."

- a. But what, may we ask, were the great distinguishing traits of this man's character which could evoke such a sublime comment on the very nature of his life?
- b. In view of the fact that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4), we must address ourselves forthrightly to Holy Writ to answer this question.
- c. In so doing, let us observe those traits not only in **precept**, but by **example**: for such is the weightier evidence of one's concern for those things which are sublime and from above. We must remember that these things "are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

**Discussion:** With this consideration engraved upon our minds, let us observe that Daniel was "a man greatly beloved"—

- I. Due to His Personal Consecration to God.
  - A. In chapter one of the volume bearing his name, we are presented with the appointed daily provision for the children of Israel in Babylon.
    1. Verse five reads: "And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king."
    2. However, notice the attitude of Daniel toward these things of the heathen king, Nebuchadnezzar. The Record declares, "But Daniel purposed **in his heart** that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Dan. 1:8).
    3. Nebuchadnezzar had the **best** of everything. Babylon, the empire of gold, boasted the finest in delicacies, and the king feasted sumptuously. The axiom, "To the victors belong the spoils," was indeed true: for the cities of the Chaldees prospered incomparably from the conquests of her lords. The magnificent palace of Nebuchadnezzar, adorned and trimmed with gold and silver, and the illus-

trious “hanging gardens,” which constituted one of the **Seven Wonders** of the ancient world, attested to the grandiose splendor that belonged to Babylon.

- a. But the Chaldean aristocracy, as with virtually every governing class driven with the madness of power, quickly decayed into a hedonistic society aimed at epicurean goals drawn-out by their debased predecessors, the Assyrians, who delighted in debauchery and all forms of riotous living.
  - b. Babylon became a cesspool of degenerates and moral perverts, concerned only with the so-called “finer things of life.” With the excesses of her political portions, Babylon fell into a sea of moral laxity, which in turn ultimately corroded the power that was initially responsible for her existence.
  - c. When the Assyrians had become a debased debacle of destruction, God removed them by the hand of Babylon. And when Babylon had collapsed into the same pernicious progenitor of moral decay, Jehovah brought down that nation by the hand of the Medes and the Persians. But their fall had been generated from within.
- B. However, amidst the morally lax Babylonians, who were given to the **soft** life (one of meat and fine wine), Daniel refused to become privy to the ways of Babylon. He declined the things of the heathen because of the ultimate consequences of their employment. He purposed **in his heart** not to partake of such. His very being thus spoke of total consecration in both thought and overt action toward the way of God.
1. Brethren, I would to God this day that we would learn this lesson, not superficially in the form of mere mental assent, but vibrantly in the permeation of our lives with a working love and concern in our intricate beings, in our very souls, as Daniel and the three Hebrew children did:
  2. If brethren would only allow God’s way to be their way, and if they would only abstain from the way of the

heathen, then **all** internal problems in the body of Christ today would be healed.

3. Only true consecration to our sacred trust can be accepted. The church does not grow when all we baptize are **wet sinners**. Without personal **conviction** and personal **consecration**, not a one of us shall be privileged to pass through the portals of heaven. Solomon said it best, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God [attitude], and keep his commandments [overt action]: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man” (Ecc. 12:13). And again, the Psalmist writes, “Trust in the Lord, and do good” (Psa. 37:3). Peter writes, “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15-16). And finally Paul declares, “be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).
  - a. We must be free of this world in our hopes, desires, and manner of life.
  - b. The Bible still emphatically teaches that “whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jam. 4:4).
4. If we would only follow the example of the Prophet Daniel, we would have no need of our pet promotional programs, which are designed to replace Bible-centered conviction and which are hand-me-downs from hell-bound denominations.
  - a. If we would listen more to Peter, Paul, and Christ, in place of operating on the recommendations, ideas, and fallacious innuendos of some brethren, we would have no problems regarding the identities of matters of faith and matters of opinion.
  - b. And, brethren, when a so-called “gospel preacher” stands on a podium and denounces godly brothers in Christ who **are standing** for what God has said for doing just that, then I question his conviction for the truth. Such a brother has gone beyond the

point of cowardice to the very apex of doctrinal treason.

- c. Someone may ask, “What is the point of this discourse?” I respond that the point with which we are concerned is that conviction and consecration can not in any way be negated or abridged without the debasement of one’s personal character. With these closely aligned traits we are in no need of the way of the heathen. Jesus said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33).
- C. In Daniel 1:21, the Prophet requests to be proved ten days with the three Hebrew children, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, while they ate of pulse and drank water. The prince of the eunuchs capitulated, and thus proved (or tried) them.
1. The result is given in verse fifteen. “And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat.”
  2. Brethren, let us take away from our midst the propieties and stifling spiritual meats of the heathen, which only poison our systems contrary to the will of God. Let us put back the spiritual food and drink of God into the diets of our people. The gospel of Jesus Christ is **the** power of God unto salvation, and not until we partake of that great Manna shall we have Bible-taught, Bible-convicted, and Bible-believing converts.
  3. Only the way of God will suffice. And Jesus said that He is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” No one can go to the Father, except through Him.

## II. **Because of His Great Reverence for God.**

- A. In chapter two of the, Book of Daniel, we have the dream of Nebuchadnezzar regarding the establishment of the kingdom of heaven, the Lord’s church, and the taking away of the imperial dominion of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome amalgamated in the corporate whole of the Roman Empire, which thus constitutes the proper identity of “these kings” of verse 44, in whose days the God of heaven would set up His beneficent rule in the person of the Messiah.

1. But of particular interest to us at this time are verses 19 and 20, where Daniel prays out of thanksgiving for the giving of understanding to him concerning the vision of the king by Jehovah God.
  2. The Record states, “Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his.”
  3. This great man of God truly revered the name of God. His attitude throughout his dealings with the omnipotent is one of fearful reverence. He was the type of individual who would not have addressed the Holy Father as “Dear Daddy.”
- B. The Book of Daniel leaves us with a majestic and glorious view of God as seen through the eyes of an individual who reverentially sought the whole counsel of the Lord.
1. Expressions such as “I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers,” and “the most high God,” “the God of heaven,” and “I set my face unto the Lord God,” abound in his volume.
  2. But more than just giving lip service, we have already noticed that he lived the way that he contemplated. His service to God was of the most honorable reverence and fear toward Jehovah.
- C. However, a sign of our times today is a total disregard and disrespect for God, His Son, His Church, and His Law. It is not uncommon to hear members talking during public prayer about carnal affairs, or find young people making out during the course of a sermon or even in our Bible classes. I have known members to say that they did not study their Bible because they did not enjoy doing so. And comments such as “What’s all the hullabyloo about the name ‘church of Christ’ anyway,” an expression I heard from a member of the Lord’s church who is **supposedly** taking Bible courses at a denominational school, these are merely inclinations of the real problem, the symptoms (if you please) of the true disease. The lack of respect and reverence, the proper attitude, toward those things of God is at the root of, these ignoble atrocities.
1. The Bible says, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we

may **serve** God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:28).

2. “Why?” someone may ask. Paul answers: “For our God *is* a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29).
3. The church, the Israel of God today, stands at the same crossroads where the Israel under the Mosaic Law once stood. Of them, Jehovah proclaimed: “Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them*: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.... This *is* a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth. Cut off thine hair, *O Jerusalem*, and cast *it* away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath” (Jer. 7:25, 27-29).
  - a. Brethren, where shall we go? It is long past time that we made our stand for what is right regardless of the consequences.
  - b. I am afraid this very hour we are facing that stern proclamation, “prepare to meet thy God, O Israel” (Amos 4:12). This great land of ours is now ripe for conquest, and with such there shall come a cleansing of the temple of God.
  - c. I am not a prophet, nor am I a prophet’s son, but if we do not amend the situation ourselves, then God most assuredly will do so by wiping the slate clean.
  - d. The question is “Do we really believe what Jesus said in Matthew 10:28? ‘fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.’”

### III. **Due to His Wise Counsel.**

- A. When Nebuchadnezzar issued his hastily conceived decree to have all the wise men in the province of Babylonia put to death because of the failure of the Chaldeans, and magicians and astrologers to recall his dream as a sign of true inspiration

and then to interpret it, Daniel in response to the decree and in the face of his own danger “answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king’s guard” (Dan. 2:14).

1. “He answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, Why *is* the decree *so* hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel” (Dan. 2:15).
2. **Parenthetically**, we notice at least one good trait in Nebuchadnezzar: in that he apparently practiced the precept of trying the spirits “to see whether they be of God.”
3. The Prophet Daniel, of course as the Record states, told the king the dream and interpreted it, but what is of importance is the assurance of Daniel regarding the things of Jehovah. “Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation” (Dan. 2:16). And when he revealed the matter he knew that he knew that he knew:
  - a. Brethren, the counsel of Daniel was born of knowledge. By excluding the miraculous circumstances, we notice this tremendous aspect of the Prophet’s characteristic assurance.
  - b. While the heathen prophets cried, “There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king’s matter:...*it is* a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh” (Dan. 2:10-11). Daniel knew that he as a prophet of the true and living God could reveal the matter. He was not like a number of our preachers today, who, when questioned about what the Bible teaches on the work and place of women in the church, or the scriptural authority for the “youth church,” and the puppet programs wherein women are placed as teachers over men, merely turn different shades of color and mumble about uncertainties, while placing “matters of faith” in a hazy gray horizon with

“matters of opinion,” seeking to enmesh both into one vaguely generalized **concept**.

- B. Daniel gave forth counsel, conceived out of godly wisdom. Brethren, we need men who will speak the counsel in the wisdom of the Book brought by inspiration. Paul declares of the Apostles and their writings, from whence godly counsel must be drawn, “we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual **words**” (1 Cor. 2:12-13—ASV). Paul’s writings were sent forth to give us understanding and wisdom. In Ephesians 3:2-4 the great Apostle of the Gentiles writes, “If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ).”

#### IV. **Because of His Courage in His Declaration of the Word of God.**

- A. All of us readily recognize that it is one thing to simply do one’s job, but it is quite another thing to do that job under difficult circumstances. Yet it was this latter consideration which stands as a trademark of Daniel’s ministry.
1. It takes courage to truly proclaim God’s Word the way God intended it to be preached. Jesus and Stephen gave their lives in doing just that.
  2. Though Daniel did not suffer martyrdom, it took a great deal of courage on his part to even just prophesy before a heathen king, and even more fortitude to prophesy against the realm of a debased and rebellious heathen king, especially while in the presence of that king’s family, friends, and subjects, as Daniel did before King Belshazzar in Daniel 5 with respect to the imminent “handwriting on the wall.”
  3. After recounting the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel pronounces, “And **thou** his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled **thine** heart, though **thou** knewest all this; But hast lifted up **thyself** against the Lord of heaven; and

**they** have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and **thou**, and **thy** lords, **thy** wives, and **thy** concubines, have drunk wine in them; and **thou** hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath *is*, and whose *are* all **thy** ways, hast thou not glorified” (Dan. 5:22-23).

B. Daniel was not too concerned with being “diplomatic.” And, brethren, it is time we woke up in the church and realized that salvation is not a game for politicians: Preachers are not diplomats who can dicker With others about their soul as if he were dealing with a mutual trade agreement. Things must only be done God’s way, or not at all!

1. Our soft-soaping of the gospel of our Lord in our punitively self-orientated sermonettes is indicative of our lack of backbone.
2. Paul said, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2).
3. And again, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13).
4. It is high time, we stood with that great Prophet of God and declared, “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting” (Dan. 5:27), regardless of what men say.
5. There is a world which is lost and dying in sin, while we sit idly by playing diplomat. Of course the truth must be spoken in love, but, brethren, let us not fool ourselves into following the worldly concept of love, which pictures it as a sickly, humanistic, and impious over-looking of sin altogether. The demerit of sin was such that it required God’s only-begotten Son to be brutalized, punished, and ridiculed, and ultimately even killed to demonstrate its gross depravity, and thus to atone for it. The blood of Christ cries out that that demerit of sin shall be paid in full—if not by man coming to God, then by man going to that fiery torment of Hell.

V. **Due to His Unceasing Prayer-Life.**

- A. The apostle Paul exhorts us to “pray without ceasing” (1 The. 5:17).

1. To the Jewish mind such a life of prayer incorporated a set pattern in time for prayer at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, hence a schedule (so to speak) for proper prayer. A Jew who maintained such a system of prayer uninterrupted, thus, is said to “pray without ceasing.”
  2. Daniel filled this model of prayer. He prayed kneeling “upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God” (Dan. 6:10). And even in the face of a decree, properly a legal injunction, from the Median king, Darius, which outlawed any petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of the king himself, Daniel continued in prayer “as he did aforetime.”
    - a. The decree was designed by his enemies in order to find an occasion against his pious life, but Darius, though hesitating out of remorse over the decree and the purposed punishment of Daniel, his friend and counsellor, carried out the sentence of punishment after these men had found Daniel “praying and making supplication before his God” (Dan. 6:11).
    - b. Thus, Daniel was cast into the den of lions as previously ordained for all violators of the decree.
- B. However, the result is well-known: for God sent His angel to shut the mouths of the lions, and Daniel was spared. So the Bible records, “Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, **because he believed in his God**” (Dan. 6:23).
1. His enemies were destroyed in the same lion pit upon the king’s command, where once they had sought to extinguish the life of this man who was “greatly beloved.”
  2. The lesson for us today is that no matter what may arise in the kingdom of men adverse to the counsel of God, we must always follow the commandments of God and, therefore, obey God more, rather than men. Daniel was willing even to die in carrying out those commands. And Daniel was spared “because he believed in his God.”
  3. I am convinced that had he not steadfastly observed his prayer life and **continued** to bow his knee to Jehovah chapters 9 through 12 in the book bearing his name

never would have been penned, and Daniel would be remembered in Holy Writ in line with the tragedies of the life of Soul.

## VI. **Because of His Concern for His Brethren.**

- A. In Daniel 9, which is the great chapter that houses Daniel's vision regarding the celebrated "Seventy Weeks," the Prophet prays not only for his sins, but also for the sins of his people and for relief from their tribulation. Daniel pleads "O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people *are become* a reproach to all *that are* about us" (Dan. 9:16).
  1. Daniel's mission in Babylon was indeed a difficult one. And in the face of the long journey to Babylon, the danger to his life in Daniel 2, and even the imprisonment in the den of lions he still maintained a fervor for his people, a concern for their welfare, and a desire for their deliverance.
  2. His deep concern for his Hebrew brethren is also implicated in his concern over the many visions which he saw regarding the flow of world history. Thus, we read, "As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart" (Dan. 7:28).
- B. The Bible clearly teaches us that we are to bear one another's burdens, and thus be concerned over the problems and plights of our brethren. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).
  1. We need to be concerned for the welfare of those that labour among us, as indeed for all our Lord's beloved body.
  2. And we should be mindful of Paul's exhortation to "warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*" (1 The. 5:14).
  3. We should love the truth and the soul of individuals so much so that we would be willing (and apt) to practice 2 John 10 for the benefit of both. "If there come any unto

you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed.”

### CONCLUSION

1. We have examined briefly the life of this man “greatly beloved” of God, and we have noticed—
  - a. His Consecration to God.
  - b. His Reverence for God.
  - c. His Wise Counsel from God
  - d. His Courage in Preaching the Word of God.
  - e. His Prayer Life to God
  - f. His Brotherly Concern before God.
2. Just as faithful Abel, “he being dead yet speaketh” (Heb. 11:4).
  - a. Would it not be a wonderful thing if each one of us here tonight can stand before God in the after-awhile and hear the commendations “greatly beloved,” and “Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mat. 25:21).
  - b. We can of course do so: if we’ll only obey (Heb. 5:8-9).

# MOSES

## *Henry McCaghren*

Henry McCaghren was married to Alma Hudgens on May 28, 1932, and she has remained his faithful companion through the years. They have two a sons : Dr. Allen D. McCaghren, of Gadsden, Alabama, and Richard McCaghren of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

He attended schools in Dallas, Texas, and began preaching there in 1940. He has conducted gospel meetings in 14 states, also in Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Most of his 37 years in the pulpit were spent in the Dallas area, about 23 years. He was with the Hawn-Freeway church in Dallas for 10 years (two tenures) and is presently with the Lakewood church of Christ in Baytown during a second tenure.

White in local work in Gadsden, Alabama, he served as a panel member of the TV program: "Know Your Bible," and conducted a weekly Radio Program. He served as moderator for Guy N. Woods in his debate with Ben Franklin, and published the *Woods-Franklin Debate*.

White touring 5 countries in 1969, he spoke in Jerusalem and Athens, Greece, on the Lord's Day.

He has conducted 10 public debates and served as moderator in several other debates, including the Guy Woods-Leroy Gannett Debate (Located preacher and stipulated pay question), in Dallas, in 1955.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The story of Moses is one of the most fascinating the world has ever heard. He was born in a world condemned to die—his life was spared by the providence of God. There are a number of striking antitheses in his life:
  - a. He was born a child of slaves, yet became the son of a Queen (Exo. 1-2).
  - b. He inherited poverty, but also lived in a palace of riches.
  - c. In Midian, he was a keeper of sheep, but later became a leader of God's people.
  - d. He attained the wisdom of Egypt, yet had the faith of a child (Acts 7).
  - e. He was educated in the court of Egypt, but dwelt in the desert of loneliness.
  - f. He was tempted with the pleasures of sin, but he chose the hardships of virtue (Heb. 11:24-25).
  - g. He was backward in speech (Exo. 4), but was great in words and deeds (Acts 7).

- h. He became a fugitive from Pharaoh, but later an ambassador from heaven (Acts 7:29) .
  - i. Died alone on Mt. Nebo, but after his death appeared with Christ in Judea (Deu. 34:10-12; Mat. 17).
  - j. No man assisted at his funeral, yet God buried him (Deu. 34:6).
2. When you read the life of this man it causes you to stop and become keenly aware that the God we serve has a mission for each of His children. From the River of Egypt to the top of Mt. Nebo is the life of a man who was one of the greatest in all the Bible. Listen to the writer in the last chapter of Deuteronomy:
- “And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders, which Jehovah sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all the mighty hand, and in all the great terror, which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel” (Deu. 34:10-12).
- I. Parents of Moses Manifested Their Great Faith in God
- “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment” (Heb. 11:23).
- A. When you consider the fact that the writer in Joshua 24:14, the people of Israel served gods while in Egypt, this makes the faith of his parents more outstanding.
- “Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah” (Jos. 24:14).
- B. Since faith comes from God’s Word (Rom. 10:17), we must conclude that God revealed the future plans He had for their son when he was born. Think about their hiding him for about 100 days, even though they knew King’s commandment. His commandment was to be carried out by the midwives destroying the male babies when they were born (Exo. 1:15-17). These midwives loved the Jewish babies more than mothers love their own in many homes today. When this plan failed with the mid-wives, he commanded the male babies to be cast into the river (Exo. 1:22). The river which was meant for their death, became life for Moses (Exo. 2).

- C. The mother of Moses became his nurse and teacher. Even though she had a limited time with him, she so influenced his life, that her teaching and God's great lessons lasted him for 120 years. Why are so many children of Christian parents going astray today? Most of us are familiar with Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it."

The word "train" means more than just "talk," it demands action by setting the proper example. When mother and daddy fuss and fight today, what can you expect when the children grow up and establish their own home? If you will notice in many cases in the local congregation of broken homes among the young married people, you will usually see it in the home they left. And furthermore, the sin of fornication and adultery is spreading because there is a lack of teaching against these sins in the home and in the church. Most of the congregations in the country are filled with members who have been married before, and some cases several times. The church will not discipline these members because "everybody is doing it," and it seems like "everybody kinda likes it." How sad Mother, you need to stay home where you belong and take care of your babies and children. And you fathers should be the kind of man you want your son to be when he grows up.

Fathers, here is a poem which should stir up our hearts and make us be more concerned about our children:

#### **The Little Chap**

A careful man I want to be,  
 A little fellow follows me;  
 I do not dare to go astray,  
 For fear he'll go the selfsame way.  
 I cannot once escape his eyes;  
 Whate'er he sees me do, he tries.  
 Like me he says he's going to be;  
 The little chap who follows me.  
 He thinks that I am good and fine,  
 Believes in every word of mine;  
 The base in me he must not see,  
 The little chap who follows me.  
 I must remember as I go,  
 Through summer's sun and winter's snow,

I'm building for the years to be  
The little chap who follows me.

- D. We do not know how long he stayed with his mother after he was found by Pharaoh's daughter, but we do know his mother must have taught him to respect and reverence God. Our children will learn this lesson when our homes return to teaching God's Word in the home. Are we instilling the kind of faith in our children that will enable them to cope with the problems of the world when they leave the home? Why not take time now to project the events transpiring today into the future? Think of the dope, drinking, free-love (fornication), sex perverts, pornography (on TV, movies, and magazines) today: What will it be within 25 years or less? No, all of our children in the church have not been involved in the above sins. Yet, the great temptation is there. Let's encourage our children to become dedicated to the Lord's service. They need to know the good things they can do and remain fine Christians. If we do not train them, the world will!
- E. Make no mistake about it, the influence of society, the school, and even the church will not influence our children as much as the home will. Moses did not **Hear** about the faith of his parents, he evidently **saw** their faith in action.
- II. Moses Was a Man of Faith Which Led Him to Make Proper Decisions.
- “By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward” (Heb. 11:24-26).
- A. When this man stood at the forks of the road, he knew which way to turn because of his faith in God. While there are some decisions in life not easy to make, a child of God should have the faith that will make the right ones when sin is involved. Your eternal destiny depends upon the decisions you make from day to day. When you reflect upon your past life, can you not remember the times you turned to the left when you should have taken the right turn? One man said he didn't like to make hard decisions because it hurt his head. It is far better to have

a headache now rather than a heartache later. If you will notice, Moses made this decision when he was “grown up.” He was mature. But we will not make the proper decisions unless we are “spiritually” mature.

“But solid food is for fullgrown men, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).

Immature children make wrong decisions so do immature Christians. Wrong decisions have been made in marriage, choosing a job, indulging in sinful pleasures, etc. Paul admonishes us: “Abstain from every form of evil” (1 The. 5:22). As one has said: “If in doubt, don’t do it.”

B. Moses refused something:

He refused a crown (Exo. 2:10), and worldly honor. Alexander the Great could not resist the temptation to gain greater power. Some today are “power hungry” and all are not outside the church either. This is one of the reasons for the church to suffer factions and divisions. Again, we note Moses refused wealth—the treasures of Egypt. Not very many men can handle wealth and serve God faithfully.

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10).

A millionaire without God is a pauper. May we not mix up our real values: From the statement made in Hebrews 11:25, there is some pleasure in sin but the conclusion of it is death (Rom. 6:23; 1 John 2:15-17).

C. Moses chose something. In this life we cannot be neutral, even though some try. It is quite difficult to ride the fence through life, and to stand in the middle of the road is a good place to get run over. Such people may make good politicians, but bad Christians. He suffered afflictions. This was so in mental anguish and a broken heart. Mental afflictions can be far worse than broken bones. Ridicule may have a tendency to make us stronger at times (Jam. 1:24), but it often tears us down.

1. Moses offered his service and life to God and His people. If he had not made the proper choice, he would have renounced God, violated his conscience, and enlisted in the

Devil's army. To have continued to be identified as an Egyptian was the same as saying I will not take a stand for righteousness. Moses looked for something better and he found it (Mat. 17:1-5; 2 Cor. 5:1). Every step he made and every tear he shed in his 120 years of service was a small cost when we take a look at him by the side of the Master on the Mount of Transfiguration.

D. Moses flees into the land of Midian (Exo. 2). He thought this was the time to deliver his people when he struck the Egyptian and killed him. Now, he has the Egyptians and his own brethren against him. In the land of Midian he marries Zipporah, who became the mother of his two sons. He served his father-in-law, Jethro.

1. Two things were accomplished in his years from 40 to 80:
  - a. He became familiar with the land which he later came back to in guiding and leading his people.
  - b. He learned the true meaning of humility as a shepherd, and patience in dealing with cantankerous people. Patience is sadly lacking in so many of us as teachers, preachers, elders, and parents. A great lesson we learn from this man of God is the fact we don't get too old to learn. At the age of 80, Moses still had another 40 years to go—he kept on learning.

III. Moses is Called to Deliver God's People (Exo. 3).

A. God appears in a burning bush. He came down to deliver the people from bondage, but he uses Moses the Shepherd (Exo. 3:8). Moses had as many excuses as some church members do today (Exo. 3-4). In Egypt, Moses took the authority into his own hand and killed the Egyptian, and now he is reluctant to go down and deliver the people from bondage with God's authority. Since he was a fugitive from Egypt and had enemies among his own people, he wanted assurance from God for the people to believe him. When Moses wanted to know what to say, God told him to tell them "I AM hath sent you." He is the GREAT I AM of his fathers (Exo. 3:6); the GREAT I AM who heard the cry of His people; the GREAT I AM of deliverance (Exo. 3:7-8).

B. When God sends his men out on a commission, he provides them with adequate proof. Note, the three signs given to

Moses: (1) A rod (Exo. 4:2), (2) Miracle of the leprous hand (Exo. 4: 7), (3) Water as poured out on the land shall become blood (Exo. 4:9).

- C. Moses goes with Aaron, his brother and they come to Pharaoh (Exo. 5-12). It is worthy of our consideration to see that in the beginning God spoke to Aaron quite often, but later He speaks directly to Moses. The man Moses was lacking in confidence at first, but within a few months he had a greater amount of faith and confidence. This is so today in the training of men to work for the Lord. Their confidence must first be built up that they can perform in the service of the Lord.
- D. The story of the 10 plagues is quite amusing at times when you see a king defy the God of all living and then back away when faced with destruction. Perhaps, out of all the plagues, one should linger a long time in our minds; Pharaoh wants Moses to rid the land of the frogs, but he is willing to spend one more night with them. Are we not like this at times? Instead of getting rid of our sins NOW, we want to spend just one more night with them:

#### IV. Moses is an Uncompromising Man of God.

- A. He pleads with Pharaoh to “let my people go” (Exo. 10:3). But Pharaoh offers some compromises:
  1. Go ye sacrifice in the land (Exo. 8 :25) .
  2. Go not very far (Exo. 8:28).
  3. Let the men go (Exo. 10:7) .
  4. Take your little ones - leave the cattle behind (Exo. 10:26).

The Devil tempts us gradually. The story is told of a tyrant who commanded his servant to forge a chain 6 feet in length. Later, he said to make it stronger and longer. After the chain was made, the tyrant took the chain and bound him with it. The Devil works the same way today. A young Christian girl who attended Athens Bible School, was a member of the ABS and had an opportunity to tour Europe. But it would have been necessary that she sing spiritual songs with the instruments of music in the Sistene chapel, attend a Catholic Mass in Notre Dame Cathedral, but she declined the invitation. It violated her conscience. A few months ago, a man attended our Wednesday night services and became quite angry since the lesson con-

cerned disfellowship. After the services he told me he would not be back since he did not believe the church had the right to practice such severe discipline. Later, he began attending another congregation and after gaining some friends there, wanted to place his membership. But the elders found out that he had been disfellowshipped by a church in East Texas in 1972. He is trying to work his way gradually back into the fellowship of the Lord's body. But he will continue until he finds a congregation who will compromise God's word to gain an ungodly member.

- B. There are many examples in the Bible of men who would not compromise their convictions:
1. The three Hebrew children were so tempted by the graven image (Dan. 3 :13-27) .
  2. Daniel would not compromise for he realized he must obey God rather than man (Dan. 6:10-23; Acts 5:29).
  3. The story is told of Mozart who had been commanded by his publisher to write his music in a more easy and popular style. Since he lived in poverty, he was almost persuaded to comply, but he didn't. He stood his ground, kept his convictions. He died at the age of 35, having neither heat or fuel in his rooms. It is better to die early with deep convictions, than in old age with none.
  4. Some of the New Testament characters compromised as did Peter (Matt. 27:69; Gal. 2:11-14).
  5. Compromises are sometimes made because of the praise of men (Jno. 12:42-43). Others for profit (Baalam).
    - a. Neville Chamberlain compromised with Hitler in World War II, but Hitler continued to take what he wanted. The Devil hasn't changed:
    - b. Liberalism in the church today is the result of compromise. Could it be that brethren are afraid of the pressure from the pews? Or, perhaps the thought of having to make another quick move? The compromiser is not pleasing to the Lord, nor is he respected by the brethren.
    - c. Recently, a preacher attending a meeting for preachers, stood up to give his name and address. He remembered his name, but forgot his address. Someone in the

audience told him not to feel embarrassed as some preachers were having to move so often that it is difficult to remember our present address.

V. Moses Leads the People out of Egypt into the Wilderness.

- A. The children of Israel gather at Rameses to begin their journey to the Red Sea, and into the Wilderness. From Num. 33 we have a list of the encampments of the children of Israel as they journey out of bondage and spend 40 years in the Wilderness. Although we do not know the exact meaning of all the encampments, some of the names can be traced back through history and have a significant meaning as to the events which transpired there.
  1. RAM-E-SES—here is the melting of evil. Over 600,000 persons gather at this place to make the journey. Remember, only 70 persons came down into Egypt in the beginning. The one lesson we can learn from Rameses is to “quit evil and do good.” Every conversion today begins at RA MESES.
  2. SUC-COTH—the setting up of booths and tents. The children of Israel are moving by faith. They have finally made the decision to be led by Jehovah. We too, must walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7).
  3. E-THAM—their hearts are prepared for trials ahead. The Dross of Egypt must be put out of their hearts. Before we serve the Lord, we must repent (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38).
  4. PI-HA-HI-Roth—they must make a clear-cut choice here; they see Pharaoh following. They could have turned to BA-AL-ZE-PHON, and served the altar of BAAL, and perhaps would not have been molested by Pharaoh, or to MIGDOL, which was a “strong tower,” and trusted in themselves. This is the mistake many are making today.
  5. RED SEA—this is the place of deliverance (Exo. 14:30). They were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:1-2). They were not delivered at Rameses, that was only the beginning. Faith leads to obedience (Rom. 6:17-18). After their deliverance, they sang the song of deliverance (Exo. 15:1-2; Acts 8:37-39).
  6. MA-RAH—this was a place of “bitterness.” Please note that “bitterness” came after crossing the Red Sea (bap-

- tism). There will be adverse winds in our lives after becoming God's children (Heb. 12:6).
7. E-LIM—they were now on a barren desert and water was scarce. Here they find 12 springs of water—70 palm trees, just an oasis in a desert. We see the providential care God extends to His people (Phi. 4:19).
  8. RED SEA—to bring them back to the Red Sea seems to be an illogical move, but God brings them back to the place of deliverance. Each week His people today are reminded of their deliverance in the eating of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11).
  9. WILDERNESS OF SIN—a place of thorns and briars. Sin is the cause of every heartache, sorrow, and tear. In the Christian life there are many, but our Lord will stand by us (Heb. 13:5).
  10. REPH-I-DIM—the Israelites fought with the Amaekites. Aaron, Hur, held up the hands of Mosen. Today, we need brethren who will hold up the hands of faithful brethren.
  11. SINAI—the law was given because of the sins of the people (Exo. 20). They broke the law in making the golden calf and in their worship to it.
  12. KIB-ROTH-HAT-TA-A-VAH—the children of Israel tired of bread from heaven. Some died in their lust and were buried. We are warned against committing the same sins (1 Cor. 10:6).
  13. HA-ZE-ROTH—we note division through gossip. The sister of Moses (Miriam) begins to complain and is smitten with leprosy and put outside the camp. Gossip still causes division (James 3).
  14. RITH-MAH—this evidently is the same place as Kadesh-Barnea as found in Deuteronomy 1:19. The spies sent out and 10 return saying “we can't” and sat down under the Juniper Trees. Because of their disobedience—must remain in the Wilderness 40 years. “We can't” has killed many congregations. When God says “We can,” let's push on:
  15. RIM-MON-PE-REZ—God had told them to take the land of Canaan, but they said **no**. Now they decide they will **go over** and God says **no**. Rebellion is a sin.

16. LIB-NAH—it was there that God opened their eyes to see themselves. They were trying to reach Canaan by themselves (Jer. 2:13; 6:16). Do we make this mistake?
17. MOUNT HOR—Aaron died (Num. 20:29). He was stripped of his priestly robes (Lev. 8:1-26). A new priest appointed (Num. 20:28).
18. NEBO—Moses dies here and is buried by the Lord. The angel of the Lord would not allow Satan to claim his body (Jude 9).
19. PLAINS OF MO-AB—Last encampment before entering Canaan. Some turned to the idolatrous worship of the Moabites. We may be close to heaven (Canaan), the danger of idol worship is ever-present.

#### VI. Moses in a State of Depression.

- A. Moses was quite optimistic when they broke camp and left Mt. Sinai. Here him as he states: “Rise up, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee” (Num. 10:35). But just three days after leaving Sinai, the people began to murmur: “people were as murmurers, *speaking* evil in the ears of Jehovah: and when Jehovah heard it, his anger was kindled; and the fire of Jehovah burnt among them, and devoured in the uttermost part of the camp” (Num. 11:1).
- B. Now we note Moses in a state of depression. “And Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, every man at the door of his tent: and the anger of Jehovah was kindled greatly; and Moses was **displeased**” (Num. 11:10). His conversation with the Lord would surely convince us that he was about ready to give up. He thought God had forsaken him because he lost sight of God’s promises. Listen to the prayer of Moses: “And Moses said unto Jehovah, Wherefore hast thou dealt ill with thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I brought them forth, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing-father carrieth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?” (Num. 11:11-12). Moses, no doubt, thought that God was going to leave him with the entire burden of leading Israel into the land of Canaan. Moses, was like most of us, he forgot the promises of God.

Even preachers today are like Moses we forget that God is still with us and He will never forget His promises to us. The Lord had promised Moses and the people: “And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest” (Exo. 33:14).

1. Brethren there are some great lessons here we should learn:
    - a. Don't lose sight of God's promises
    - b. God has an overall plan. We many times will allow our faith to be overwhelmed with material “eye-sight,” and not walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7).
  2. Christians today need to know how to handle our depressions.
- C. First, it is important to know what happens to Christians when we get depressed. We forget God's promises and power. We lose perspective of His plan for us. No matter how close we have been with God in the past, no matter how many times He has answered our prayers, no matter how exciting our lives, we can hit a low point that literally shatters our faith for a time.
1. Second, it is important that God understands our depression. He knows our problems, and feelings. He understood Moses, Elijah, Paul, and many of the outstanding men of faith. We need to read the Bible more—pray more, and close out the material things.
  2. Third, we must seek God's solution to the problem of depression. If we get depressed because of sin in our lives, the need is to repent. Some become depressed over the sins of others and have a guilty feeling. If so, do everything possible to help the other person. That is all God expects of His children. If you become depressed over your environment, then get out of it, if at all possible. Most depressions come to us because we don't have enough faith and good common sense.

#### **On Nebo**

“By Nebo's lonely mountain,  
 On this side Jordan's wave'  
 In a vale in the land of Moab,  
 There lies a lonely grave.  
 And no man dug that sepulchre,  
 And no man saw it e'er:  
 For the Angel of God upturned the sod,  
 And laid the dead man there.”

“Oh lonely tomb in Moab’s land!  
 Oh dark Bethpeor’s hill:  
 Speak to these curious hearts of ours,  
 And teach them to be still.  
 God hath His mysteries of grace  
 Ways that He cannot tell;  
 He hides them deep, like the secret sleep  
 Of him He loved so well.

### CONCLUSION

1. Some great lessons we learn from Moses:
  - a. When we take authority into our own hands as did Moses when he killed the Egyptian (Exo. 2:11-15), and struck the rock (Num. 20:10-14), we will surely fail.
  - b. Both Heaven and Hell fought over the body of Moses (Jude 9), but God will stand by His own (Heb. 13:5).
  - c. Decisions in life do not come easy, but “my God shall supply every need of yours” (Phi. 4:19 ).
  - d. We must not allow the fact that God says “**No**,” to keep us from continuing being faithful. There is no evidence that Moses tried to retaliate in any manner after God told him he could not go over into the promised land (Deu. 3:25-26; Deu. 34).
  - e. “The call of the unattainable,” is experienced by many (Deu. 34:5), but when we do our best, God will take care of the rest.
  - f. Some reach their goals here and sit down to rest and be lost
  - g. If your goal does not reach into heaven, your vision is bad.
  - h. Moses not only had enemies from without, but also from within (Exo. 2).
    - i. Outside enemies will slow us down, but inside enemies will often stop us.
    - ii. The experience of Paul should teach us a great lesson (2 Cor. 11).
  - i. The Bible is filled with lives who “almost” made it. Agrippa (Acts 26).
    - i. Abraham Lincoln died just a short time before Lee’s army laid down its arms. He had been reading from Deuteronomy 3, where Moses pleaded with God to “let me go over, I pray thee,” but God refused (Deu. 3:25-26).

- j. Although Moses failed to reach Canaan, he stood on three Mountains with God:
  - i. Mt. Sinai
  - ii. Mt. Nebo
  - iii. Mt. of Transfiguration
- k. What a beautiful eulogy: “And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses” (Deu. 34:10).

# JESUS THE CHRIST

*Jackie M. Stearsman*

Jackie M. Stearsman was born April 4, 1938, at Morton's Gap, Kentucky. In 1964 he married Judy Turner of Parkersburg, West Virginia, and they have two sons—David Kent, 5<sup>1/2</sup> years old, and Daniel Kirk, 3 years old.

He holds the A.A. degree from Freed-Hardeman College, as well as the Third Year Certificate in Bible from that institution; the B.A. from David Lipscomb College; and the M.A. from Harding Graduate School of Religion.

He has participated in the West Coast Lectureship (Florida), 1975; Lake Worth Lectureship on Liberalism, 1976; Freed-Hardeman Lectureship, 1976; and the Old Paths Lectureship (Florida), 1977.

He taught New Testament Greek in Michigan Christian College, Rochester, Michigan.

He has been preaching for more than 16 years and is at present preaching for the Central church of Christ in Clearwater, Florida.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Occasion: The Fourth Annual Bellview Preacher Training School Lectureship, May 14-18, 1978.
2. Purpose: To study the character of the Christ in order to have a clearer picture of the One who is our Lord and model for life.
3. Assumptions:
  - a. That God is.
  - b. That the Bible is His inspired, perfect, complete, infallible, all-sufficient, and authoritative revelation to man.
  - c. That man can understand the revelation and live in harmony with it.
4. Biblical Characterization of the Christ.
  - a. That He lived a life of sinless perfection.
    - i. Jesus asks His accusers: "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John 8:46).
    - ii. Paul could say of Him: "[He] knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21).
    - iii. "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

- iv. Again our high priest is described as: “holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people” (Heb. 7:26-27).
- v. He was “without blemish” and “without spot” (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19).
- vi. He “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet. 2:22-23).
- vii. His life was “the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18).
- viii. “And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin” (1 John 3:5).
- b. That he grew and developed as a perfect man:
  - i. “And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52).
  - ii. He was “in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).
  - iii. “When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal. 4:4).
- c. That He far excels all men.
  - i. He is greater than Abraham (John 8:53, 58)
  - ii. He is greater than Jacob (John 4:12-14).
  - iii. He is greater than Moses (John 6:31-38; Heb. 3:1-6).
  - iv. He is greater than the prophets (John 8:53; Mat. 12: 41).
  - v. He is greater than Solomon (Mat. 12:42).
- d. That He is the perfect model for our lives.
  - i. He is the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2).
  - ii. He is the Messiah (the Christ, the Lord’s Anointed), our Master, Saviour, and is Divine.
  - iii. He suffered for righteousness’ sake and calls upon us to follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21).
  - iv. He is held up before us as the supreme example of sacrificial living (Acts 20:35; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phi. 2:5-11).
  - v. The greatest in His kingdom is the one who serves the most, and no one has ever rendered more service to mankind than He (Mat. 20:25-28).

- vi. “And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked” (1 John 2:36).
- e. An Appeal: Let us study the character of the Christ in order to walk as He walked.

### DISCUSSION

- I. He Walked in Perfect Obedience to His Father’s Will.
  - A. He was born under the law (Gal. 4:4) .
  - B. He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfil the law (Mat. 5:17).
  - C. Greatness in the kingdom was to be measured by keeping teaching the least commandment (Mat. 5:18-20).
  - D. His enemies could not convict Him of even one sin (John 8:46).
  - E. He was not isolated from sin and temptation but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15) .
  - F. We find ourselves failing in relation to the will of God (Jam. 4:17; 1 John 2:15-17; 3:4; 5:17; Jam. 1:12-16), but the Christ never failed.
- II. He Walked above the Customs, Traditions, and Hypocrisies of Men.
  - A. He charged that some men worship seeking only the approval of men.
    - 1. They give to be seen of men (Mat. 6:1-4).
    - 2. They pray to be heard of men (Mat. 6:5-15).
    - 3. They fast to be seen of men (Mat. 6 :16-18).
  - B. Some of His contemporaries violated the law of God by placing their traditions above His will (Mat. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13).
  - C. Some of His contemporaries violated the sacred principles regarding marriage and divorce (Mat. 5:27-32; 19:1-9).
  - D. The great weakness of the scribes and Pharisees was their lack of genuineness (Mat. 23:1-36), and He demands that our righteousness exceed theirs (Mat. 5:20).

- III. His Life Was Not Lived in Secret—Consider the Publicity of It.
- A. From Moses on, the prophets had foretold His day (Luke 24:44; Deu. 18:18; Acts 13:26-41; 15:13-21; Isa. 53; 7:14).
  - B. John was His forerunner and created great publicity concerning one greater than himself (John 1:29-36; 3:22-30; Mal. 4:5-6; Isa. 40:3; Mat. 3:1-12; 11:14).
  - C. He chose twelve apostles, endowed them with miraculous powers, and sent them to the nation of Israel, publicizing the coming of the kingdom (Mat. 10:1-15; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6).
  - D. Later there were seventy others sent out in the same fashion (Luke 10:1-17).
  - E. The miracles performed by Him and the ones he commissioned made it virtually impossible for Him to appear on the scene without being identified.
    1. “And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judaea and *from* beyond the Jordan” (Mat. 4:23-25; see also Mat. 9:35—10:1).
    2. With what was done by Him in their midst, it is no wonder that the multitude said: “When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?” (John 7:31).
  - F. His teaching also called attention to Him
    1. Matthew mentions this at the close of the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 7:28-29).
    2. There was so much excitement about His teaching that He chose to go to the Feast in private (John 7:10-16).
    3. The officers who were sent to arrest Him returned with the statement, “Never man so spake” (John 7:46).

4. It is hard to imagine the excitement that must have been present at His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Mat. 21:1-11).
  5. It is easy to understand Paul's statement to Agrippa, "this hath not been done in a corner" (Acts 26:26).
- IV. The Marvelous Character of Christ Is Exemplified in His Mastery over Self.
- A. In perfect submission to the will of His Father, in the Garden of Gethsemane the last night of His life, He prayed, "Not my will be done, but thine" (Mat. 26 :36-45) .
  - B. Earlier in His life He had withstood all of the offers of the Devil by stating, "It is written," and showing that one must not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Mat. 4:1-11).
  - C. With perfect confidence He could ask His accusers, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John 8:46).
  - D. There were times when He became angry, but He never let the anger lead Him to sin (Eph. 4:26; Heb. 4:15).
- V. The Perfection of His Character Is Manifested as He Confronts Error Flawlessly.
- A. At the beginning of His ministry and at its close He cleanses the temple and points the accusing finger at those who would turn the Lord's house into a den of robbers (John 2:13-21; Mat. 21:12-13).
  - B. He confronted the Jewish leaders with contradicting the law of the Lord by their tradition (Mat. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13).
  - C. One of the most extended accounts of His confrontation with error is that recorded in Matthew 21:23–23:39.
    1. He challenges the chief priests and elders with the principle of authority (Mat. 21:23-32).
    2. He speaks the Parable of the Householder, and the Pharisees understand that he has them in mind; and they seek to kill him but fear the multitudes (Mat. 21:33-46).
    3. The Pharisees, seeking to ensnare Him in His talk, send their disciples with the Herodians with the question of paying tribute unto Caesar. They marveled at His answer and go away (Mat. 22:15-22).
    4. On the same day, the Sadducees confront Him with the question of marriage in heaven, and when the multi-

tudes hear it, they are astonished at His teaching (Mat. 22:23-33).

5. The Pharisees again come to Him, in the person of a lawyer, asking what is the first and greatest commandment (Mat. 22:34-40).
6. While the Pharisees are gathered together, Jesus inquired of them, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is He?" Unable to answer without admitting Him as their Lord, they cease their questioning (Mat. 22:41-46).
7. What follows in Matthew 23 is His final rebuke and rejection of the Jewish nation.

#### VI. The Character of Jesus Is Further Revealed as it Is Studied in Relationship to Truth.

- A. It was for the purpose of bearing witness unto the truth that He was born (John 18:37; 1:17; 17:14).
- B. He lived the truth (John 1:14; 8:46).
- C. He provided truth (John 14:6; 17:14; Mat. 7:24-29).

#### VII. One of the Great Attributes of the Character of Christ Was His Faith.

- A. He shows us, both in His life and in His teaching, that our faith must not be in material things (Mat. 6:19-34; 1 John 2:15-17).
- B. He had great faith in His Father (John 11:41-42; Mat. 26:36-45).
- C. He had faith in the Bible.
  1. He answers the Devil with, "It is written," (Mat. 4:1-11).
  2. He also shows that the Scriptures cannot be broken, which expresses His deep respect for the Bible (John 10:35).
- D. He had faith in Himself (John 10:1-18; Mat. 16:21-28).

#### VIII. One Cannot Study the Life of Christ Without Observing the Great Courage Which He Manifested.

- A. The apostle John recalled the courage of Christ, stating that it was the fulfillment of Psalm 69:9, where it is stated that the zeal for thine house shall eat me up (John 2:17).
- B. The Hebrews writer expresses it in the following words:

“Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin” (Heb. 12:2-4).

- C. As we have noted above, He withstood the Devil (Mat. 4:1-11).
  - D. He withstood His mother and His brethren in the flesh (John 2:1-3; Luke 2:49; John 7:1-9).
  - E. He had to withstand the pressure put on Him by His own Apostles as they sought to hinder His going to Jerusalem to be crucified (Mat. 16:21-26).
  - F. With courageous zeal He withstood false teaching (Mat. 21-23).
- IX. The Character of Christ Was Saturated with and Completely Controlled by Divine Love.
- A. His love for His Father is expressed in John 14:31 John 15:7-10, and Matthew 22:34-40.
  - B. His love for man is expressed in John 13:34-35 and Romans 5:6.
- X. From the Lips of Some of the Enemies of Christ Are Expressions of the Greatness of His Character.
- A. The Pharisees accuse Him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, and He shows in debate with them how absurd such a deed would be.
  - B. If He were working miracles by the power of the Devil, it would mean that the Devil was working against himself, which shows the absurdity of their argument as well as the truthfulness of the miracles that He performed (Mat. 12:24-37; Mark 3:20-30).
  - C. There are few things that make the character of Christ more singularly attractive than to see it as it is manifested by attacks from those who were His enemies. In debate and confrontation their lives were shown time and again to be riddled with insincerity, contradiction, and superficiality, while His was open, honest, and genuine.

- D. The genuineness of His character is manifested by others who were not His followers.
  - 1. The thief who was dying with him on the cross testifies of His character and turned to Christ for comfort (Luke 23:40-43).
  - 2. The centurion who was in charge of the crucifixion is recorded as saying, “Truly this was the Son of God” (Mat. 27:54).
  - 3. Even the wife of Pilate appealed to Pilate to have nothing to do with Jesus, whom she designated as a righteous man (Mat. 27:19).
  - 4. We know that at least on three different occasions Pilate confronted the Jewish audience with the innocence of Christ (Luke 23:22), and it is stated that he knew it was for envy that they had delivered Him up (Mat. 27:18);
- XI. The Absolute Purity and Genuineness of the Character of Christ Is Not Diminished by Time or Exposure.
  - A. The single element of time is enough to do away with the influence of most men.
  - B. In time John Mark turned back; in time Barnabas and Peter withdrew from Gentile converts in social contacts; in time Peter denied the Lord; in time Abraham denied that Sarah was his wife.
  - C. Time and exposure will show the superficiality of leaders of religious systems not founded upon truth. All that is required to see the truthfulness of this is to take the time to study the lives and teachings of Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Charles T. Russell, and others. How different it is with Christ! Time and exposure—2,000 years of time and exposure—have not diminished the genuineness, truthfulness, and the purity of His character.

### CONCLUDING LESSONS

- 1. An Apologetic Syllogism
 

**Major Premise:** If it is the case that the Bible is inspired, perfect, complete, infallible, all-sufficient, and authoritative; and that the Bible teaches that the Christ was in all points tempted as a man and yet without sin; and that the Bible shows us that the Christ lived in perfect obedience to the will of His Father; and that He

lived above the customs or traditions of men; and that His life was not lived in secret but was open and publically viewed by all, both small and great; and that no matter what difficulty confronted Him, He always exercised complete control of Himself; and that He confronted error flawlessly; and that His life and truth were synonymous; and that He lived in absolute trust and confidence with His God and Himself; and that He manifested perfect courage before friend and foe; and that His every act was motivated by Divine love; and that even from His enemies and non-disciples come expressions of a confirmatory nature regarding His character; and that the elements of time and exposure do not diminish the genuineness of His character but only seem to enhance its truth and beauty; then He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

**Minor Premise:** It is the case that the Bible is inspired, perfect, complete, infallible, all-sufficient, and authoritative; and that the Bible teaches that the Christ was in all points tempted as a man and yet without sin; and that the Bible shows us that the Christ lived in perfect obedience to the will of His Father; and that He lived above the customs or traditions of men; and that His life was not lived in secret but was open and publically viewed by all, both small and great; and that no matter what difficulty confronted Him, He always exercised complete control of Himself; and that He confronted error flawlessly; and that His life and truth were synonymous; and that He lived in absolute trust and confidence with His God and Himself; and that He manifested perfect courage before friend and foe; and that His every act was motivated by Divine love; and that even from His enemies and non-disciples come expressions of a confirmatory nature regarding His character; and that the elements of time and exposure do not diminish the genuineness of His character but only seem to enhance its truth and beauty.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

2. By a Study of the Character of the Christ we can Learn—
  - a. How we should regard Divine law.
  - b. How we should regard the traditions and hypocrisies of men.
  - c. The need for self-control (Eph. 4:26).
  - d. How to regard and confront error.
  - e. How to regard truth—love it and live it (2 The. 2:10, 13-15).

- f. To put our trust and confidence in Cod and His Word, not in material things.
  - g. To live courageously for our God.
  - h. To preach and teach the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).
  - i. That when our character is what it ought to be, even our enemies must respect us (Tit. 2:7-8; 1 Tim. 4:12).
  - j. That time and exposure are great assets to truth and genuine character but not to error and hypocrisy.
3. May the Love of God and the Characteristics of the Life of the Christ be indelibly engraved upon our hearts and minds in order that we might lead others to Him for the glory and praise of both Him and His Father.

# JACOB: FROM SUPPLANTER TO PRINCE OF GOD

*Robert R. Taylor, Jr.*

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Jacob is one of the most interesting, colorful and challenging characters among biblical personalities.
2. Like Peter of the New Testament there are so many facets of his life with which we can relate in one or more points.
3. The life of Jacob is an eloquent exhibition of what God can do in making and molding of immature human material into a giant of robust faith and deep spirituality.
4. Jacob not only traveled many miles during the course of his checkered and colorful career but his travel toward the marvelous maturity of being a real man among men and a towering prince among God's royal family is even more amazing.
5. Tracing his one hundred and forty-seven-year pilgrimage on Jehovah's green footstool in Canaan, Padan-Aram, Canaan again and finally to Egypt will be productive of pleasant profit. His story appears in the last half of Genesis.

## DISCUSSION

- I. The Early Years in Canaan, (Gen. 25-28).
  - A. His immediate family tree.
    1. Abraham and Sarah—his paternal grandparents. He never knew Sarah but lived fifteen years contemporary with

- Abraham and what rich years they must have been (Gen. 25:19).
2. Isaac and Rebekah—his parents. Isaac was sixty years old at the time of Jacob's birth (Gen. 25:20-26).
- B. Growing to maturity (Gen. 25:27-28).
1. Esau—a cunning hunter—a man of the outdoors and the obvious favorite of his father Isaac (Gen. 25:27-28).
  2. Jacob—a plain man—a son around the house and the obvious favorite of his mother Rebekah (Gen. 25:27-28).
- C. The birthright passes from Esau, the elder son, to Jacob, the younger son (Gen. 25:29-34).
- D. The sojournings of Isaac in Southern Palestine while Jacob was young (Gen. 26:1-33).
- E. Esau's paganistic marriages proved to be a grief to his parents (Gen. 26:34-35). Esau was forty years of age at this time. This makes Jacob of the same age.
- F. Isaac's advancing age, his approaching blindness and a request made of his favorite son Esau (Gen. 27:1-4).
- G. The deliberately planned conspiracy toward the aged Isaac between Rebekah and Jacob with Rebekah's being the dominant force and the determined leader (Gen. 27:5-13).
- H. Rebekah's orders are carried out and every necessary detail toward the deceptive plan's successful execution is depicted (Gen. 27:14-17).
- I. Jacob is successful in deceiving his father and receives the blessing of the firstborn or primogeniture (Gen. 27:18-29).
- J. Esau's arrival, the discovery of Jacob's duplicity and Esau's plea for a fatherly blessing (Gen. 27:30-40).
- K. Esau's flaming anger and deep hatred toward Jacob (Gen. 27:41).
- L. Rebekah's quickly contrived plan for the saving of Jacob's life (Gen. 27:42-46).
- M. Isaac's charge to Jacob to go to Padan-Aram and why he was being sent (Gen. 28:1-5).
- N. Esau's actions in taking an additional wife from among the descendants of Ishamael (Gen. 28:6-9).
- O. Jacob's vision at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-22).
1. Jacob's ladder that connected earth and heaven and had ascending and descending angels upon it (Gen. 28:12).

2. God's message to Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15). This was a re-statement of the Abrahamic promise of Genesis 12:1-3 and that given to Isaac in Genesis 26:3-5.
  3. Jacob's response to the vision and Jehovah's message (Gen. 28:16-22).
- II. The Maturing Years in Padan-Aram (Gen. 29-31).
- A. Jacob's continuing journey and his arrival in Padan-Aram (Gen. 29:1-14).
1. His inquiry about his kinsmen in the area (Gen. 29:5-8).
  2. His meeting with Rachel—the daughter of Laban and Jacob's cousin (Gen. 29:9-12).
  3. Jacob's meeting with Laban and the month he remained in his home (Gen. 29:13-14).
- B. Jacob's working wages (Gen. 29:15-20).
1. The names and descriptions of Laban's two daughters (Gen. 29:16-17).
  2. Jacob agreed to work seven years for the hand of Rachel in marriage (Gen. 29:18-20).
- C. Jacob's demand for Rachel and the subsequent deception (Gen. 29:21-29).
1. Jacob thought he was getting Rachel but his new wife turned out to be the tender eyed Leah instead of the well favored Rachel (Gen. 29:21-25).
  2. Laban's explanation and his demand to wring out another seven years from Jacob (Gen. 29:26-27).
  3. One week later Jacob received Rachel but had to work an additional seven years for her (Gen. 29:28-30).
- D. Jacob, Leah and their first children (Gen. 29:31-35).
1. Leah became a son-bearing wife to Jacob while Rachel remained barren (Gen. 29:31).
  2. The birth of Reuben whose name meant "See a son" (Gen. 29:32).
  3. The birth of Simeon whose name meant "Hearing" (Gen. 29:33).
  4. The birth of Levi whose name meant "Joined" (Gen 34).
  5. The birth of Judah whose name meant "Praise" (Gen. 29:35).
  6. For the time being Leah "left bearing" or had no other children for awhile (Gen. 29:35).

- E. Rachel's grief and the children born to Jacob through the two handmaidens—Bilhah and Zilpah (Gen. 30:1-13).
  - 1. Rachel's grief over her barren condition and her blame for it placed upon Jacob (Gen. 30:1-2).
  - 2. Rachel's plan to have children by Bilhah—her handmaiden (Gen. 30:3-4).
  - 3. Bilhah bears Dan whose name meant "Judging" (Gen. 30:5-6).
  - 4. Bilhah bore a second son whose name was Naphtali whose name meant "wrestlings of God" (Gen. 30:7-8).
  - 5. Leah gives Jacob Zilpah, her handmaiden, in order to have children by her (Gen. 30:9).
  - 6. Zilpah bears Gad whose name meant, "a troop, or company" (Gen. 30:10-11).
  - 7. Zilpah bears Asher whose name meant, "Happy" (Gen. 30:12-13).
- F. The bartering for Jacob's sexual affections between Rachel and Leah and the birth of three more children to Jacob by Leah (Gen. 30:14-21).
  - 1. The mandrakes of Reuben and the agreement between Rachel and Leah for Jacob's sexual favors (Gen. 30:14-16).
  - 2. The sexual union that Leah had sold by means of Reuben's mandrakes led to the conception and birth of Issachar whose name meant "an hire" (Gen. 30:17-18).
  - 3. Leah bore Jacob a sixth son whose name was Zebulun name meant "Dwelling" (Gen. 30:19-20).
  - 4. Leah then bore Jacob a seventh child—a daughter Dinah. Her name meant "Judgment" (Gen. 30:21).
- G. Rachel is remembered by God and she bore Jacob a son (Gen. 30:22-24).
  - 1. With the birth of this son Rachel felt the Lord had taken away her reproach created by the deeply resented barrenness (Gen. 30:23).
  - 2. She called his name Joseph which meant "adding" (Gen. 30:23).
- H. Jacob's plans revealed to Laban for a return to Canaan along with his now increasing family (Gen. 30:25-26).

- I. Laban's request that Jacob remain in Padan-Aram and why he made such a request (Gen. 30:27-28).
- J. Jacob reminds Laban of how greatly God has blessed him (Laban) since his (Jacob's) initial coming (Gen. 30:29-30).
- K. An agreement is reached whereby Jacob decides to stay in order to feed and keep Laban's flocks but also how Jacob may provide for his growing family (Gen. 30:31-36).
- L. Jacob's policy to become rich in cattle is detailed and the plan worked with signal success (Gen. 30:37-43).
- M. Jacob's plans for leaving Laban (Gen. 31:1-21).
  - 1. Jacob overheard his brothers-in-law make their accusations and observes a decided change toward him upon the face of Laban (Gen. 31:1-2).
  - 2. The Lord commanded Jacob to return to Canaan (Gen. 31:3).
  - 3. Jacob shares with Rachel and Leah why it is advisable that a departure from Padan-Aram be made promptly (Gen. 31:4-13).
  - 4. Rachel and Leah respond with positive readiness toward the wisdom of a quick departure from the household of their father (Gen. 31:14-16).
  - 5. The actual departure without Laban's knowledge (Gen. 31:17-21).
- N. The hot pursuit of Laban after them, their eventual confrontation and a final farewell from each other (Gen. 31:22-55).
  - 1. Laban is informed of their departure and quickly takes after them in hot pursuit (Gen. 31:22-23).
  - 2. God's statement of warning to Laban in a dream relative to Jacob's safety (Gen. 31:24).
  - 3. Laban's overtaking of Jacob and his chastisement of his son-in-law for the secrecy of his departure (Gen. 31:25-29).
  - 4. The accusation relative to the theft of Laban's gods (Gen. 31:30).
  - 5. Jacob answers why he left in secrecy and agrees that the thief of Laban's gods should not live. Jacob was not aware that his own beloved Rachel had in reality taken them as they left Laban's home (Gen. 31:31-32).

6. Search is made in vain for the gods due to Rachel's clever way of keeping them concealed (Gen. 31:33-35).
  7. Jacob's angry response to Laban (Gen. 31:36-42).
  8. Laban's arrogant response to Jacob (Gen. 31:43).
  9. The mutual covenant between Laban and Jacob (Gen. 31:44-53).
  10. The final night together in which sacrifices were killed and bread was eaten (Gen. 31:54).
  11. Laban's farewell to his family and his final departure back to his own place (Gen. 31:55).
- III. The Ripening Years in Canaan Again (Gen. 32-45).
- A. The journey back to Canaan.(Gen. 32:1-33:17).
1. Meeting with the angels of God at Mahanaim (Gen. 32:1-2).
  2. Jacob sends a message to Esau his brother (Gen. 32:3-5).
  3. The returned report of the messengers greatly upsets Jacob (Gen. 32:6-8).
  4. Jacob took his problem to the Lord and prayed for deliverance from the anticipated fears of what Esau might do to him and his family (Gen. 32:9-12).
  5. Plans made and executed for a gift to be taken to appease Esau's anticipated wrath (Gen. 32:13-21).
  6. The passing over of the family of the Jabbok, a tributary of the Jordan River (Gen. 32:22-23).
  7. Jacob wrestles with the angel, has his name changed to Israel and receives the greatly desired blessing from heaven (Gen. 32:24-30).
  8. The passing over of Peniel as the sun arose and the beginning of a meat custom among Jacob's descendants (Gen. 32:31-32).
  9. The meeting of Esau and Jacob, their reconciliation, the presentation of Jacob's family to Esau, the reception of Jacob's gift by Esau and their departure (Gen. 33:1-16).
  10. Jacob's journey to Succoth where he built a house and made booths for his cattle (Gen. 33:17).
- B. Jacob's arrival back in Canaan (Gen. 33:18-20).
1. Came to Shalem, a city of Shechem and pitched his tent before the city (Gen. 33:18).

2. There he purchased a parcel of a field from the children of Hamor (Gen. 33:19).
  3. Upon this purchased ground he erected an altar and called it Elelohe-Israel. This name means “God the God of Israel” (Gen. 33:20).
- C. The defiling of Dinah by Shechem (Gen. 34:1-4).
1. She was the daughter of Jacob and Leah and Shechem had carnal knowledge of her while she had gone out to see the daughters of the land (Gen. 34:1-2).
  2. Shechem fell in love with Dinah and requested his father to make provisions for her to become his wife (Gen. 34:3-4).
  3. Jacob heard of Dinah’s defilement but held his peace till his sons came (Gen. 34:5).
- D. The meeting between Hamor, Shechem’s father and Jacob and his sons (Gen. 34:6).
1. Hamor goes to Jacob to speak of marriage plans for Shechem and Dinah (Gen. 34:6).
  2. Reaction of Dinah’s brethren when they heard what had happened (Gen. 34:7).
  3. Hamor’s specific proposal of marriage between Shechem and Dinah and additional marriages between the two families and trading privileges (Gen. 34:8-10).
  4. Shechem joins his father in making a request for Dinah’s hand in marriage (Gen. 34:11-12).
  5. The deceitful way that Jacob’s sons handled the matter (Gen. 34:13-17).
  6. The demand for the family of Hamor and Shechem to accept circumcision was readily accepted (Gen. 34:18-19).
- E. The circumcision plan is projected, accepted and prosecuted with promptness (Gen. 34:20-24).
- F. The vengeance of Simeon and Levi (Gen. 34:25-31).
1. These sons of cruelty came upon the city when all the men were still sore from their recent acceptance of the circumcision rite three days before and slew all males of the town (Gen. 34:25).
  2. They slew Hamor and Shechem with the sword and took Dinah home (Gen. 34:26).
  3. They took the spoils of the city also (Gen. 34:27-29).

4. Jacob's immediate displeasure with his impetuous sons of cruelty (Gen. 34:30).
  5. Their attempted justification which was weak as water (Gen. 34:31).
- G. Jehovah commands Jacob to go to Bethel (Gen. 35:1-5).
1. There he was to dwell and erect an altar (Gen. 35:1).
  2. Jacob's command that his family put away all strange gods, be clean and change your garments. They were going to the place that meant "the house of God" and were to be in a state of spiritual readiness and proper preparation (Gen. 35:2-3).
  3. What Jacob did with the gods (Gen. 35:4).
  4. God protected them in this journey (Gen. 35:5).
- H. The brief sojourn at Bethel (Gen. 35:6-15).
1. The building of the altar at Bethel and the death of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse (Gen. 36:6-8).
  2. God appears to Jacob at Bethel and blesses him (Gen. 35:9-13).
  3. Jacob sacrificed there and called the name of the place Bethel (Gen. 35:14-15).
- I. Jacob journeys on to the south (Gen. 35:16-29).
1. Rachel's death near Bethlehem as she gave birth to Benjamin (Gen. 35:16-20).
  2. Jacob continued his journey (Gen. 35:21).
  3. The incestuous affair between Reuben and Bilhah (Gen. 35:22).
  4. The twelve sons of Jacob listed along with their mothers respectively (Gen. 35:23-26).
  5. The death of Isaac and his burial by Jacob and Esau (Gen. 35:27-29).
- J. The tragedy of Joseph's sale by his brethren (Gen. 37:1-36).
1. The partiality that Jacob felt and exhibited toward Joseph above his older sons (Gen. 37:1-4).
  2. The dreams of Joseph and family response to them (Gen. 37:5-11).
  3. Jacob, concerned about his sons, send Joseph to Shechem to check on their welfare (Gen. 37:12-14).
  4. Joseph finds them in Dothan and their plans to deal deceitfully with him (Gen. 37:15-22).

5. Their selling of Joseph to the traders who were bound for Egypt (Gen. 37:23-28).
  6. The fabricated story they conveyed to Jacob who greatly grieved the tragedy he believed had overtaken his beloved Joseph (Gen. 37:29-36).
  - K. Jacob sent his sons to Egypt the first time to buy grain due to the severe famine that had hit Canaan (Gen. 42:1-2).
  - L. Their return to Jacob with the request from the Egyptian governor that Benjamin must accompany them on the next trip. Jacob refused to even consider such (Gen. 42:29-38).
  - M. Jacob send his sons to Egypt a second time and with great reluctance allows Benjamin, his youngest son, to accompany them. Note is especially made of Jacob's brand of honesty in this context (Gen. 43:1-14).
  - N. The return of Jacob's sons to Canaan and with news that Joseph yet lives, is governor of Egypt and wants the entire family to move there (Gen. 45:25-28).
- IV. The Final Years In Egypt (Gen. 46-50).
- A. Jacob departs for Egypt with God's blessings abiding the journey (Gen. 46:1-4).
  - B. The trip to Egypt (Gen. 46:5-7).
  - C. Names of Jacob's family who went down to Egypt (Gen. 46:8-27).
  - D. The happy reunion between Jacob and Joseph who had not seen each other for at least twenty-two years (Gen. 46:28-30).
  - E. Plans are made for representatives of the family to meet with Pharaoh (Gen. 46:31-34).
  - F. The meeting with Pharaoh, the conversation between the Egyptian monarch and the aged patriarch (now 130 years old) and the blessing that Jacob conferred upon Pharaoh (Gen. 47:1-10).
  - G. Jacob and the family are generously situated by Joseph in the best land that Egypt had to offer (Gen. 47:11-12).
  - H. Jacob's meeting with Joseph, his two sons—Ephraim and Manasseh—and the blessings he gave both sons. In the future each of their descendants would share in the land inheritance of Canaan (Gen. 48:1-22).

- I. On the threshold of his death Jacob calls together his sons and previews their future and the future of their descendants (Gen. 49:1-28).
- J. Jacob's instructions relative to his burial (Gen. 49:29-32).
- K. The death of Jacob (Gen. 39:33).
- L. The instructions about his burial in the cave of Machpelah are honored (Gen. 50:1-13).
- M. What Jacob had told his sons sometime before his death relative to their selling of Joseph nearly forty years before (Gen. 50:14-18).
- N. Joseph's forgiving and merciful response to this request from his father by way of the concerned brethren (Gen. 50:19-21).

### CONCLUSION

#### **How Jacob is remembered in Inspiration's Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11.**

##### **Jacob: from Supplanter to Prince of God**

Jacob was his name at birth. This name meant supplanter. Israel became his name at the time of his rebirth into real spiritual maturity. The former name was given by his parents; the latter name was supplied by God Almighty. There is little doubt that he lived up to his first name in his early years. The crafty and secular Esau once asked with great anger in his aroused soul, "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" (Gen. 27:36). The latter portion of his colorful pilgrimage on earth portrays him as a real man among men, as a prince who prevailed with God. Truly he added lovely luster to the name Israel. God greatly honored this man, his father and his grandfather by the frequent designation, "the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exo. 3:6). Jacob in the Old Testament and Peter in the New Testament are marvelous examples of what the Master Potter in heaven can do with two pieces of willing human clay. The finished product in personality forms in both cases are beautiful to behold; they are profitable to peruse by way of study; they are eloquent exhibitions to emulate. Moses depicts Jacob's noble narrative with marching notes of triumph in the last half of the Genesis account.

### The Early Years in Canaan

Jacob had the priceless heritage and the lovely legacy of being born into a spiritually enriched family. Abraham, the father of the faithful and the friend of God, and Sarah were his paternal grandparents. Jacob never knew Sarah as she died some twenty-three years prior to his birth. But he had the rare privilege of living contemporary for fifteen years with faithful Abraham. What rich years these must have been for the growing lad of Southern Palestine. Jacob was born to Isaac, the great and good man of peace, and Rebekah. Isaac was sixty years of age at the birth of Jacob (Gen. 25:26). Jacob and Isaac were contemporary for 120 years. Think of having one's father for 120 years. That is 50 years longer than the average span of life now is in our era.

Jacob was the younger of twin sons. Esau became a successful hunter, a man of the outdoors and the obvious favorite of his father, Isaac. Jacob was a plain man, a dweller in tents, a young man around the house and the obvious favorite of Rebekah, his mother. Parental partiality played havoc with home happiness in the Hebrew household and in later years would be duplicated in Jacob's own family.

Primogeniture, a double portion to the firstborn and inheritance of family rulership, was in full effect in that patriarchal era. By birth Esau had that birthright but was entirely too secular in thinking and practice to exhibit full appreciation of the same. In a fickle moment he sold his birthright to Jacob, the younger son, for a mess of pottage. Moses appraises this situation with the evaluation, "thus Esau despised *his* birthright" (Gen. 25:34). Centuries later the inspired penman of Hebrews in the New Testament would find occasion to make mention of this sale made by the secular and superficial Esau (Heb. 12:16-17).

Isaac was not really as near his death in Genesis 27 as both he and the family thought. He lived beyond this point perhaps another eighty years. He gave request that Esau hunt venison and make him the savoury meat dish that he loved so greatly. Then he promised to give Esau the blessing that belonged to the firstborn son. Esau went about to honor this fatherly request. Unknown either to Isaac or Esau, Rebekah had plans of her own to thwart totally their plan. She overheard the conversation between her husband and her firstborn son. Later she suggested to Jacob how they would dress him up to feel just like Esau and would thus receive the blessing Isaac fully intended to give to his firstborn—Esau. This conspiracy between the artful Rebekah

and the reluctant Jacob was carried through to a cunning conclusion. Jacob received the blessing of the firstborn.

Esau's return with the venison and the savoury meat dish brought into the open the entire conspiracy. Esau had to settle for the secondary blessing as it turned out. Esau's anger and wrath reached the boiling point of enraged malice. Thinking that his father's death was at hand he resolved in heart to slay the supplanter just as soon as the days of mourning were concluded for his father. Rebekah learned of these fiery plans and succeeded in getting Jacob sent back to her family in Padan-Aram. It was done under the clever guise of not wishing Jacob to marry one of the pagan women of the area. What Esau had done in marrying heathen women greatly displeased his Hebrew parents and rightly so. In the meantime Esau took an additional wife from among the descendants of Ishmael. A wife from among these people would have pleased Isaac much more than the former choices of heathen women that Esau had made earlier.

In obedience to parental demands Jacob begins his long and lonely journey to Padan-Aram or Syria which lay to the north and northeast of Southern Palestine. He spent a night at Bethel and there received the vision of the ladder between heaven and earth with its ascending and descending angels. Upon that historically important occasion God restated the Abrahamic promise to Jacob. This promise was not to be realized through Esau's family line but through Jacob's family line. Jacob promised to tithe if the Lord would be with him and bless him. This was not the beginning of the tithe system in the Abrahamic family. Be it recalled that Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils to Melchisedec (Heb. 7:4-8). From Bethel, the house of God, Jacob continued his journey to the north.

### **The Maturing Years in Padan-Aram**

Upon his arrival in the Syrian country where his maternal kinsmen lived, Jacob made immediate inquiry as to their whereabouts. Later he met with the beautiful and well favored Rachel who was his own cousin. Jacob's mother and Rachel's father were brother and sister. Jacob then met with Laban and spent a month as guest in his uncle's home. The matter then came up relative to wages. Already there had been a bond formed of more than just a first cousin type of association between the young man from Canaan and the stately Syrian woman who was of beautiful countenance and well favored. It had almost been

a case of love at first sight between Jacob and Rachel. Jacob desired Rachel's hand in marriage and agreed to serve Laban seven years for this prized possession to be his. Laban agreed that it was better to allow Jacob to have her than to give her to another. Be it kept in mind that marital plans in those days were worked out usually by parents and not by the prospective groom and bride to be. Jacob's parents not being present, the agreement was worked out between Jacob and Rachel's father. Nothing was said in this initial agreement about the Syrian custom that the elder daughter, in this case Leah, would have to marry first. Perhaps Laban thought that the hand of the less desirable Leah would be claimed before the seven years ended or perhaps he knew all along what he would do seven years later when it came time to keep his part of the agreement.

Such was the noble nature of Jacob's increasing affection and deepening love for Rachel that the seven years seemed as though they were but a few days. Real love lightens loads and even speeds by the time. Such was eminently the ease in this beautiful romance of Jacob and Rachel.

Upon the completion of his years Jacob asked for his prized possession—Rachel in marriage. Laban deceived him and gave him the tender eye d Leah instead. I have wondered over the years if Jacob, at this point, might not have remembered his own deception of Isaac some seven years earlier. He was now beginning to reap the whirlwind of what earlier he had sown but all the wages were not yet paid in his case. Jacob had to work an additional seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage though he actually received her as wife one week later but on a credit system that would require another seven years to pay out. All in all he served Laban a full fourteen years for Leah and Rachel.

Though married to both women one of them became a fruitful wife in the bearing of sons and the other remained a barren woman for a long period. In quick succession the less favored Leah bore Jacob Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Names appropriate to Leah's deepseated feelings at hand were given this quartet of sons.

In the meantime the barren Rachel became desperate indeed. She gave Jacob her handmaid—Bilhah—in order that she (Rachel) might have children through the child bearing agency of another. By Bilhah Jacob had Dan and Naphtali. Leah, who in the meantime had ceased to bear Jacob any more children, gave him her handmaid Zilpah—for a secondary wife. By this handmaid Jacob had Gad and Asher.

Rachel and Leah, sisters in the flesh and married to the same man., continued to be bitter rivals for Jacob's love and his sexual attention. The mandrakes brought home by Reuben and desired by Rachel proved to be a bartering ground for the sexual favors of Jacob. For possession of the mandrakes Rachel promised Leah that Jacob would spend the night with her. Jacob acquiesced and that night's union resulted in the conception of Issachar who was born later. This was the fifth son Leah bore to Jacob. Later she bore him a sixth son, Zebulun, and a daughter, Dinah.

After a number of years of barrenness Rachel is remembered in the vastly important realm of motherhood. She bore Jacob a son. His name was Joseph. At this point Jacob was now the father of eleven sons and one daughter. By Leah he had seven children. By the two handmaids he had a total of four sons—two by each one. Rachel had now borne him one son and in later years would bear him Benjamin as her second and final son to the family number.

At this point Jacob desired to return to the longed for land of his nativity. Laban was reluctant to see him go. He recognized that Jacob's presence constituted a sure way for him to obtain greater prosperity. Jacob was the butter on Laban's bread as it were. Jacob was not the least bit reticent in reminding his subtle father-in-law of what he (Jacob) had meant to the family fortune.

Jacob desired to be given nothing. He had worked for his two wives. Now he would work for a material living to care for those whom God had bequeathed him in the family framework. An agreement is reached whereby Jacob would again tend Laban's flocks and what he (Jacob) would receive by way of wages. The plan worked exceptionally well for Jacob. The Bible affirms that he "increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses" (Gen. 30:43).

Laban's countenance changed for the worse toward Jacob. Laban's sons accused Jacob of outright theft relative to the livestock arrangement. The Lord also commanded Jacob to return to Canaan at this time. Jacob called Leah and Rachel out to the field where they might have a private family conference. He laid before them his plans and why it was prudent now to leave. They ardently acquiesce in his plans. The plan called for a secret departure—one totally unknown to the crafty and ever deceptive Laban.

Laban learned of their leaving and takes after them in hot pursuit. Jacob's God intervenes and warns Laban to lay no hand of violence upon Jacob. Laban overtakes the fleeing family and sharply chastizes Jacob's secret departure with a verbal battle. Laban accuses them relative to the theft of his household gods. Jacob responds frankly and forthrightly and readily agrees that the thief should be put to death. Jacob was unaware that his own beloved Rachel was the culprit in this case of idol theft. Search was made for the gods but all in vain due to Rachel's clever manner in keeping them concealed. Jacob responded angrily to Laban and Laban's response was filled with arrogance. Before Laban's final departure the estranged father-in-law and son-in-law entered into a mutual agreement. Subsequent to the offering of sacrifices and the common communing of a meal Laban extended words of a final farewell to his family and returned back home. So far as we know this was the final time Laban saw his daughters.

### **The Ripening Years in Canaan Again**

The journey back to Canaan entailed a necessary confrontation with the estranged Esau. For all that Jacob knew Esau was still on the warpath. After meeting with the angels of God at Mahanaim Jacob sent a message to Esau. The returned response about how many were with Esau greatly upset Jacob. Jacob took the matter to God and prayed for deliverance from the anticipated fears of what Esau might do. Jacob arranged for a generous gift to be sent Esau for the appeasement of his still apparent wrath and resentment. The family continued their southward journey. After crossing the Jabbok, a tributary of the Jordan River, Jacob wrestled with the angel and experienced the significant change in his name. Jacob, the supplanter, now becomes Israel, the prince who prevailed in power with God. One of the carefully observed meat habits of the Hebrew people had its initial inception in this unique incident.

The years had mellowed Esau and had matured Jacob. Their meeting was not anything like Jacob had long feared. Their reconciliation is discernible instantly in their face-to-face meeting. Jacob presented his family and urged Esau to receive the proffered gift. The older brother did this with becoming reluctance, claiming that he had sufficient. The two brothers separate. Esau returned to Edom; Jacob continued his journey toward Canaan.

Jacob's arrival at Shechem meant he was now back in the very heartland of Canaan. There Jacob pitched his tent, bought some property and built an altar. Jacob's ripening process in religion was continuing.

The defilement of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, by Shechem and the wide ramifications that developed therefrom greatly marred the patriarch's arrival back into the land of his nativity. Dinah had gone forth to see the daughters of the land. Amidst this surveying journey she was defiled by Shechem who took her and lay with her. Immediately he fell in love with the now humbled Dinah and requested that family provisions be made for her procurement as his wife. Jacob and his sons were greatly upset over this act of defilement. The two families discussed this and Jacob's family said that Hamor, Shechem and all their family would have to accept circumcision before there could be intermarriage and commercial trading privileges between the two families. Shechem's family acquiesced and circumcised themselves. While the men were still very sore from the recent circumcision rite Simeon and Levi, Jacob's second and third born sons, became the crafty sons of cruelty by coming upon the city and slaying all the males. They slew Hamor and Shechem with the sword and took Dinah back home with them. In addition they took the spoils of the city. Upon learning of their unjustified and unmitigated cruelty Jacob immediately exhibited his indignant displeasure. His harsh and sharply given rebuke was,

Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I *being* few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house (Gen. 34:30).

Their weak attempt at justification was, "Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?" (Gen. 34:31).

Again it became imperative for Jacob to move. Jehovah God commanded him to go to Bethel. There he was to dwell and erect an altar of worship. They were now going to the city whose very name meant, "house of God." Jacob recognized the total inconsistency of traveling toward the house of God and the building of an altar and the family's current possession of strange gods. Hence he charged his household to engage in a housecleaning of idols. He would not bring a family of polytheism to the place where only monotheism was the established order and the accepted norm. Jacob then dealt with the

household gods as the family delivered them into the patriarch's hands. God's protection surrounded them amidst the journey to Bethel.

The sojourn at Bethel was brief. The altar was built and sacrifices were there offered. The death of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, occurred there. God again appeared to Jacob and blessed him. Jacob called the name of the place Bethel which meant, "house of God." Jacob again took up travel plans and headed toward Southern Palestine. While on this journey death claimed the life of his beloved Rachel as she gave birth to her second son and to Jacob's twelfth and final son—Benjamin. In later years he would become the apple of his aged father's eye. Rachel's death is described as a departure of her soul from her body. Such is in absolute harmony with man's dual nature and what the Bible describes death as being in James 2:26. Jacob continued his journey subsequent to his burial of the beloved Rachel in the Bethlehem area. In this general area of time occurred another chapter of inflicted suffering to the aging patriarch. His firstborn, Reuben, had an incestuous affair with Jacob's wife, Bilhah. Jacob must have been deeply pained by this depraved act on the part of a wife and the beginning of his strength. In later years he would call it to painful memory (Gen. 49:3-4). Isaac had now reached the end of his one hundred and eighty year pilgrimage on earth and went the way of all the earth. His spirit was gathered to his fathers. The body was buried in the cave of Machpelah by his surviving sons—Esau and Jacob.

Jacob would have been in full sympathy with a sentiment frequently expressed relative to children, "When they are young they are on your feet; when they get older they are on your heart." Genesis 37 tells the story of another glaring and grievous tragedy that the sons of the aged patriarch, now 108 years old, inflicted upon his frequently troubled heart. They sold his beloved Joseph into Egyptian bondage but led the unknowing father into thinking that Joseph had been devoured by a wild beast.

The tragedy developed in this fashion. Joseph was seventeen years of age at the time. Clearly and obviously Joseph was the preferred one in the family as far as Jacob was concerned. Jacob evidently had forgotten how parental partiality had worked such havoc in his early home with Isaac and Rebekah. Even if he remembered, he failed to heed its obvious lessons. He exhibited his partiality toward Joseph by making him a coat of many colors. As a teen-ager Joseph also began to have dreams. The obvious implication of each one was a prophetic pointer

toward Joseph's future dominion over them. The family response to the revealed dreams only aggravated an already explosive situation that grew more touchy and sticky day by day. Even the prudent Jacob rebuked Joseph relative to their obvious implications.

In the meantime the older sons of Jacob had gone far to the north in search of grass and water for their herds. Jacob sent Joseph to check on their welfare. Now that the youthful dreamer with his multi-colored coat was distantly removed from his father's protective custody, they decided to sell him. This they do. They took the despised coat and dipped it in the blood of a slain goat. The bloody garment was brought to Jacob. He concluded just what they plotted for him to think. In Jacob's mind the precious son of his old age was dead-ravished by a wild beast. At that very time Joseph was headed for slavery in Egypt. It would be a long twentytwo years before Jacob would see the beloved Joseph again. It would be that long before he would even know that he was still alive.

The years came and went. A severe famine hit Canaan. Reports that came to Jacob confirmed the presence of available grain in Egypt. Jacob sent his sons to obtain needed grain. Unknown to any of the brothers Joseph was now governor. They appeared before him and bowed. The dreams were now reaching fulfillment. He knew them; they did not know him. He accused them of being spies. He detained Simeon upon sending them home and demanded they bring Benjamin, their youngest brother, with them the next time down. Jacob at first states that Benjamin would not be going with them on the second trip. But when stern necessity demanded their going again he reluctantly agreed to Benjamin's going with them. Jacob requested that presents be taken to the Egyptian governor. Their money had been sent back the first time. Jacob requests that it be taken since it might have been an oversight the first time. Such exhibits his sterling brand of honesty and integrity. It reminds us of his grandfather Abraham's honesty who once said he would not take so much as a thread to a shoelatchet that belonged to another (Gen. 14:23).

During this second trip Joseph makes himself known to his brethren and learns that they are truly changed men from the hardhearted brethren who had mercilessly made merchandise of him twenty-two years earlier. The brethren return to Jacob with news that Joseph yet lives, is governor over all Egypt and wants the whole family to move

to Egypt. Words are impotent to reflect the full joy that the revitalized Jacob, now at the age of 130, must have felt deeply in his heart.

### **The Final Years in Egypt**

Jacob immediately made plans to accept his long lost son's invitation. God told him to go and that heavenly blessings would abide him on the journey and final sojourn. The trip was without incident. Great and glorious was the reunion of a father and son, of an Egyptian governor and a prince of God. Twenty-two years had passed since Jacob sent Joseph on a mission from which he was never to return.

Jacob and certain representatives of the family were brought before Pharaoh. Pharaoh and Jacob conversed freely. The Occupant of the Egyptian throne received a blessing from him who was an heir of the Abrahamic promises and one who had prevailed with the Ruler of the Universe.

Jacob was destined to live out his final seventeen years in Egypt. He and his family were given Goshen, the best that the Egyptian land had to offer.

Final events in the patient patriarch's colorful and deeply significant life included the blessing of Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. These two sons, through their descendants, would inherit tribal sections of the Promised land. Thus Joseph, the firstborn of the beloved Rachel, was given the land rights of primogeniture or a double portion. On the threshold of his death Jacob called together his sons and prophetically previewed their future. Jacob gave instructions relative to his burial. He was to be buried in the cave of Machpelah. This is where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah were all entombed. His spirit was gathered to his fathers and they did with his earthly remains in full harmony with his dying request. Prior to his death Jacob had given instructions to his sons relative to what they were to tell Joseph about their selling him nearly forty years before and how that Joseph was to be besought to continue his forgiving compassion upon them. Joseph full complied with the request.

Jacob is enshrined in Inspiration's Hall of Faith and Fame in Hebrews 11. Such is a beautiful and fitting tribute to one who traveled the great character distance from an immature supplanter to a mature prince who prevailed with God.

### Lessons from Jacob

1. In Jacob we see the transforming power of God at work in changing a disposition to supplant to a real prince of God.
2. In Jacob we see a man who placed a far higher premium upon the spiritual than upon the physical.
3. In Jacob's early home and later in his own home we see the adverse effects of parental partiality.
4. In Jacob's checkered homelife we see the impossibility of a polygamous framework producing household harmony.
5. In Jacob we see one molded in the likeness of Abraham and Isaac and who was willing to become an important human instrument in the gradual unfolding of the Abrahamic promises. Esau was a misfit in these overall plans.
6. In Jacob we see the laws of sowing and reaping at work. He deceived and later was deceived. He sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind in this momentous matter.
7. In Jacob we see at work the principle that one reaps more than he sows and for a longer time (cf., Hos. 8:7). Jacob deceived once; he was deceived twice—once by Laban and later by his own sons and over a twenty-two-year period.
8. In Jacob we see a man of tireless energy, of abounding industry.
9. In Jacob we see a man who was frequently hurt and hurt deeply and yet retained his strong faith in God to the very end of life.
10. In Jacob we see a man who wanted to make his own way. He never desired to be the recipient of a constant hand-out philosophy.
11. In Jacob we see a man who was honest and filled with integrity, especially in mature life.
12. In Jacob we see a man who loved and loved deeply. This love reached up to God, to his parents, to his beloved Rachel and to his sons.
13. In Jacob we see a man who knew that God held the future in his hands as far as he and his descendants were concerned.
14. In Jacob we see a man who knew firsthand about the beauty of worship. He worshipped near the time of his death as he had done all his life (Heb. 11:21).
15. In Jacob we see a shining and illustrious example of what it means to die in the faith (Heb. 11:8-13).
16. Jesus affirmed that Jacob will be in the eternal kingdom of glory (Mat. 8:11). That made his life eminently useful and worthy of

emulation. Let us follow him as he followed the God of his being and Father of his eternal spirit. From him church leaders of today can learn much in being leaders of men for truly Jacob was a leader of men.

# PETER

*Donald Davis*

Donald Davis was born November 21, 1928, nears Dozier, Alabama. Having been orphaned at an early age, he grew up on the farm of his grandparents in Holmes County, Florida. After serving two years in the U.S. Navy, he married Gladys Jones of Graceville, Florida. They have four children.

He was converted by the radio preaching of Emerson J. Estes. He and his wife obeyed the gospel in the first service they attended of the church.

He attended Montgomery Bible College and has done local work in Alabama, Florida, and Tennessee. He is presently working with the Maytown Church of Christ, Mulga, Alabama.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Although Peter's life was marred with moments of weakness and frustration, one would search in vain to find a life more thrilling and dramatic in its dedication, more abundant in service or farther reaching in its accomplishments.

## DISCUSSION

- I. The Man Peter.
  - A. Peter was just a common ordinary man.
    1. By occupation, he was a fisherman (Mat. 4:18).
    2. He was a family man (Mat. 8:14; 1 Pet. 5:1; Tit. 1:6).
    3. He had little or no formal education (Acts 4:13).
  - B. Peter, like any ordinary man, had both faults and virtues.
    1. When told of his impending conduct at the arrest and trial of Jesus, he was boastful and overconfident (Mat. 26:30-35).
    2. As predicted, when faced with a crisis, he acted very cowardly (Mark 14:53-54, 66-71).
    3. He was hypocritical toward the Gentiles at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-12).
    4. Following Jesus' instruction to "launch out into the deep" Peter became very meek and humble (Luke 5:1-8).
    5. When threatened by the council, he displayed great boldness (Acts 4:16-20).
- II. The Disciple Peter.

- A. Peter was introduced to Christ by Andrew (John 1:40-42).
  - B. Peter, James and John were intimate disciples of Christ.
    - 1. Jesus chose these three to witness the transfiguration (Mat. 17:1-3).
    - 2. Jesus also permitted these three to witness the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:22-24, 35-42).
    - 3. Peter, James and John were near Jesus when He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane (Mat. 26:36-37).
  - C. Peter's name appears first in each list of the twelve disciples (Mat. 10:1-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13).
  - D. Jesus saw great potential in Peter.
    - 1. Jesus saw in him a "fisher of men" (Mark 1:16-18).
    - 2. Jesus promised him "the keys of the kingdom" (Mat. 16:13-19).
  - E. Peter is known for his impetuous actions.
    - 1. He assumed to walk on water without sufficient faith (Mat. 14:22-31).
    - 2. He had the audacity to rebuke Jesus (Mat. 16:21-23).
    - 3. At the transfiguration, Peter proposes three tabernacles (Luke 9:28-33).
  - F. Peter, the disciple, is grieved when Jesus insists that he "feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17).
- III. The Apostle Peter.
- A. Peter leads in selecting a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:15).
  - B. Peter uses the keys of the kingdom (Mat. 16:19).
    - 1. He opened the door of salvation to the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2).
    - 2. God's provision for the erring was revealed by Peter in Samaria (Acts 8).
    - 3. Peter was God's choice by whose mouth the Gentiles would "hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (Acts 10).
  - C. Peter exercises apostolic power.
    - 1. A forty year old man, lame from birth, was healed at the Beautiful gate (Acts 3).
    - 2. Ananias and Sapphira are stricken dead for lying to God (Acts 5).
    - 3. Aeneas, sick of the palsy (paralyzed) for eight years was healed instantly (Acts 9:32-34).

4. Dorcas was raised from the dead (Acts 9:36-41).
- D. Peter and other apostles refuse to bow to pressure (Acts 4:16-21; 5:25-29).

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Peter's life stands as a monumental reminder that an ordinary faltering and stumbling man can overcome and become a giant in the faith through faithful obedient service to the Master.

# ANDREW

*Jim Bullington*

Jim Bullington was born and heaved in Athena, Alabama. He married the former Mildred Hagood, also of Athens. He is a 1972 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching and had completed four years of mission work in Blairsville, Georgia. He moved to his present work with the Oliver congregation at Rogersville, Alabama in mid 1976. He has participated in a debate concerning the false doctrine of "Saints Only" in August 1977.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Andrew lived in a time identified as "the fulness of the time" (Gal. 4:4).
  - a. The time of Andrew was the time of which all the prophets had spoken from Samuel when they foretold of "these days" (Acts 3:24).
  - b. His time was the time in which the Father would raise up Christ to sit on David's throne (Acts 2:30).
2. Andrew, an inhabitant of Bethsaida, lived in a place of special significance.
  - a. As a part of Israel, he lived in the land which had been given by Jehovah to the descendants of Abraham.
  - b. He lived in the vicinity of the predicted rise of the Prophet of prophets.
3. How exciting it must have been to have lived at the time and in the vicinity of the Messiah.
  - a. This is not literally possible for anyone today.
  - b. However, we can know Andrew, a person who walked and talked with Christ.
    - i. We can learn of his special office.
    - ii. We can learn his human characteristics and traits which set him apart from others.
    - iii. We can learn to imitate the humble steps of this great servant of God which lead to true greatness.

## DISCUSSION

- I. Andrew, an Apostle of Christ.
  - A. An ambassador of the kingdom.

1. Jesus began to preach, “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 4:17).
    - a. Andrew, brother of Simon Peter, was called as one of the select ambassadors of the kingdom (Mat. 4:18-19).
    - b. Recognizing the importance of this mission, Andrew left his nets straightway and followed Jesus (Mat. 4:20).
  2. A participant in the “limited commission”.
    - a. As Jesus had done before, Andrew began to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Mat. 10:7).
    - b. He was empowered to “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils” (Mat. 10:8).
- B. A proclaimer of the Gospel.
1. Since the sin of the original pair, mankind had longed for the day in which the “Good News” of the remission of sins through the blood of Christ would be a reality.
  2. Andrew stood with Peter and the eleven on the day in which this message was initially proclaimed (Acts 2: 14).
  3. He remained in Jerusalem and was among those who “gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4:33).
  4. His actions are included in those who were “daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42).
  5. He was one of the ones of whom it was said that it was not reason that they should leave the word of God and serve tables (Acts 6:2).
- C. He was a vessel for “the hope of Israel” and for the entire world.
1. Without the Christ, the whole world was in darkness. With Christ, comes light and life.
    - a. No one should have known this better than a Jew. Their nation had groped in darkness due to sin for almost 1500 years.
    - b. No one should have recognized this any more forceably than Andrew as he observed the general condition of Israel.

- c. Money spoke far louder than mercy and position had much more weight than justice and righteousness.
    2. Andrew was to be a proclaimer of true greatness.
      - a. The carnal ordinances of the law had brought cold formalism to Israel's worship.
      - b. The relationship between the Jew and Gentile, rather than improving, had only worsened with time.
      - c. The gospel announced by Andrew was a means to "worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
      - d. The gospel announced by Andrew contained the answer to the problem existing between Jew and Gentile. All could be "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).
      - e. Years of hate and animosity could be swept away by the message of the lowly Nazarene, and Andrew was preaching that message.
  - D. However, almost without note, we have seen Andrew rise from an obscure man of the sea to a renowned man of the Saviour. The next section of our study will deal with traits and characteristics which brought forth this marvelous man called Andrew.
- II. Andrew, Some Characteristics and Traits.
- A. He was a disciple interested in destiny.
    1. He was interested in his own destiny.
      - a. A disciple of John (John 1:35).
      - b. He followed Jesus when John announced that Jesus was the lamb of God (John 1:36-37).
    2. He was interested in his family's destiny.
      - a. John records that he **first** findeth his own brother, Peter, and brought him to Christ.
      - b. Note the priority exhibited in this action.
    3. He was interested in the destiny of others.
      - a. Obvious from the fact that he was an Apostle
      - b. Demonstrated in his bringing of the seeking Greeks to Christ in Jerusalem (John 12:20-22).
  - B. He was a servant interested in service.

1. Willing to accept the “menial” task of finding food for the hungry multitude (John 6).
    - a. Five loaves and two small fishes.
    - b. Five thousand plus were fed
  2. A servant willing to accept a “back seat.”
    - a. The fact that his brother was so well known did not deter him from doing what he could.
    - b. His name is last mentioned in Acts 1:13.
  3. He had no claim to greatness other than his humble service.
  4. He was perfectly willing to let God “keep the score.”
    - a. An imperative trait in the gospel preacher.
    - b. Clamor for the acclaim of man is but the echo of an empty soul.
    - c. Service is the mark of true greatness.
- C. He was a saint who was truly set apart.
1. As a disciple of John, Andrew had been called upon to bring forth the fruits which were meet for repentance.
  2. Unlike the masses, Andrew was not satisfied with the “status quo.” Rather, he sought for change through God’s ordained means
  3. He readily gave up his material possessions in order to follow Jesus.
  4. He was with the “inner circle” when the prophecies pertaining to the destruction of Jerusalem were given by the Lord (Mark 13:13).
- D. He is an example worthy of emulation.
1. There is no hint of hesitation when good was to be done.
  2. No hint of immorality in his life.
  3. No hint of his apostasy.
  4. No hint of an enlarged ego; the big I and little you concept.
  5. He was a so-journer from earth to heaven who recognized full well the principles involved in Matthew 16:24-27.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

### CONCLUSION

1. Acceptable traits have never changed.
2. Eternity alone will reveal the reward of those who follow in the humble steps trodden by Andrew (cf., Mat. 25:31ff).
3. We must recognize that opportunities to serve are but steps to greatness.
  - a. Regardless of the “position” which such opportunities offer.
  - b. God will exalt those of low degree.
4. Andrew the apostle.
  - a. A disciple interested in destiny.
  - b. A servant interested in service.
  - c. A saint who was truly set apart.
  - d. An example worthy of emulation.

# DAVID

## Acts 13:22-23

*Quentin Dunn*

Quentin A. Dunn began preaching in Cottonwood, Texas, in January of 1946. Nearly all of his local work has been in Texas and Oklahoma. He has held meetings in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Iowa, New Mexico and Arizona. He has also preached over the radio. He writes articles for the *Defender*, *Contending For The Faith*, and *Four-State Gospel News*.

### INTRODUCTION

1. Read Acts 13:22-23—David was the second King of Israel.
  - a. He was a man after God’s own heart.
  - b. He trusted in the Lord, was humble and penitent.
2. Jesus came in the lineage of David (v. 23).
  - a. Many of the Psalms of David refer to Christ.
  - b. Jesus said, “all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44). It is easy to see how David fits into the plan of the Bible.
3. Elders and preachers should trust in the Lord, be humble and penitent.
  - a. A proud, impenitent elder or preacher is dangerous.
4. The life of David can be divided into three parts.
  - a. His youth.
  - b. His relation to Saul.
  - c. His reign as King.

### DISCUSSION

- I. His Youth.
  - A. He was the youngest son of Jesse (1 Sam. 16:10-12).
  - B. Samuel anointed David (1 Sam. 16:13).
    1. The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.
    2. David looked after his father’s sheep and obeyed his father.
  - C. David played music to Saul and had many abilities.

1. He was a man of courage, prudent; the Lord was with him (1 Sam. 16:18).
  - D. David fought Goliath (1 Sam. 17).
    1. He went in the name of the Lord. He was victorious.
    2. We must do all in the name of the Lord.
- II. David's Relationship With Saul.
- A. David behaved himself wisely (1 Sam. 18:5, 14-15, 30).
    1. Rewards—the Lord was with him.
    2. He was also in favor with the people.
    3. His name was set by.
    4. Favor was manifested in many ways because of David's behaviour.
  - B. There was enmity of Saul toward David (1 Sam. 18:6-9).
    1. Saul was jealous of David.
      - a. The jealousy endured.
      - b. Saul sought to kill David.
      - c. David remained humble. There is jealousy among elders. There is jealousy among preachers. This is wrong. We should remain humble in spite of how jealous anyone is.
    2. David had opportunity to kill Saul (1 Sam. 24:1-11).
      - a. David cut off Saul's skirt but spared his life.
      - b. David's heart smote him because he cut off the skirt of God's anointed. We should respect rulers.
- III. After Saul Died David Became King.
- A. David went to Hebron by God's direction and was made king over Judah (2 Sam. 2:1-4).
    1. This shows him to be a man after God's own heart.
  - B. David was anointed king over Israel (2 Sam. 5:3).
    1. David inquired of the Lord (2 Sam. 5:19).
    2. David did as the Lord commanded him (2 Sam. 5:25).
    3. David subdued the Philistines.
  - C. Sin in the life of David 2 Sam. 11:1-27).
    1. Adultery
    2. Deception
    3. Murder
    4. Some think that adultery is a small sin. Not so! David repented but he and his family suffered for his sins. The influence of some elders and preachers have been ruined

by this sin. Even if they repent their influence is greatly diminished.

- D. David numbered God's people (1 Chr. 21:5; 2 Sam. 24:2-9). He trusted in numbers rather than in God.
  - 1. David's heart smote him, he repented (2 Sam. 24:10).
  - 2. David showed generosity (2 Sam. 24:25).
    - a. God gave the victory.
    - b. God gives the victory now.

### CONCLUSION

- 1. David showed himself to be a man after God's own heart in his youth.
- 2. David showed himself to be a man after God's own heart in relation to Saul. David was humble, Saul was proud. Saul was jealous, David was patient.
- 3. David showed himself to be a man after God's own heart as king. He worshipped God. He was humble and repented of all sins.
- 4. May God help each of us to profit by David's trust in the Lord, his courage, his humility and repentance. But let us be warned by his sins!

# JOB

*Linwood E. Bishop*

Linwood E. Bishop was born in Brown County, Texas, to William P. and Marry B. Bishop. He attended public school at Golden, Lone Pine and Rising Star, Texas, and Abilene Christian College with the class of 1935. He began preaching in 1931 while attending ACC, and has devoted his whole life to the Lord's work since that time. He has preached and lectured from coast to coast and from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, and has engaged in a numbers of debates. He also taught in The College of World Evangelism, Downtown San Francisco, California. He now ministers to the Northside Church of Christ, Santa Anna, Texas. He has given initial training and encouragement to many young preachers!

## INTRODUCTION

It is my responsibility in this lecture, if I correctly understand the assignment, to discuss the person and character of Job, and to show how the history of his life and experience relates to the overall purpose and message of the Bible. In spite of the fact that perhaps no other book in all of the Bible has been more critically examined and more doggedly attacked by skeptical critics, the book of Job has been and is one of the greatest literary productions of all time. This, within itself, is very unusual in view of the fact that the Jewish people, apart from inspiration, were never distinguished as a literary people. The Jews themselves have ever accepted this book as being “inspired of God” and have given it a place along with the other inspired books of the Old Testament.

It should be evident, even to the casual student, that the story of Job most certainly does relate to the overall purpose and message of the Bible—that is, the glory of God and the salvation of man. Perhaps no other book in the entire Old Testament is more completely devoted to the glory of God than is the story of Job. Even though the theme of salvation in Jesus Christ is not spelled out in so many words, yet the story does definitely reveal the fact that God has a plan for man which is bigger than any one individual; and that He is, in His own time and according to His wisdom, working all things according to His eternal purpose for the eventual good and happiness of man. This should become crystal clear as we develop the lesson.

In view of the fact that Job probably lived in the “starlight” or Patriarchal age, and I believe he did, his spiritual perception and his hope for immortality was far in advance of his time. He was thoroughly convinced that God has a purpose in the existence of man which reaches beyond our earthly human experiences. This hope is eloquently expressed in 14:7-15; 19:23-27.

### DISCUSSION

The first few verses of the book of Job presents him as a most unusual person in many ways. We are told that he “was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil” (1:1). Thus he was an exceptionally moral and religious man. Furthermore, he had a wonderful family of seven sons and three daughters, who evidently loved each other and enjoyed a peaceful and harmonious fellowship continually. The record says, “his sons went and feasted *in their* houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them” (1:4). Even though there is no indication of any thing immoral or wrong going on, yet Job did not simply take their innocence for granted; but being an interested father and concerned about their spiritual as well as their physical welfare, he kept a watchful eye on the situation. After each of these rounds of feasting, Job would sanctify them,

and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings *according* to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually (1:5).

Job was a man who took his parental responsibilities seriously. O Lord God, give us more parents, and grandparents, today, who are really involved in the lives of their children, and who will take the time and make the effort and necessary sacrifices to train them up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” I am persuaded that the greatest curse of this generation, insofar as our youth is concerned, is that they have been given too much time, too much money and too much freedom, with no responsibility. Fathers, God holds us accountable for the proper training of our children, and He expects a better job than many of us are doing.

Job was also a man of great wealth.

His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east (1:3).

What more needs to be said upon this point? It is evident that, at this point in history, Job was a very great and successful man. Yet the most amazing thing about his financial success is that he came by it honestly, the accusations of his friends notwithstanding. Over and over again, in reply to the false charges of his friends, Job affirms his honesty and fairness and justice. Yes, even his mercy and compassion. He recognized, of course, that all good things are from Jehovah, but he emphatically denied having gotten any of his wealth by fraud or extortion. Even with all his wealth and greatness, God was still first in Job's heart and life. Entirely too often when men become materially wealthy they lose their sense of a need for God and spiritual things, and drift away into worldliness. This was not true of Job. He refused to allow success to interfere with his loyalty to God. He maintained his integrity in spite of it all. He recognized the source of his prosperity and he was grateful for it. Jehovah recognized and commended his loyalty.

It should be no surprise to us that at the very zenith of Job's power Satan appears on the scene with a purpose and a plan to destroy him. In fact, this is a typical example of Satan's primary purpose and work in the world. Satan is now, as he always has been, busily engaged in tempting, testing, trying people, and especially those who are happy in the service of God, in an effort to wreck their lives and damn their souls. He does not always succeed, as in Job's case; but he never quits trying.

Another fact worth mentioning in this context, typical of Satan's tactics, is that he was mingling with the sons of God. Notice "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them" (1:6).

Old Satan is shrewd enough to know where he can do the most damage. He doesn't have to spend his time with those who are already his, but rather with those who are not. This most certainly is not the only time Satan came along with the sons of God when they went to worship. You and I know from our own experience that just one Devil "among the sons of God" can do more harm than a thousand can do anywhere else. Oh how terrible has been the damage to the cause of our Lord, because Satan was allowed to work his way in among the children of God. No wonder we have so many warnings in the Word of God against this very thing. When the Lord asked Satan, "Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (1:7). He

doubtless was seeking just such an opportunity as this. An opportunity to try a man like Job to the very depth of his soul must have been a real challenge to Satan's pride and vanity.

The Lord's question to Satan, relative to His servant Job, strongly implies His love and the high esteem with which He regarded Job. "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (1:8). Satan treats the Lord's commendation as a challenge, and he replies with an accusation:

Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face (1:9-11).

Thus, Satan accuses Job of serving God hypocritically, only because God had blessed him with an abundance of material possessions. But Satan's philosophy was not then, and never has been true to the facts of human nature, in all history. The one almost universal principle of human nature, with few exceptions, which stands out in history as clearly as perhaps any other, is that great wealth and material prosperity do not, as a rule, cause men and women to be more loyal and more devoted to God. In fact, the very opposite is true. As a rule, humanity has a tendency to forget God in times of great prosperity; but on the other hand, we have a tendency to turn to God in time of great stress and need. There are exceptions, of course, but they are rare and far between. The New Testament especially emphasizes the danger of too much material wealth.

The Lord had enough confidence in Job's fidelity that He delivered him into the hands of Satan to be tried, with the one restriction that he was not to put his hands on Job's person. With this in mind, Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, to put his scheme in motion. Job was stripped of all his material possessions, including his children, in a single day. Only the few servants who escaped to bring him word of his losses remained. It is doubtful that many of us could have endured such a traumatic shock as this, with the grace and composure of Job. I have known cases in which men who occupied positions of leadership in the church suffered a complete mental and emotional breakdown, as a result of losses far less dramatic. Their faith in God was just not

strong enough to endure the shock; but with Job it was a different matter. He did not have a “nervous breakdown,” or a heart attack, or a stroke; because his trust was in God, not in his material possessions. He realized that his blessings came from God, and that He has a perfect right to give or withhold them, or even to withdraw them as He sees fit; and furthermore, as a mere human being, he had no reason or right to sit in judgment of God’s actions. Instead of becoming bitter and critical, we are told,

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly (1:20-22).

The second trial of Job is introduced in exactly the same words as the first, except that after commending Job God adds, “and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause” (2:3). To this Satan replies, “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face” (2:4-5). Satan’s indictment against man may be generally true; but it was not true of Job, and it has not been true of many others down through the ages. There have been many in history, and there are some today who value principles above life itself. If this were not true, Christianity would never have existed. Self-sacrifice and personal commitment is the foundation principle of Christianity (see Mat. 16:24-26).

Once again God gave Satan permission to try Job, only with the understanding that his life be spared. God’s confidence in Job’s integrity is unshaken, so He allowed the trial.

So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. 8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes (2:7-8).

Anyone who has ever had boils, even a few, can not doubt the extreme pain and agony of Job’s condition; but to be stricken with boils from the soles of one’s feet to the crown of his head would be a condition so horrible that it is almost beyond human comprehension. Some have supposed that Job was afflicted with elephantiasis; but regardless of the diagnosis, Job’s condition was almost unbearable, and

it staggers our imagination. At this point when it seemed that Job's condition was as bad as it could possibly be, his wife came and added insult to injury, by suggesting that he should take the so-called easy way out. She said, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die" (2:9) Job's reply to his wife indicates the type of person he was. Instead of lashing out at her with a harsh and cutting rebuke, he simply said unto her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (2:10). Therefore, "in all this did not Job sin with his lips" (v. 10). It is rather doubtful whether we would have been as gentle and understanding as Job was, under similar circumstances. He demonstrated a great deal of wisdom, as well as patience.

Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that *his* grief was very great (2:11-13).

At this point in our story we cannot help but be impressed by this vivid and emotionally charged account of the coming of Job's three friends. In spite of the fact that they had been close friends for a long time, Job's condition had so changed his appearance that his friends "knew him not." They were so touched by his wretched condition that "they lifted up their voice and wept." They demonstrated their genuine concern by, "rent[ing] every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word" (2:12-13). "They saw that his grief was very great," and they sincerely wanted to help him.

A fact worthy of mention is that, so far, nothing whatever has been said about any wickedness or guilt on Job's part, even though he was undergoing a great trial of affliction, and without any apparent cause or reason. The question uppermost in Job's mind was the same as has been asked over and over by suffering humanity all down through the ages: That is, "Why?" "**Why me?**" Job knew that his faith was being sorely tried, but he did not know why.

Beginning with chapter three and running through chapter thirtyone, we have a heated discussion between Job and his three friends, on the problem of human suffering, and particularly on the question of why Job was having to suffer. The three friends had come to mourn with Job and to comfort him; but instead, their accusations and arguments only made his suffering worse. They were dedicated to the proposition that human suffering in general and especially Job's suffering was a direct result of personal wickedness. They were convinced that Job had committed some terrible secret sin, and that he was being justly punished for it. When Job denied their charges, they decided that he was a hypocrite and they told him so. Now I feel sure that ail of us would agree that wicked and sinful people do often suffer, both physically and mentally, has a direct result of their sins. For instance, the drunkard may and often does develop sclerosis of the liver, or the habitual smoker may develop lung cancer; or the person who experiments with drugs very often becomes an addict. In these and many other similar instances people suffer the consequences of their own sins. On the other hand, the person who lives a clean and wholesome and righteous life is often happier and healthier than the person who dissipates and indulges in every form of sinful pleasure; but this is not invariably true. Sometimes the innocent suffer along **with the guilty**, and sometimes **because of the guilty** (as in the case of an automobile wreck, caused by drunk driving). Then sometimes the innocent suffer **for the guilty**; and sometimes we all have to suffer because we live in a world cursed by sin.

Another fallacy of the philosophy of Job's friends is that it ignores the fact that God's judgment is not always speedily executed. Also, the fact that wicked and ungodly people often acquire great wealth, and some enjoy excellent health. Some of them have many friends, and often occupy positions of great honor and high authority. Both experience and revelation teaches us that there is no consistent "cause and effect" relationship between righteousness and prosperity on the one hand and between sin and suffering on the other. The amount and degree of suffering that one endures in this life is no indication that he is a wicked person. Neither is material wealth and prosperity indicative of one's righteousness.

The third chapter opens with Job cursing his day and wondering why he was ever born:

After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. And Job spake, and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night *in which* it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it (3:1-4).

He wonders why he ever lived:

Why died I not from the womb? *why* did I *not* give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? (3:11).

He thinks it would have been better if he had not been born.

For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest...There the wicked cease *from* troubling; and there the weary be at rest (3:13, 17).

He ponders the purpose of his life, and longs for the grave:

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter *in* soul; Which long for death, but it *cometh* not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; Which rejoice exceedingly, *and* are glad, when they can find the grave? (3:20-22) .

He had been afraid something like this would happen to him:

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me (3:25).

Job's three friends tried to be kind and helpful at the beginning, even though they were obsessed with the idea that he had been wicked; and that he was being punished for his sins. With this one thought in mind, each takes his turn accusing Job, and trying to convince him that his only hope was in facing up to his wickedness, and in repentance, confession; and in pleading for mercy. Their lack of confidence and their continued accusations, instead of comforting Job, only made his agony worse. He felt like they were actually persecuting him. Let us notice some of their charges:

Then Eliphaz...answered and said, *If* we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?... *Is* not *this* thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways? Remember, I pray thee, who *ever* perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed (4:1-2, 6-9).

Eliphaz reasons that since God is sovereign over all creation, He has a right to do whatever He pleases, without being questioned He ad-

monishes Job to seek God, and to present his cause before Him (5:8). He also thinks Job should be grateful for the Lord's correction:

Behold, happy *is* the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty (5:17).

He thinks he has given Job the solution to his problem and he admonishes him to accept it for his own good:

Lo this, we have searched it, so it *is*; hear it, and know thou *it* for thy good (5:27).

Job's pain and grief was almost beyond endurance, and he did not understand why; because he had not done anything to deserve this kind of trial:

But Job answered and said, Oh that my grief were throughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!... For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.... Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant *me* the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off! Then should I yet have comfort... What *is* my strength, that I should hope? and what *is* mine end, that I should prolong my life? *Is* my strength the strength of stones? or *is* my flesh of brass? *Is* not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me? (6:1-2, 4, 8-10, 11-13).

Job thought his friends should have shown kindness, but instead, they showed contempt, and this did not help at all:

To him that is afflicted pity *should be shewed* from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.... Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance? Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty? Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove? Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, *which are* as wind? Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig *a pit* for your friend (6:14, 22-27).

Job wonders if there is to be no end to his suffering.

*Is there* not an appointed time to man upon earth? *are not* his days also like the days of an hireling?... Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.... When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: So that my soul chooseth strangling, *and* death rather than my life. I loathe *it*; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days *are* vanity.... O thou preserver of men? why hast

thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? (7:1, 11, 13-16, 20-21).

Now Bildad adds his accusations to those of Eliphaz.

Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, How long wilt thou speak these *things*? and *how long shall* the words of thy mouth *be like* a strong wind? Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice? If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression; If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; If thou *wert* pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous (8:1-6).

Job recognized the absolute sovereignty of God, but he thinks God is treating him unfairly, by refusing him a conference

If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort *myself*: I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. *If* I be wicked, why then labour I in vain? If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. For *he is* not a man, as I *am*, *that* I should answer him, *and* we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, *that* might lay his hand upon us both. Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me: *Then* would I speak, and not fear him; but *it is* not so with me (9:27-35).

Thus he continues to pour out his complaint in a torrent of words:

My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me (10:1-2).

Zophar thinks that Job is not getting what his wickedness justly deserves:

Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said, Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?... For thou hast said, My doctrine *is* pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;...Know therefore that God exacteth of thee *less* than thine iniquity *deserveth* (11:1-2, 4-5, 6b).

Job thinks his friends are letting their **egotism show**:

And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye *are* the people, and wisdom shall die with you. But I have understanding as well as you; I *am* not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these? (12:1-3):

Lo, mine eye hath seen all *this*, mine ear hath heard and understood it. What ye know, *the same* do I know also: I *am* not inferior unto you. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. But ye *are* forgers of lies, ye *are* all physicians of no value. O that ye would altogether hold your peace! (13: 1-5).

In chapter fourteen Job reasons on the frailty of all human flesh, on the brevity of life, on the purpose of life, and he expresses hope in a resurrection and immortality. We do not have the time and space to devote to a thorough study of this passage at this time; but we do want to say that it is a most profound and encouraging passage. Throughout many centuries it has served to comfort and encourage the hearts of the sorrowful and the suffering and the dying, wherever God's Word is read and respected.

The running debate between Job and his friends gets hotter and more caustic as it continues. They each take turns accusing and condemning; but no really new evidence or arguments are advanced, but are primarily repetitions of their former speeches. They accuse him of wickedness, lying and hypocrisy, and of stubbornness and rebellion against God. But Job, of course, continues to deny any wrongdoing which would justify his suffering. He believes that God is arbitrarily punishing him for some unknown reason. He also feels that all his friends have turned against him in his affliction, and have become his enemies. He was deeply hurt by their attitude:

Then Job answered and said, I have heard many such things: miserable comforters *are ye* all.... I also could speak as ye *do*: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you. *But* I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage *your grief*. Though I speak, my grief is not asswaged: and *though* I forbear, what am I eased? But now he hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company (16:1-2, 4-7).

My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids *is* the shadow of death; Not for *any* injustice in mine hands: also my prayer *is* pure.... Also now, behold, my witness *is* in heaven, and my record *is* on high. My friends scorn me: *but* mine eye poureth out *tears* unto God. O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man *pleadeth* for his neighbour! (16:16-17, 19-21).

He pleads with his friends to cease their campaign against him, and to leave his judgment to God:

Then Job answered and said, How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times have ye reproached me: ye

are not ashamed *that* ye make yourselves strange to me. And be it indeed *that* I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself. If indeed ye will magnify *yourselves* against me, and plead against me my reproach: Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net. Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but *there is* no judgment (19:1-7).

He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.... My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated for the children's *sake* of mine own body.... All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me. My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh? (19:13-14, 17, 19-22).

But in spite of his feelings of having been persecuted and then forsaken, Job still retains his hope in -final redemption and immortality:

Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me (19:23-27).

Job's three friends continue to harangue and harass him with their charges and accusations; insisting that his suffering is only just retribution for his sins. Their bad philosophy was based on the false assumption that suffering is always the direct result of one's sins. Job emphatically denied that this was true in his case, or that he had been wicked or done anything to deserve this kind of suffering or punishment. He still did not know why he was in this terrible condition, but he believed it was unjust and unfair:

Then Job answered and said, Even to day *is* my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find him! *that* I might come *even* to his seat! I would order *my* cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words *which* he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with *his* great power? No; but he would put *strength* in me (23:1-6).

Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, *As* God liveth, *who* hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, *who* hath vexed my soul; All the while my breath *is* in me, and the spirit of God *is* in my nostrils; My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter

deceit. God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach *me* so long as I live (27:1-6).

Job remembers the time of his former prosperity, and he longs for a return of the good old days:

Oh that I were as *in* months past, as *in* the days *when* God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head, *and when* by his light I walked *through* darkness; As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God *was* upon my tabernacle; When the Almighty *was* yet with me, *when* my children *were* about me; When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil; When I went out to the gate through the city, *when* I prepared my seat in the street! (29:2-7).

In chapter 32, a young “know-it-all” enters the picture. He thinks he “knows all the answers,” and he is angry with Job and his three friends, because with all of their age and experience, and their professed knowledge and wisdom, yet they have not been able to offer a satisfactory solution or explanation to Job’s problem. Elihu begins by soundly rebuking “everybody,” for their lack of wisdom and understanding; ironically speaks of his own youth, in comparison with their age and position; then assumes the posture of “speaking for God.” Regardless of whatever else may be said of Elihu, he most certainly was not lacking in self-esteem. However, in spite of professed wisdom, in the final analysis, his philosophy was identical with that of the three friends, and his arguments relatively the same as theirs. The speeches of Elihu, chapters 32-37, lead to the speeches of the Lord, which begin with chapter 38.

The Lord begins by giving Job “a final examination,” which opens with:

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who *is* this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me (38:1-3).

The Lord proceeded to present Job a series of questions so profound and complex that they caused Job to realize just how little he really knew about God, His power, His plans, His purposes and His ways; also to realize how small and insignificant his own problems were in comparison to God’s overall plan and purpose. It seems needless to say that Job “flunked the examination.” However, it did serve to restore

Job's confidence in the wisdom and justice of God, and to see that he, as a mere man, had no reason or right to accuse Him at all.

Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further (40:3-5).

After another series of questions and further discussion by the Lord, Job realized that it was he, not God, who had been unfair; and with this realization came the complete restoration of his faith and trust:

Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that* no thought can be withholden from thee. Who *is* he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes (42:1-6).

An invaluable lesson which Job learned and which we need to learn is that misfortune and human suffering is not a contradiction of God's love. Regardless of the duration or the degree of suffering we may have to endure, we must never loose our trust in Him.

### CONCLUSION

With the restoration of Job's faith came the restoration of health and his prosperity, and he had twice as much as he had before.

# JOSEPH: A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

*Robert R. Taylor, Jr.*

## INTRODUCTION

1. Joseph lived nearly forty centuries ago and was truly a man for all seasons.
  2. Had Diogenes, the cynic of ancient Athens who searched the streets of Athens with a lighted lantern in broad open daylight for a man, an honest man, a real man, lived in Joseph's era, he could have realized his quest when he came to know the just Joseph, one of the most holy of all Hebrews.
  3. Joseph has been one of the most beloved of all biblical characters. Some men in the Bible were unlovable and were regular rogues; Joseph instantly attracts our attention and prompts an immediate and growing admiration with each passing hour spent in a study of his checkered career, his colorful pilgrimage on earth.
  4. From a favored son to a despised brother, to a sold captive, to a tempted slave, to an unjustified sentence in prison, to a respected ruler, to a forgiving figure, to a saviour of his people and to one who died in faith and hope we trace the thrilling journey of Joseph of the Old Testament.
  5. We shall speak of him in his father's house, in Potiphar's house, in the prison house, in the governor's house and finally his anticipated inheritance in the Father's heavenly house in the bright beyond. These will be our major segments of study both in the outline and in the narrative later.
- I. Joseph in His Father's House (Gen. 30:22-37:35).
    - A. This period covers the first seventeen years of his life.
    - B. His birth to the formerly barren but now deeply grateful Rachel—the most beloved of all Jacob's wives (Gen. 30:22-24).

- C. The new baby boy was named Joseph which means, “Adding.” Rachel was now confident that God would add to her another son. Thus an additional line existed between Joseph and Benjamin from the name significance (Gen. 30:24).
- D. Soon after Joseph’s birth Jacob thought in terms of returning to Canaan but was begged by Laban to remain in Padan-Aram (Gen. 30:25ff). Hence Joseph’s birth and first years were spent in Padan-Aram.
- E. Jacob’s extra special protection and care for Rachel and Joseph when he anticipated violence from the initial confrontation with Esau (Gen. 33:1-2).
- F. Rachel and Joseph are made acquainted with Esau and exhibited proper respect becoming courtesy (Gen. 33:7).
- G. In the list of Jacob’s family Joseph and Benjamin are mentioned as children of Rachel (Gen. 35:24).
- H. Joseph at the age of seventeen fed the flocks with four of his half brothers and brought their evil report unto his father Jacob (Gen. 37:2).
- I. Parental partiality exhibited toward Joseph and the new coat (Gen. 37:3-4).
  - 1. Implications of the new coat (Gen. 37:3).
  - 2. The hateful response to all this preferred partiality by his envious brethren (Gen. 37:5-11).
- J. Joseph and his dreams (Gen. 37:5-11).
  - 1. Joseph conveyed his dream to his brethren and this produced greater hatred than ever from his brethren toward him (Gen. 37:5-8).
  - 2. Another of his revealed dreams seemingly indicated that the whole family would one day bow before him. This brought about even a rebuke from Jacob and greater than ever envy on the part of his brethren. Nevertheless Jacob observed carefully the whole matter (Gen. 37:9-11).
  - 3. Joseph was sent to check on the welfare of his brethren who were in central Canaan feeding the flocks (Gen. 37:12-14).
  - 4. Not finding them in Shechem he was directed to Dothan where they had moved in the meantime (Gen. 37:15-17).
  - 5. The planned conspiracy against the dreamer (Gen. 37:18-20).

6. Reuben's efforts to save him from the death they had planned for him (Gen. 37:21-22).
  7. At first they planned to leave him in a pit to starve (Gen. 37:23-24).
  8. The approaching presence of the traveling traders who were headed for Egypt prompted a change in their pernicious plans (Gen. 37:25-27).
  9. Joseph was sold by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver and taken into Egypt (Gen. 37:29-30; cf., Gen. 37:21-22).
  10. Reuben's strong displeasure at not finding him in the pit. He intended to deliver him and bring him again safely to Jacob (Gen. 37:29-30; cf., Gen. 37:21-22).
  11. The exceptionally cruel and heartless manner in which they sought to cover the enormity of their inhumane crime (Gen. 37:31-32).
  12. Jacob's instant belief of their concocted story and the great grief of soul that the supposed tragedy brought to his mind (Gen. 37:33-35).
- II. Joseph in Potiphar's House (Gen. 37:36-39:19).
- A. The Midianite traders brought Joseph into Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, an officer to Pharaoh and the captain of the guard (Gen. 37:36).
  - B. Joseph is not mentioned by name in Genesis 38. This chapter concerns Judah and his family.
  - C. Joseph became a purchased slave in the house of Potiphar (Gen. 39:1).
  - D. Jehovah prospered Joseph in the house of his master (Gen. 39:2).
  - E. Potiphar began to realize what a valuable servant he had in the young purchased Hebrew (Gen. 39:3).
  - F. Great responsibility was given Joseph by his new master (Gen. 39:4-6).
  - G. Temptation resistance and the consequences (Gen. 39:7-19).
    1. Potiphar's wife sought on several occasions to seduce the Hebrew youth who was a goodly person and well favored but he steadfastly resisted all of her subtle blandishments (Gen. 39:7-13).

2. She falsely accused him of the very thing she had wanted to do and that he had refused to do, i.e., commit fornication with her (Gen. 39:13-19). Evidently both the men of the house and later her husband believed her concocted story.
- H. Lessons from Joseph in Potiphar's house.
1. Temptation can be resisted successfully.
  2. Joseph said a courageous **no** and made it stick.
  3. Joseph would not betray the unlimited confidence his Egyptian master had placed in him.
  4. Joseph knew some things were off limits to him. Potiphar's wife was one of them.
  5. Joseph knew that all sin is ultimately against God.
  6. Joseph recognized this to be the glaring and grievous sin that it really is.
  7. Joseph did not stay around to flirt with this explosive evil. Distance—not proximity—is the only safe course in such explosive situations where aroused bodily chemistry can make men and women engage in the most naive or unreasonable of human relationships of evil and wanton wickedness.
  8. Joseph was not ignorant of Satan's devices and one of his favorite and most successful is in the powerful and explosive realm of illicit sex.
  9. Joseph would not allow his manly looks and handsome features to become prostituted for base and inglorious human actions.
  10. Joseph shows that purity of person can be maintained against the strongest and most persistent of power packed temptations.
- III. Joseph in the Prison House (Gen. 39:20-41:36).
- A. Potiphar believed his wife's concocted story and sent the just Joseph to prison (Gen. 39:20).
  - B. Again the Lord was with Joseph and soon he was given a responsible position in the prison house (Gen. 39:21-23).
  - C. The imprisonment of the butler and the baker (Gen. 40:1-4).
  - D. Both the butler and the baker dreamed dreams while they were detained in prison (Gen. 40:5).

- E. Joseph learned of their dreams and interpreted them (Gen. 40:6-23).
  - 1. The butler's dream was interpreted first. He was to be reinstated to his former position as butler (Gen. 40:9-13).
  - 2. Joseph asked the butler to remember him (Joseph) when he had the butlership reinstated to him again (Gen. 40:14-15).
  - 3. The baker's dream was then interpreted. He was to be executed (Gen. 40:16-19).
  - 4. Both dreams came about just as Joseph had predicted (Gen. 40:20-22).
  - 5. Human like the butler forgot all about Joseph (Gen. 40:23).
- F. Two years later Pharaoh had a dual dream—one dealing with seven well favored and seven ill favored cattle and one dealing with seven good ears of grain and seven blasted ears of grain. No one could interpret the significance of the dual dreams (Gen. 41:1- 8).
- G. At this point and after two long years of forgetfulness the butler remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh what Joseph had been able to do with his and the baker's dreams while they were imprisoned (Gen. 41:9-13).
- H. Pharaoh called for Joseph and briefly related the dual dreams to him (Gen. 41:14-24).
- I. Joseph, by God's aid, told the Pharaoh that the seven good cattle and the seven good ears of grain represented seven years of plenty and the seven bad. cattle and seven blasted ears of grain represented seven years of famine (Gen. 41:25-32) .
- J. Joseph then gave wise counsel as to what prudent plan the Pharaoh should follow in dealing with the coming realities of plenty and then the coming of the severe famine (Gen. 41:33-36).
- K. Pharaoh's subsequent actions about raising Joseph to the governor's house brought to an end the long, gloomy years he had been unjustly incarcerated. The prison house was now exchanged for the governor's house. The long years behind bars were now behind and liberty lay ahead.

## IV. Joseph in the Governor's House (Gen. 41:37-50:26).

- A. The official appointment of Joseph as Egyptian governor and the presentation to him of his governmental credentials (Gen. 41:37-44).
- B. Joseph's new name and his marriage to Asenath—the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On (Gen. 41:45).
- C. Joseph's administration of the plan to preserve food during the bountiful years to tide them over during the coming years of the severe famine (Gen. 41:46-49).
- D. To Joseph and his wife were born two sons, Manasseh (the firstborn) and Ephraim (the younger) (Gen. 41:50-52).
- E. The bountiful years ended and were followed by the famine years. Joseph then began the administrative work of dispensing the stored grain to both the Egyptians and those who came from neighboring nations to purchase grain (Gen. 41:53-57).
- F. Jacob sent his ten oldest sons (Benjamin was kept home) to Egypt to buy grain (Gen. 42:1-5).
- G. The reception they received from Joseph who recognized them but they did not recognize him. He accused them of being spies who had come to witness the famished fields of Egypt (Gen. 42:6-16).
- H. They were imprisoned by Joseph who laid the necessary groundwork for the bringing of Benjamin to the land of Egypt (Gen. 42:17-20).
- I. Their expressed remorse over what they had done to Joseph years before and Reuben's reminder of his piercing words at the time (Gen. 42:21-22).
- J. Unknown to them Joseph understood all their conversation. He detained Simeon to be held as captive while making preparation to send the other nine back to Canaan (Gen. 42:23-24).
- K. They were sent back to Canaan with full sacks of grain, their money intact and the report they gave Jacob upon their return back home. Jacob states that Benjamin will never go with them on a subsequent trip (Gen. 42:25-38).
- L. Due to a pressing necessity they are sent back a second time and Jacob very reluctantly agrees for Benjamin to accompany them (Gen. 43:1-14).

- M. Jacob's sons return to Egypt a second time where they are entertained royally by Joseph (Gen. 43:15-34).
- N. Joseph pursues another test to determine the current character of his once deeply depraved brethren (Gen. 44:1-17).
- O. Judah's selfless supplication to Joseph in behalf of Benjamin (Gen. 44:18-34).
- P. Joseph makes himself known to his brethren (Gen. 45:1-15).
- Q. News of this spreads to the pleased ears of Pharaoh who extends an invitation for Jacob and all the family to move from Canaan to Egypt (Gen. 45:16-20).
- R. The brethren carry the news of Joseph's welfare and present status in the Egyptian governorship back to Jacob and with the request that the entire family move to Egypt (Gen. 45:21-27).
- S. Jacob's decision to go and see his long, lost son in Egypt before he dies (Gen. 45:28).
- T. Jacob and his family make plans for the move from Canaan to Egypt with God's full approval and promised blessings abiding them (Gen. 46:1-7).
- U. A listing of Jacob's family (Gen. 46:8-27).
- V. The great reunion between the aged Jacob and the youthful Joseph (Gen. 46:28-34).
- W. Joseph presents his father and some of his brethren to Pharaoh (Gen. 47:1-10).
- X. The placement of Jacob and his family in the best land that Egypt had to offer (Gen. 47:11-12).
- Y. Joseph's wise administration during the remnant of the seven years of the famine (Gen. 47:13-26).
- Z. The final days of Jacob's life and the plans for his burial as given to Joseph (Gen. 47:27-31).
- AA. The presentation by Joseph of his two sons—Manasseh and Ephraim to the aged Jacob and the blessings that Jacob gave them (Gen. 48:1-22).
- BB. The calling together of Jacob's sons for their final blessings and a prophetic look to their future and the future of their tribal descendants (Gen. 49:1-28).
- CC. Jacob's final charges to his sons pertaining to his burial and his death (Gen. 49:29-33).

- DD. The mourning for Jacob and his burial back in the land of Canaan (Gen. 50:1-13).
  - EE. The return to Egypt of Joseph and his brethren subsequent to Jacob's burial (Gen. 50:14).
  - FF. The concern of the brethren as to Joseph's feelings and their plea for final and full forgiveness of what they had done to him by way of selling him as a captive (Gen. 50:15-18).
  - GG. Joseph's forgiving response of kindness and brotherly gentleness (Gen. 50:19-21).
  - HH. Joseph's declining years and a prophetic pronouncement of their return to Canaan (Gen. 50:22-24).
  - II. Joseph extracts a promise of his people that his bones would be taken from Egypt to Canaan when the time of the Exodus came (Gen. 50:25). Exodus 13:19 and Joshua 24:32 show that future Israelites honored that promise by taking Joseph's bones to Canaan. The writer of Hebrews 11:22 recalls to mind this incident also.
  - JJ. Joseph's death and embalment in Egypt at the age of 110 (Gen. 50:26).
- V. Joseph In The Heavenly House.
- A. The excellent character that Joseph possessed surely makes him a prime candidate for receiving the crown of life in the heavenly world.
  - B. If he is a prime candidate for this crown of eternal righteousness, then right now he is enjoying the royal rest and the constant comfort of Abraham's bosom in the Hadean realm.
  - C. As great as was the Egyptian crown that he perhaps wore for some eighty years yet the eternal crown of life will be far, far greater.
  - D. He is classified among the great worthies of faith in Hebrews 11 and that seems to insure his eternal inheritance in the heavenly home on high.
  - E. How profitable and precious to have spent these priceless moments in the company of one of the truly great and most godly of all men.

## CONCLUSION

The lives of men like Joseph all remind us that we too can make our lives sublime and in departing leave behind footprints on the sands of time.

### JOSEPH: A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

Joseph lived nearly forty centuries ago. The title is not a misplaced one in labeling him as a man for all seasons. He was a man, a real man. Had Diogenes, the cynic of Athens who once searched the city streets of Athens with a lighted lantern in hand in broad open daylight seeking a man, a real man, an honest man, lived in Joseph's era, he could have realized his quest when he came to know the just Joseph, one of the most holy of all Hebrews.

Joseph has been one of the most beloved of all biblical characters. Some men of the Bible whose portraits have been painted by the Spirit of truth were unlovable in character and we register toward them a prompt repulsion. Such men were regular rogues. Joseph instantly attracts our attention and prompts an immediate and growing admiration with each hour spent in a study of his checkered career, his colorful pilgrimage upon earth.

Joseph was a man for all seasons. His life was spent amidst widely varying circumstances and quickly changing situations. He knew what it was to be the favored son and yet parental partiality did not ruin him for life as it has untold others who became favored sons or daughters. He knew what it was to be envied, despised and sold by his own flesh and blood. Yet such did not embitter him for life. He was tempted as a young man by an older woman who sought to seduce him into an immoral web. Many young men in similar situations have lost their masculine purity in a moment of fleshly weakness. Too many of them have never been recovered because the taste of forbidden fruit had them addicted from the first immoral escapade onward. The drinking of stolen waters became more deeply desirous with each carnal conquest. He knew what it was to serve time in prison for a wrong he never committed. At the age of thirty his fortune took a drastic change as he shed prison garments for the royal apparel of an Egyptian governor. He remained a ruler most of his life and never allowed politics or the intrigues of court life to change his basic character of godliness and righteousness. Other than Jesus Himself he stands without peer among men in the field of forgiveness. Gladly and willingly he became the

physical saviour of his people during a critical and crucial famine. Without controversy he was a man for all seasons.

The major segments of our contemplation of Joseph will be his sojourn in his father's house, in Potiphar's house, in the prison house, in the governor's house and finally his anticipated inheritance in the heavenly home at last.

### **JOSEPH IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE**

Joseph was born while the family still sojourned in Padan-Aram. He was way down the line among the births of Jacob's children and yet was the firstborn to Jacob by Rachel, the best beloved of his four wives. His birth brought great joy to the formerly barren and deeply distraught Rachel. The baby boy was named Joseph which means "Adding." Rachel now bore confidence that God would add her another son. Later she would give birth to Benjamin and hence there is an additional link of significance between Joseph and Benjamin other than in their being fullblooded brothers. Joseph's name at birth anticipated Benjamin's later birth.

Shortly subsequent to Joseph's birth Jacob made plans to return to the land of his nativity. Laban, his father-in-law persuaded him to stay longer and tend his flocks. Jacob did. This meant that the earliest years of the child Joseph were spent in the land of Padan-Aram.

The time however came when Jacob and his family made the decision to return to Canaan. While prosecuting this slow journey the paths of Jacob and Esau were destined to cross again. Jacob feared the worse from his older brother whom he had wronged in earlier years. In preparation for the expected clash and the anticipated danger therefrom Jacob demonstrated his extra special protective care for Rachel and Joseph by putting them at the very back of his family. Thus they would be the very last to feel the effects from the initial and expected confrontation with Esau. However, Jacob's fears were groundless and the meeting between the long separated and formerly estranged brothers was one of peace and serenity. Jacob introduces his growing family to Esau. Rachel and Joseph, when introduced to their brother-in-law and uncle respectively, exhibited proper respect and common courtesy. Such attributes are very rare in our day. They need to be restored. It is always refreshing to meet a youngster who will do something besides give a reluctant grunt at the initial introduction. Joseph was already

showing the good breeding he possessed and the proper training he was receiving in his father's house.

Rachel, the mother of Joseph, died in the childbirth of Benjamin and was buried near Bethlehem (Gen. 35:18-19). Though belonging to an exceptionally large family Joseph would only have one full brother—Benjamin.

Up until Genesis 37 Joseph is mentioned only casually and infrequently though his birth occurred in Genesis 30:22-24. Joseph's real story, as far as major emphasis is concerned, begins in Genesis 37. At the age of seventeen he is a lad of industry and integrity. His industry is witnessed in his work of feeding the flocks along with his older brethren. His integrity is observed in the fact that he would not allow his brethren's evil report to escape Jacob's attention. He brought this evil report to his father and this may well have been the real beginning of their mounting hatred toward him. Some have criticized Joseph for bringing the evil report to Jacob and passed without comment the leveling of any blame upon the brethren for possessing the evil report in the first place. How exceedingly strange!! Obviously Joseph would have had no evil report to bring from them if there had been none present among his older brethren. I do not lodge any criticism against Joseph in this matter at all.

Parental partiality had already been manifested by Jacob in the placement of Rachel and Joseph last when they were about ready to meet Esau back in Genesis 33. There is another show of it in the making of a new coat. Some Bible students think this was Jacob's way of suggesting that Joseph was going to be considered as his firstborn. Of course he was the firstborn by Rachel but Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah had borne Jacob sons before Joseph was born to Rachel. If there is validity in this, then the implications were many. The response by Joseph's brethren toward this preferred partiality was hateful and envious to the very core of family feelings.

Joseph not only was the wearer of the new coat but became a dreamer. His dreams seemingly indicated very strongly that his brethren would one day bow in obeisance to him. One dream even indicated that his father would do the same. The older brethren met such dreams with scoffing and sneers. Jacob rebuked him for such yet allowed the dream to be kept in mind. The dreams, their revelation and the very apparent application they posed for the future prompted an ever greater hatred to

develop toward the younger preferred brother. They could not even speak peacefully to him or about him.

The family were shepherds. They had to go where grass and water were available for their growing flocks. Scarcity of such in Southern Palestine prompted the older brethren to head north in search of food and water for their flocks. They went to Shechem and later on to Dothan. When I visited Bible Lands some years back the area of Dothan was pointed out. It appeared to me that this area would be a shepherd's paradise due to the luxuriant regions of grass that grew profusely there. After the older brethren had been gone for sometime Jacob became solitious of their welfare. He sent his teen-age son Joseph to check on them. Little did Jacob and Joseph realize the long finality of this farewell. Their eyes would not see each other again until a long and eventful twenty-two years passed. Joseph, as an obedient lad to the patriarchal demands of his aged father, headed for Shechem. Not finding his brethren there he was directed on to Dothan. There he met them bearing a father's good wishes and fully anticipating a brotherly welcome. But the calloused brethren were neither interested in the reception of best wishes from their father nor in the extension of a brotherly welcome. Even when they witnessed his approach on the distant horizon all the despised dreams flashed across their malicious minds again. They conspired to kill him. Then we will see what will be the sequel of all his so-called prophetic dreams, they must have thought one and all. Reuben, the eldest, alone had a spark of brotherly compassion for the lone lad. He had a plan to save him and deliver him back safely to Jacob. Initial plans called for a death by starvation in an abandoned pit. Such pits abound in that area. The approaching presence of the traveling traders headed for Egypt prompted a revision of their pernicious plans for his extermination. Perhaps the anticipation of a quick way to make money aided also in the change of plans. They sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. Obviously, they thought the dreamer was gone for good and his dreams would fall to the ground void of any type of humiliating fulfillment out there in the future. Egypt, his new destination, was a long way from their Southern Palestinian home. Finally, he was out of their hair, they thought. But they had not reckoned with the providence of God and how the content of those dreams fit that plan of providence. They were out to destroy the very one who ultimately would be the saviour of themselves and all their little ones.

Evidently, Reuben was not with them when they made merchandise of the innocent Joseph. He returned to the pit ready to release him and deliver him to Jacob. He was filled with consternation at not finding him.

There is scarcely a Bible parallel of calloused cruelty, inhumane action and unbrotherly conduct to their premeditative purpose of covering the infamy of their infraction of brotherly love and family feelings. They retained the despised coat of many colors, slew a kid, dipped the coat in its blood and took it to Jacob. He immediately drew the conclusion they planned for him to draw. In his own mind Jacob could see a dead Joseph mercilessly mangled by a brute beast. Great sorrow filled the mind of the saddened patriarch and lamentations fell from his quivering lips. Were the calloused brethren able to witness all this fatherly lamentation without any pang of troubled conscience? Apparently so. They form an excellent commentary on a statement that Jeremiah would write several centuries later by saying, "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

### JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE

In the meantime Joseph was taken to Egypt by the Midianite traders. In the famed land of the Nile where his great grandfather Abraham had once sojourned temporarily Joseph was sold to Potiphar, an officer to Pharaoh, the lord of the land.

Joseph combined his sphere of slavery with fervency of service. Obedience was his object day by day. The Lord prospered him in Potiphar's house and soon Joseph was given responsible tasks in the household of the Egyptian captain of the guard and commensurate with his ability and multiple talents.

As is frequently the case responsibility is often met by unexpected temptations. Potiphar's flirtatious and lascivious wife cast her enticing eyes in Joseph's direction. She lusted after him and desired him as the object of her insatiable passions. He resisted each of her daily propositions for the illicit and lascivious liaison. Finally, she became more aggressive and one day when the two of them were alone in the house, she caught him by the coat and sought to compel his lying with her. He fled immediately the fatal framework of potential fornication and left the coat in her hand. He thought far more of his character than he did of a coat. Kitty Ann Wells, a former holder of the Miss Universe crown,

once said she would no more think of marrying a man she had not slept with than she would in buying a frock coat she had not tried on. Her character meant no more to her than a frock coat did. Not so with the holy Hebrew youth in Potiphar's house. His refusal to submit to the seduction led her to accuse him of doing the very thing she had propositioned that they do and that he had steadfastly refused to do. Her false accusation led to his immediate imprisonment upon his Master's return home.

Impressive lessons of a precious and profitable nature are ours, in the patient perusal of this noble narrative in Genesis 39. A young man can resist the temptation to be sexually active prior to marriage. Joseph said a loud and resounding **no** to temptation and remained loyal to that initial **no**. Additional solicitations toward seduction did not make that **no** bend toward a **maybe** and finally Surrender to a **yes**. Joseph was not like a modern girl who once confessed that the giving in to sex on a date was the sweetest of all surrenders. Joseph knew that such was sinful—not sweet!! Joseph would not betray his Master even though his Master's wife later betrayed him. Joseph recognized quite keenly that some objects could never be his. They were forever off limits to him. Potiphar's wife was of that excluded number. Joseph recognized that fornication is sin and that this sin is against God. Joseph did not stay around to flirt with sin. It is not always cowardly to flee. Centuries later Paul would counsel the Corinthians to "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18). Distance—not proximity—is the only safe course in such explosive situations where bodily chemistry at work will make men and women do in a moment of fleshly weakness what a lifetime of subsequent regrets will not undo in the way of reaped consequences. Joseph was not ignorant of Satanic devices. One of the devil's most successful devices is in the realm of illicit liaisons between men and women who have no God-given right to be intimate. Joseph would not allow his manly looks and his handsome features to be prostituted for base and inglorious human actions. Joseph shows superbly that purity of person can be maintained against the strongest and most persistent of power-packed temptations.

### JOSEPH IN THE PRISON HOUSE

Potiphar evidently believed his wife's concocted story and his trusted servant, the just Joseph, was sent to prison. But the wronged Hebrew slave did not go to prison alone. The Lord was right with him

when the prison door slammed shut with a thud of sorrowful finality. The Lord blessed him in the prison house and soon a responsible role was his daily challenge to fill. And fill it he did in a marvelous manner.

Pharaoh's butler and baker had displeased their Egyptian lord and were imprisoned. Here their paths met and merged with the innocent Hebrew lad. Both men dreamed dreams which had predictive features connected with them. Joseph, by God's aid, interpreted the dreams. The butler's dream indicated his restoration to his butlership again. It came about just as the imprisoned Joseph declared it would. The baker's dream indicated that capital punishment lay in his future. He was executed for his displeasure at Pharaoh's hand. Before the butler was lifted from the prison house Joseph asked to be remembered by the restored butler. Human like the butler forgot. How very quickly we can forget the debts we owe others. It is a common human failing. It would be a full two years before Joseph would cross the mind of the forgetful butler. Then his memory had to be jogged by a dual dream that Pharaoh had and which no one could interpret for him. The ruler's dual dream consisted of the good cattle who were devoured by bad cattle and yet the bad remained bad; the good ears of grain which were devoured by the blasted ears of grain and yet remained good. None of Pharaoh's advisors could interpret the dream. At this point the butler's memory began to be activated once again. He, after a two year lapse, remembered Joseph as an accurate interpreter and relayed the information to the perplexed Pharaoh. Joseph, by Jehovah's help, told Pharaoh the significance of the dual dreams. The good cattle and good ears of grain represented seven coming years of plenty; the bad cattle and ill-favored ears of grain represented seven years of grievous famine. The years of plenty would be first. The dream was dual to give double emphasis to its virtual surety. Joseph counseled Pharaoh as to what precautions should be taken. Pharaoh sensed in the young Hebrew prisoner the very person to administrate such a complex program. Hence, the Egyptian ruler raised Joseph to the post of governor. The long, lean years in the prison house were now exchanged for the governor's mansion. The way was now **up** for him who had been put **down** again and again during the last thirteen years.

### JOSEPH IN THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE

Graciously and gratefully the now released Hebrew prisoner exchanged his bonds for the Egyptian governorship and the official

extension of his governmental credentials. Pharaoh gave Joseph a new name, Zaphnath-paaneah, which in the Coptic signifies, “a revealer of secrets, or, The man to whom secrets are revealed.” Joseph was given Asenath, daughter of Potipherah, for wife. To this union were born Manasseh, the elder, and Ephraim, the younger. The names given to the two sons are significant. Manasseh means, “For God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house” (Gen. 41:51). The name Ephraim meant, “For God, *said he*, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house” (Gen. 41:52). From all indications he had shut the door of his mind upon Canaan and all his family therein. For more than a dozen years they had made no effort to contact him and of course he did not know the concocted story that the evil brethren had handed to his father. Brother J. W. McGarvey may well have been right in suggesting that Joseph at first lived with the precious hope that his father would search for him and finally find him. But the long years of no communication from Canaan must have crushed that once cherished hope. Egypt was now home; Canaan was put to the back of his busy mind.

Joseph began immediately the execution of a prudent plan to preserve sufficient food during the **fruitful** years for the coming of the **fruitless** years. The years of plenty passed and the mighty famine set in for seven long years of duration. Joseph administered wisely and well the preserved supply of grain both to the native Egyptians and those who came from neighboring nations.

The mighty famine hit Canaan. The once prosperous Jacob found his growing family without food. He dispatched ten of the sons to Egypt having heard grain was available down there. Benjamin, the youngest son and now the father’s favorite, was kept home. The brethren in Egypt found themselves before the strange and harsh acting governor. Joseph recognized them; they did not recognize him. They bowed before him. He recalled the predictive dreams of earlier years. He accused them of spies who had come to look over the nakedness of the land and Egypt’s famished fields. Temporarily he placed them in prison. The stunned brethren were again called before the Egyptian governor and recalled what they had done to Joseph years before. Reuben recalled his words, “Do not sin against the child.” Reuben had tried to save him. Maybe there was some good in his brethren after all—at least in one of them. This would have been the first time that Joseph would have known of Reuben’s intercession in his behalf.

Unknown to the perplexed brethren Joseph was understanding all the conversation. Joseph detained Simeon as a permanent prisoner, sent the brethren back home with grain plus their money and gave them strict instructions to bring their younger brother Benjamin the next time they came else they would not see his face. They returned to Canaan and to Jacob and told all that had befallen them while on the Egyptian errand. Jacob at first insisted that Benjamin would never accompany them on a subsequent trip. But stern necessity later led to a change of Jacob's mind in this regard. The brethren are sent for needed grain a second time and Jacob reluctantly agrees for Benjamin to accompany them. Judah agrees to be surety for the lad's safety against any harm or injury.

On the second trip the brethren are entertained quite royally by Joseph. He is still unknown to them. Joseph pursued one final test to determine the current character of his once evil and calloused brethren. It concerned their attitude toward Benjamin and whether they would really go to bat for the young lad when he faced a possible retention permanently in Egypt. Judah, one of the older brethren, presented a selfless supplication to Joseph when it looked like Benjamin was to be retained permanently in Egypt as a slave.

Joseph had now seen enough. Sufficient tests had now been made. He revealed his true identity to his brethren and made instant inquiry about his father's welfare. The full story had now come to light and his father had not ignored him through the years but had grieved him as an apparently dead son in a confrontation with a savage beast. News soon spread to Pharaoh's pleased ears about the coming of Joseph's brethren. Invitations are extended from the Egyptian ruler for the whole family to move to Egypt. Joseph was pleased.

The happy and relieved brethren returned to Jacob with the good news that Joseph yet lives. He is well. He is governor of Egypt. He wants us all to come to him in Egypt. Pharaoh has extended officially the invitation for all of us to come. At first the news was too good to be, true to the frequently troubled heart of the aged patriarch. For so very long he had believed the beloved Joseph was dead and perhaps entombed in some unmarked Palestinian grave by the graces of some one who found his mangled remains. With the grateful reception of the news as true Jacob promptly made the decision to move to Egypt and there see once again the face of the long lost Joseph. God told Jacob to go and that heavenly blessings would abide his trip there and his final sojourn therein.

The rather large family made the move. Words fail us in depicting the emotions that ran deep when Jacob, the aged patriarch, and Joseph, the youthful Egyptian governor, greeted each other as father and son respectively and felt the warm embrace of togetherness again. With dispatch Joseph presented his father and representatives of the Israelite family to Pharaoh. The conversation between the wise patriarch and the Egyptian ruler was warm and cordial. Jacob and his growing family are given the best that Egypt could tender by way of a land grant. It was generous to the nth degree.

The famine years continued and grew more severe all the time. Joseph wisely administered the preserved grain in order that all might eat and live. Joseph's name meant "Adding" and now he was literally **adding** life to vast multitudes of people. Little did Rachel realize this dynamic dimension would be added to her firstborn's name in later years. She would not live to see it but Jacob and the family did.

The sunset of Jacob's life drew near. Prior to his death he gave instruction relative to his burial, received and blessed both the sons of Joseph and gave a prophetic preview of the future fortunes of all of his sons and their descendants respectively. Jacob died at the ripe old age of 147. His mortal remains were taken to Southern Palestine for entombment in the cave of Machpelah, where his paternal grandparents, his parents and Leah were all interred.

Subsequent to the mourning period over Jacob and their return to everyday life in Egypt, the brethren again became concerned with Joseph's attitude toward them. Perhaps they remembered what they had done some thirty-nine years earlier to Joseph in the absence of Jacob and they feared like treatment. Now they were concerned about what Joseph might do without the aged father's presence in the immediate background. If they thought the just Joseph would now become the unjust governor and the forgiving figure of the past would now become the hardened and calloused ruler in their midst, they had completely misread the character of their lovely brother and misjudged the charitable nature of one of the best men who ever walked on God's green footstool. They even reminded him of a statement Jacob supposedly made prior to his death touching this thorny problem. Joseph's response was one of kingly kindness, full forgiveness and genuine gentleness. His attitudes and actions toward them would be the same in the future as they had been in the past.

Joseph faced the sunset of his earthly pilgrimage with courage and conviction. From his lips fell a prophetic pronouncement of their ultimate return to Canaan. He extracted a promise of his people that his mortal remains would be taken from Egypt to Canaan for a permanent burial when time for the Exodus arrived. Exodus 13:19 and Joshua 24:32 show that a future generation of Israelites under the leadership of Moses and Joshua honored that promise. The inspired scribe of Hebrews 11:22 looked back upon this event and included it in the great chapter of faith. Joseph died at the age of 110. If he remained in the governor's house till death, which is very likely, then he served in that particular post for eighty years. Such a lengthy and distinguished record of public service has not been equaled many times in human history. That is twice as long as David served as the Shepherd King in later centuries.

### JOSEPH IN THE HEAVENLY HOME

The excellent character that Joseph possessed and the eloquent eminence of his remarkable faith surely mark him as a prime candidate for the reception of Canaan's crown of heavenly righteousness in the world that is yet to be. If he is a prime candidate for this crown of heavenly righteousness, then right now he is enjoying the royal rest and the constant crown of Abraham's bosom in that realm called Sheol in the Old Testament and Hades in the New Testament. As great as the Egyptian crown of the governorship was which he wore for perhaps a full eight decades, yet the eternal crown of life will be far, far greater. The earthly crown will pale into utter insignificance by way of the one-sided comparison.

The marvelous manner in which he is remembered in two later Bible passages marks this marvelous man for all seasons as being truly bound for the Heavenly Canaan. Israel's Sweet Singer reflected on that great personality by saying,

He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him. The king sent and loosed him; *even* the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom (Psa. 105:17-22).

The inspired penman of Hebrews wrote, "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave

commandment concerning his bones” (Heb. 11:22). His classification among the great worthies of faith in this historic chapter seemingly assures his eternal inheritance in the heavenly habitation on high. If not, **why not??**

### CONCLUSION

How priceless, precious’ and profitable have been the marvelous moments we have spent in the courageous company of one of the truly great and most godly of all men—Joseph.

(For some of the points about Joseph in Potiphar’s house I am greatly indebted to Wendell Winkler and his masterful sermon on that tremendous topic).

### Great Lessons from Joseph

1. In Joseph we see one who loved, respected and honored parental authority in his youth.
2. In Joseph we see one who remembered God during the days of his youth.
3. In Joseph we see the value of industry in a young man’s early life.
4. In Joseph we see what background training will do in the mature molding of sterling character for future temptation.
5. In Joseph we see one who would not remain silent when there was evil in the camp. He brought to his father the evil report of his brethren.
6. In Joseph we see unrequited love. He sought the welfare of his brethren while they plotted and conspired for his utter destruction.
7. In Joseph we see a young man who did not allow a father’s partiality and the malicious mockery of his brethren to destroy his budding character of faithful fruitfulness and unique usefulness.
8. In Joseph we see a young man who took his religion with him to a foreign land.
9. In Joseph we see a young man of faith who did not sow wild oats during his youth. It is the devil’s lie that every youth must have his immoral fling. Just when did Joseph have his?
10. In Joseph we find a man of faith when the going became really rough.
11. In Joseph we find one who prized character above corruption and purity above passion.

12. In Joseph we find a person of dependability whether as Jacob's son, Potiphar's servant, an imprisoned youth or in a post of royal responsibility.
13. In Joseph we see an example of one who did not believe in allowing the surrounding moral climate to control him.
14. In Joseph we see one who chose distance rather than proximity to an explosive situation.
15. In Joseph we see one who gave credit to the Lord for aiding him in the accurate interpretation of dreams.
16. In Joseph we see one who met the challenges of the future by practicing present thrift and daily preservation of precious food.
17. In Joseph we see the major difference between a statesman and a politician. He was always the former and never the latter.
18. In Joseph we see a man who followed what was right—not the pragmatic approach of what might be workable whether it was right or wrong.
19. In Joseph we see the personification of real and permanent forgiveness.
20. In Joseph we see the providence of God at work.
21. In Joseph we see the blessed benefits of a life well spent and the warm embrace of being able to die in the faith.
22. In Joseph we have an example of the type of basic character every leader in the church currently needs.
23. In Joseph we see an example of what one man dedicated to God and to his fellowman can accomplish within an earthly pilgrimage.
24. In Joseph we find a man who did not fear relative to taking a stand for truth.
25. In Joseph we find one who was pro-life, pro-family and pro-God. These are desperately needed in our day when we hear of abortion on demand, the dissolving of the family and every kind of pro-atheistic stand.

# SAMUEL AND THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS

*Rex A. Turner*

## INTRODUCTION

1. Today, I propose to discuss with you the subject, “The Schools of the Prophets.”
  - a. Perhaps all of you know that during the Old Testament period there were schools of the prophets.
  - b. What more than this do you know about the “Schools of the Prophets”?
  - c. Where is the Bible requirement or plan for such schools?
  - d. What was the origin, constitution, and aim or purpose of such schools?
  - e. When were the schools first founded? and by whom?
  - f. What was the admission policy?
  - g. What was the prescribed course of study? and,
  - h. What implications do those schools of a former period hold for the church today?
2. The beginning point for this study of the Schools of the Prophets turns on a study or overview of the life and works of Samuel.

## DISCUSSION

- I. An Overview of the Life and Works of Samuel.
  - A. Samuel was born during the period of the judges.
    1. The first chapter of 1 Samuel sets forth the peculiar circumstances of his birth.
    2. Elkanah, a Levite of the family of Korah of Ramah of the hill country of Ephraim, had two wives—Hannah and Peninnah.
    3. Hannah had no children; whereas, Peninnah had children, and she provoked Hannah sore.
  - B. On an occasion when Hannah went up with the family to the house of Jehovah at Shiloh to the annual feast, she prayed for a man child, and she pledged Jehovah that if her request be granted that she would give him to Jehovah.

1. At the turn of the year Samuel was born.
  2. When he was old enough to wean, Hannah carried him to Shiloh and left him in care of Eli, the high priest and judge of Israel.
- C. The third chapter of 1 Samuel records how that “the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was precious [or scarce] in those days” (v. 1).
1. When Samuel was quite young, God called him for a very crucial and special work.
  2. Josephus wrote that Samuel had just passed his twelfth birthday when Jehovah called him.
  3. The call, “Samuel, Samuel,” came in the early hours of the morning and just before the lamp of God in the Holy Place of the tabernacle had burned out.
    - a. Samuel was asleep in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle.
    - b. He ran to Eli and said: “Here am I; for thou callest me;” but Eli said: “I called not; lie down again” (v. 5).
    - c. Jehovah called the second time, and Samuel ran to Eli; but Eli assured Samuel that he had not called him.
    - d. When the call from Jehovah came the third time, Eli perceived that Jehovah was calling Samuel, and he said to the lad: “Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth” (v. 9).
  4. Then “Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth” (v. 10).
  5. Jehovah then said to Samuel: “Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle” (v. 11).
  6. Jehovah. then announced: “I will perform against Eli” (v. 12), and “the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be expiated with sacrifice nor offering for ever” (v. 14).
  7. Eli later called Samuel and asked: “What is the thing that *Jehovah* hath spoken unto thee? I pray thee, hide it not from me” (v. 17), he said; and Samuel, though exceed-

ingly fearful, “told him every whit, and hid nothing from him” (v. 18).

D. We next read that “Samuel grew,” which means that he grew into manhood, and “Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground” (v. 19).

1. In short, Jehovah continued to reveal himself to Samuel.
2. The result was that “all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba” (v. 20) came to know that Samuel was established to be a prophet in Israel.
3. Jehovah appeared again to Samuel in Shiloh, and the result of those appearances was that “the word of Samuel came to all Israel” (4:1).

## II. The Fall of Israel to the Philistines.

A. The Fourth chapter of 1 Samuel gives the account of the complete fall of the Israelites to the Philistines.

1. Jehovah was angry with Israel, and
2. He was especially angry with Eli, the high priest of Israel.
3. Jehovah was angry with Eli because he allowed his evil sons to administer the sacrifices and services at the tabernacle which had long been pitched at Shiloh.
  - a. Eli had two sons—Hophni and Phinehas—and they were “base men; they knew not Jehovah” (2:12).
  - b. They took by force the raw flesh of the animals that had been sacrificed instead of waiting to take with a three-pronged fleshhook their part from the flesh that had been broiled (2:12-17).
  - c. Their sins were thus very great for they “despised the offering of Jehovah” (2:17).
  - d. Further, “they lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting” (2:22).
  - e. Eli moderately warned and discouraged his evil sons from their practices, but he did not take the drastic action which the justice of God demanded.
  - f. Eli, thus, honored his sons above Jehovah, “to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?” (2:29).
  - g. Thus the Scripture declared of Eli, concerning his sons, “And he restrained them not” (3:13).

- h. As a means of punishment to Eli for letting his evil sons administer the sacrifices, God declared: “there shall not be an old man in thy house for ever” (2:32).
- 4. Jehovah was also angry with Israel as a nation because—
  - a. Throughout the nation there was a general dissolution of morals, and further
  - b. Throughout the nation there was the prevalence of licentious idolatry.
- B. The complete fall of Israel came to pass at the Battle of Apex.
  - 1. It was a fight between Israel and the Philistines.
    - a. Israel was encamped at Ebenezer, and
    - b. The Philistines were encamped at Apex.
  - 2. When the battle was joined, Israel was smitten
  - 3. Then the elder of Israel reasoned that if the Ark of the Covenant were with them, their victory over the Philistines would be certain.
    - a. The Israelites rationalized that Jehovah would never let the ark of the covenant be taken by their enemies.
    - b. After all, they reasoned, the ark of the covenant led the way in the crossing of the Jordan.
    - c. Further, the ark of the covenant had been with them on other trying occasions.
  - 4. And so, the Israelites “fetch[ed] the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of Shiloh” (4:3).
    - a. Hophni and Phinehas, Eli’s evil sons, came bearing it out on the battlefield, and
    - b. A wild excited shout, which made the earth ring, went up from the Israelites as those two priests bearing the ark of the covenant made their appearance in the camp.
    - c. The Philistines were woefully afraid. They said, Woe unto us!
    - d. Those Philistines fought with the desperation of death.
  - 5. When the battle was joined for the second time, the Israelites were sorely smitten again.
  - 6. “They fled every man to his tent” (4:10).

7. A man of Benjamin, out of the army “with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head” (4:12), came running to Eli at Shiloh that same day. He came to announce to Eli
  - a. That the Israelites had turned their backs to the Philistines and had fled the field of battle.
  - b. That Eli’s two sons—Hophni and Phinehas—had been killed on the battlefield, and
  - c. That the ark of God had been taken by the Philistines.
8. Eli’s “heart trembled for the ark of God” (4:13) when it was removed from the tabernacle to be carried to the battlefield.
  - a. He was at that time ninety-eight years of age, a very old man.
  - b. His eyes were set—that is, he was blind, and he was very heavy.
9. When he heard that the ark was taken by the Philistines, he fell from his seat backward; his neck broke, and he died.
10. He had judged Israel for forty years.
11. The wife of Phinehas, on hearing the shocking news of the death of her husband, went into labor, and as she was dying, she named her new-born son “Ichabod,” for she said, “the glory is departed from Israel” (4:22).
  - a. Thus, there was no high priest in Israel.
  - b. Ahitub, the elder son of Phinehas and the older brother of Ichabod, was not old enough to serve in the capacity of high priest.
12. The ark of the covenant remained in the hands of the Philistines for seven months.
  - a. During those seven months, the hand of Jehovah was heavy upon the Philistines.
  - b. In complete despair, the Philistines, after a seven months period, sent the ark back to Israel, and they sent it back, “and not empty.”
  - c. The ark was taken to the house of Abinadab.
  - d. His son, Eleazar, was sanctified to keep the ark.
  - e. The time was long.

- f. Twenty years passed before Jehovah gave the Israelites a single victory over the Philistines.
  - g. The ark remained in the house of Abinadab for about eighty-seven years, at which time David brought it and placed it in the new tent which he had built in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:1-4; 12-19).
- C. When Israel fell, Shiloh—the place where the tabernacle of Jehovah had been pitched for some 325 years—was completely destroyed.
1. The Levites were successful in retrieving Moses' tent (2 Chr. 1:3).
  2. They were also successful in retrieving the brazen altar, which Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made (2 Chr. 1:5).
- D. At the hour of Israel's fall, and when all was dark and hopeless, Samuel took the place of Eli as judge, priest, and prophet of the nation of Israel.
1. Samuel's training and overall background had destined him to be a reformer.
  2. Early he had been separated from the mass of men.
    - a. He was separated by his Nazarite vow.
    - b. He was separated by his peculiar dress.
    - c. He was separated by his being a Levite from birth.
  3. Samuel performed the duties of priest when necessity demanded.
    - a. He was not, however, a priest.
    - b. True, all priests were Levites, but untrue, all Levites were priests.
    - c. Only the direct descendants of Aaron were priests.
    - d. Samuel was the son of Elkanah, the son of Kohath, a Levite (1 Chr. 6:22-28).
    - e. How may we account for Samuel's having performed the duties of a priest?
    - f. Further, he performed the duties of a priest on the high places—the places where Moses enjoined the Israelites that they should not sacrifice. "Ye shall not do so unto Jehovah," Moses charged (Deu. 12:4).

- g. Moses instructed that instead of the high, places, they should resort “unto the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come; and thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill-offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock: and there ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto” (Deu. 12:5-7).
  - h. Pursuant to the proper understanding of the Schools of the Prophets is the question already raised—that is, the question of how we may account for his having performed the duties of a priest?
4. Samuel judged Israel, and that “all the days of his life” (1 Sam. 7:15).
  5. Foremost, however, Samuel was a prophet
    - a. He was the first of the regular succession of the prophets.
    - b. To illustrate, the apostle Peter said to the multitude in Jerusalem: “Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days” (Acts 3:24).
    - c. Samuel was succeeded by Elijah, and then Elisha, and later by Jonah, and Amos, and Hosea, not to mention David, Nathan, and Gad.
  6. With the cessation of the offerings in Shiloh, together with the destruction of the sanctuary there, Samuel came to recognize that a true and pure religion was more important than the mere formality of worship.
  7. We are not surprised, therefore, to read how that he later said to King Saul: “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim” (15:22-23).
- E. Samuel’s resolve was to arouse a religious reformation in Israel, and this as a means of lifting Israel again to a position

of economic, political, and spiritual independence and acceptance before Jehovah.

1. During the twenty years that intervened before Jehovah gave Israel a single victory over the Philistines, Samuel strove to bring about a religious awakening.
2. He did the work of a prophet.
3. He insisted on individual repentance.
4. If Moses can be said to be founder of the nation, then Samuel can be said to be the savior of it.
5. After the fall of Shiloh, Samuel returned to his home city, Ramah.
6. He preached on a circuit, going from year to year:
  - a. To Bethel.
  - b. To Gilgal.
  - c. To Mizpah.
  - d. To Ramah.

### III. Samuel Deposed to Make Room for a King.

- A. When Samuel was old—he was then about sixty years of age the elders of Israel gathered themselves unto Samuel at Ramah and demanded that he be deposed so that the nation could have a king.
  1. They charged: “Thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways” (8:5).
  2. Now, Samuel had served Israel all his days as judge, priest, and prophet. The elders of Israel, therefore showed themselves to be totally lacking in gratitude for the great work that Samuel had done.
  3. Though designated as being old, Samuel actually continued to live and serve Jehovah for some thirty to forty years longer.
  4. The last glimpse that the Bible gives of Samuel was when David fled from Saul and came to Samuel in Naioth. When Saul’s messengers arrived in Ramah, there was a company of prophets gathered, “and Samuel was standing as head over them” (19:20).
  5. When the elders proposed that Samuel be deposed to make room for a king Samuel was hurt deeply—he was shocked, sorely grieved, as a matter of fact.

- a. Samuel, no doubt, spent a restless, sleepless night, with intermittently cold sweats.
  - b. He prayed to Jehovah concerning the injustice and ingratitude of those elders, and Jehovah replied: “they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them” (8:7).
  - c. The real motivating reason for those elders’ proposal lay in the fact that they wanted a king so as to be like the nations about them.
  - d. Nonetheless, Jehovah gave them a king, and herein lies the fact of the free moral agency of man.
  - e. Samuel accepted the decision and waited for Jehovah to direct him in the appointment of the king.
- B. Thus the report went out that Israel was to have a king.
1. The report was the occasion of much excitement and anticipation.
  2. In the cities and up and down the countryside the people discussed the matter of their having a real viable king, and who with anxiety as to what he would be like.
  3. Some time passed. How much time is not known.
  4. Then on a certain day, Jehovah informed Samuel that he was about to be introduced to the new king. Jehovah said: “To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel” (9:15-16).
- C. In the meantime a man by the name of Saul and his servant had come to the land of Zuph, of which Ramah was a city, in search of his father’s asses.
1. This Saul was tall and handsome.
  2. He stood head and shoulders taller than other men.
  3. He was at least thirty years of age (his age is a matter of debate among the scholars), a family man and father of three sons of whom Jonathan, then at least a teenager, was the oldest.
  4. His father was Kish.
  5. In true patriarchal style, Saul had remained under the paternal authority of his father.
  6. During the patriarchal period a son attained to a position of authority only after his father was dead.

- D. In despair of finding the asses, Saul proposed to his servant that they return home lest his father be more concerned about them than he was about the asses.
1. The servant suggested that they call on the Seer, thinking thereby that he could divine some means of locating the asses.
  2. Saul did not know the Seer.
  3. Saul's father Kish had been much too busy breeding asses to carry his family to hear Samuel preach.
  4. "What shall we bring the man?" (9:7). Saul asked, and the servant replied: "I have in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver" (9:8).
  5. Samuel, on being informed that the new king would come to him, prepared to honor him in a reserved sort of way.
  6. A sacrifice was set for the occasion.
- E. Saul and his servant approached the city of Ramah, and on meeting young maidens, they inquired: "Is the seer here?"
1. "He is," they replied, and they stated that Saul and his servant should make haste for "he is come to-day into the city; for the people have a sacrifice to-day in the high place" (9:12).
    - a. Observe, the sacrifice was to be made on a high place.
    - b. Now, what is the explanation of this?
  2. As Saul and his servant went up to the city gate, Samuel came out and as the men met face to face, Jehovah revealed to Samuel that Saul was the man to be made king.
  3. When Saul inquired of Samuel as to the location of the seer's house, Samuel answered: "I am the seer."
  4. Then Samuel said to Saul, "go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day: and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not they mind on them; for they are found" (9:19-20).

5. Then Samuel proposed rhetorically, “And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father’s house?” (9:20).
6. The full conversation likely is not recorded, but one thing is certain, namely, Samuel’s words were from the first very strange and unusual.
7. The word was out that Israel was to have a king, and Saul must have wondered if the guarded intimations of Samuel had to do with the fact that a king was to be appointed.
8. Saul was certainly apprehensive and embarrassed, for he said: “Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?” (9:21).
9. Samuel walked with Saul and his servant up to the high place where the sacrifice was to be made.
10. There was a building there, and Samuel ushered them into the guest chamber, made them sit in the chief places, and summoned the cook to set before Saul the portion of the thigh—the portion which had been prepared by the prior instruction of Samuel.
11. After the sacrificial meal, the three men came down from the high place and Samuel communed with Saul on the housetop at his home the flattop houses of that day were used as places of private conversations and for sleep.
12. Saul and his servant slept on the housetop that night.

#### IV. Saul Anointed King.

- A. At about the spring of day, Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, “Up, that I may send thee away” (9:26), he said.
- B. As Samuel walked with Saul and his servant to the end of the city, or gate of the city, Samuel said to Saul: “Bid the servant pass on before us” (9:27).
- C. Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it upon Saul’s head and kissed him.
  1. The record does not give the conversation which ensued, but a very natural response would have been for Saul to ask, “What meaneth this?”

2. Anyway, Samuel said: “Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance?” (10:1).
  3. Samuel then proceeded to give Saul assurance that Jehovah had selected him to be prince over Israel.
  4. He foretold four things that would come to pass as Saul made his way back home.
- D. The four events would be for signs or confirmations so that Saul might know of a certainty that Jehovah had selected him to be the prince over Israel.
1. **Sign 1 Reads:** “Thou shalt find two men by Rachel’s sepulchre,” Samuel related, “and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found” (10:2).
  2. **Sign 2 Reads:** “Thou shalt come to the oak of Tabor; and there shall meet thee there three men going up to God to Beth-el” (10:3),—that is, they were going up to sacrifice—one would be carrying three kids, another three loaves of bread, and another a bottle of wine. “they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread” (10:4), Samuel added.
  3. **Sign 3 Reads:** “Thou shalt come to the hill of God [or Gibeah of Benjamin],...that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place...and they will be prophesying” (10:5) Samuel explained.
  4. **Sign 4 Reads:** “And the Spirit of Jehovah will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man” (10:6).
- V. Introduction to the Schools of the Prophets.
- A. When Samuel had taken a vial of oil and suddenly poured it upon Saul’s head, he said: “Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance?” (10:1).
1. As a means of assurance to Saul that Jehovah had selected him, Samuel gave Saul the four signs as just related.
  2. The third sign stated in detail included the following: “After that thou shalt come to the hill of God,...it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe,

and a harp, before them; and they will be prophesying” (10:5).

- B. Now, in just this incidental way the Schools of the Prophets were, and are first introduced in the Scriptures.
  - 1. Samuel had organized the schools for the training of young men in spiritual matters so that they could assist him in his great work for a spiritual awakening and reformation in Israel.
  - 2. The Old Testament Scriptures nowhere give any specific plan, and/or details for the organization and administration of such schools.
  - 3. Unlike the plan for and support of the Levitical priesthood, no plan for and support of the Schools of the Prophets had been set forth by Moses in the giving of law.
  - 4. The Old Testament Scriptures nowhere set forth—except by incidental reference—anything akin to an aim, or a philosophy, or a constitution for such schools.
  - 5. There are no specifics in the Scriptures as to what the admission policy was, or as to whether or not the students paid tuition, or of what the course of study consisted.
- C. Only through incidental references may one gain an insight into the Schools.
  - 1. In order to observe the incidental reference, the student must move from Samuel to Elijah, to Elisha, and to all the prophets, for that matter.
  - 2. While the student must depend upon incidental references for an understanding of, and an appreciation for, the Schools of the Prophets, the fact remains that those incidental references when put together, constitute a great body of material.
- D. An organization of those incidental references points up the following:
  - 1. For one incidental reference, those who attended the Schools of the Prophets were known as “the sons of the prophets,” and/or “the servants of the prophets.”

- a. To illustrate, in 1 Kings we read: “And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his fellow” (1 Kin. 20:35) .
  - b. Then in 2 Kings we read: “And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said” (2 Kin. 2:3). In verse 15 we read: “And when the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho” (2 Kin. 2:15).
  - c. In another place, we read: “And the sons of the prophets were sitting before him” (2 Kin. 4:38).
  - d. In another place we read: “And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth” (2 Kin. 6:15).
2. For a second incidental reference, those who attended the Schools of the Prophets were, for the most part at least, young men.
    - a. To illustrate, in 2 Kings we read: “two young men of the sons of the prophets” (2 Kin. 5:22).
    - b. Then we read: “So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead” (2 Kin. 9:4).
  3. For a third incidental reference, those who attended the prophets lived in a commune and ate in common, or dormitory, style.
    - a. This we learn by incidental reference.
    - b. Elisha came to Gilgal.
    - c. A dearth was on, “and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him” (2 Kin. 4:38).
    - d. Elisha said: “Set on the great pot [that is, dormitory cooking], and boil pottage for the sons of the prophets” (2 Kin. 4:38).
    - e. This was on the occasion that wild gourds were gathered, and “there is death in the pot” (2 Kin. 4:40).
    - f. When Elisha had rid the pottage of the poison, he said: “Pour out for the people, that they may eat” (2 Kin. 4:38-41).
  4. For a fourth incidental reference, the chiefs or headmasters of the Schools of the Prophets were older and

well-known prophets. To name some of the earlier headmasters, there were:

- a. Samuel
  - b. Elijah
  - c. Elisha
5. For a fifth incidental reference, the chief or headmaster of the Schools of the Prophets was called “father,” and/or “master”:
- a. When Saul, following his anointing as king, prophesied among the prophets, one asked: “And who is their father?” (1 Sam. 10:12).
  - b. Then we read: “And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master [that is Elijah] from thy head to-day?” (2 Kin. 2:3).
  - c. On an occasion when the sons of the prophets were engaged in the construction of a new school building, and the ax-head of one of the young men fell into the water, he said: “Alas, my master: for it was borrowed” (2 Kin. 6:1-7).
6. For a sixth incidental reference, the sons of the prophets rendered due respect and obedience to their master—they were his servants or attendants.
- a. We read of how that a young man was in attendance for the needs of the prophet Samuel (2 Kin. 6:14-19).
  - b. Elisha so served as an attendant for Elijah that he was known as the one “who poured water on the hands of Elijah” (2 Kin. 3:11).
  - c. In the time of Elisha, he dispatched a young “son of the prophets” to Ramoth-gilead to anoint Jehu as king over Israel (2 Kin. 9:1-10).
7. For a seventh incidental reference, the “father” or “master” of the Schools of the Prophets showed fatherly care for the sons of the prophets and also for their wives and children.
- a. This, too, we learn through an incidental circumstance

- b. A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the Prophets “cried...unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear Jehovah: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two children to be bondmen” (2 Kin. 4:1-7).
  - c. In short, this son of the prophets was in debt. This is par for preachers, is it not?
  - d. Elisha inquired of the widow as to what she had in the house, and she replied: “Thy handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil” (2 Kin. 4:2).
  - e. Then Elisha said: “Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few” (2 Kin. 4:3).
  - f. He further instructed that she and her sons should shut the door and that then she should pour oil from her pot of oil into all the vessels until each was full.
  - g. When this was done she reported to Elisha, and he said: “Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt” (2 Kin. 4:7).
8. For an eighth incidental reference, the sons of the prophets were married—at least generally speaking as is indicated by the statement: “Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha” (2 Kin. 4:1).
9. For a ninth incidental reference, the sons of the prophets, on one occasion at least, built a chapel or school building by their own initiative and labor.
  - a. The 2 Kings record reads: “And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell before thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto the Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell” (2 Kin. 6:1-7).
  - b. Elisha granted the petition, and the schoolhouse was built.

- c. The necessary implication of this account is that the enrollment in the School of the Prophets was increasing.
10. For a tenth incidental reference, the prophets lived by their own labors in agricultural pursuits and by free-will offerings.
  - a. When Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha, Elisha was “plowing, with twelve yoke *of oxen* before him, and he with the twelfth” (1 Kin. 19:19).
  - b. When Saul despaired of finding his father’s asses, his servant suggested that they seek to the seer or prophet of the city, and Saul asked: “behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God” (1 Sam. 9:7).
  - c. The servant replied: “I have in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God” (1 Sam. 9:5-8).
11. For an eleventh incidental reference, we know of five schools of the prophets, namely:
  - a. There was a school at Ramah, and a dormitory as well (1 Sam. 19:18-24).
  - b. There was a school at Gibeah (1 Sam. 10:5).
  - c. There was a school at Bethel (2 Kin. 2:3).
  - d. There was a school at Jericho (2 Kin. 2:15)
  - e. There was a school at Gilgal (2 Kin. 4:38-.41).
12. For a twelfth incidental reference, admission to the Schools of the Prophets seems to have been freely granted on the basis of a young man’s desire and spiritual fitness for the office (2 Kin. 6:1-7).
13. For a thirteenth incidental reference, the course of study for the Schools of the Prophets included the law of Moses, music, poetry, and history (1 Sam. 10:5).
14. For a fourteenth incidental reference—or for that matter, numerous incidental references—the prophets preached from town to town, up and down the countryside, and in the cities—in fact, in all the public places, and especially at the city gate.

- E. The Schools of the Prophets as founded by Samuel came to be the greatest spiritual force within the nation of Israel.
1. The prophets were Jehovah's voice—his forthright spokesmen among the nation of Israel.
  2. While the prophets appeared from all the social ranks and positions of Hebrew life, they all needed special preparation for the office, and the Schools of the Prophets was one major means of providing for their needs.
  3. Samuel served Israel as priest, judge, and prophet, but his greatest and longest service to Israel was as a prophet and as a headmaster of young prophets.

#### VI. Summary and Conclusion.

- A. Now, with this extended overview of the life and works of Samuel, together with the incidental details which pertain to the Schools of the Prophets, there are some pertinent observations which we are prepared to make.
1. My first observation is that there had been a watergate of the priesthood.
    - a. As a result, Shiloh, where the tabernacle had stood for 325 years, was completely destroyed.
    - b. There was no one place for the Israelites to go for to worship.
    - c. From the time of the destruction of Shiloh until God's presence filled Solomon's temple—a period of some 123 years—there was no one place for the Israelites to worship.
    - d. Thus the Israelites reverted back to the patriarchal order of worship.
    - e. Samuel performed the duties of a priest in the capacity of his being a prophet, and not as a representative of the Aaronic priesthood. He did not associate himself with the Aaronic priests.
    - f. Even when Solomon was anointed king, he went to Gibeon, where Moses' tent and Bezalel's brazen altar stood, but
    - g. Five miles away in Jerusalem stood David's tent and brazen altar; and in addition, the ark of the covenant and the ephod of the high priest were there.

2. My next observation is that the incidental way in which the Schools of the Prophets are introduced is indicative of the ever present principle of the divine economy of the Scriptures.
  - a. If such schools had been demanded and outlined, they would have been necessarily operative, whether or not there were men fitted in character for such training. The ambitious and the prestigious, rather than the humble and dedicated, would have been attracted.
  - b. If such schools had been demanded and outlined, a financial base for their operation would necessarily have been provided, and this would have tended to attract young men of selfish and avaricious motives.
3. My third observation is that the Schools of the Prophets grew up out of a pressing need.
  - a. They grew up in that part of Israel that later apostatized under Jeroboam I.
  - b. They grew up where departures were more predominant.
  - c. They grew up when the nation of Israel was at a very low ebb spiritually, politically, and economically.
4. My fourth observation is that God leaves many matters and decisions to the judgment of men.
  - a. No such school had been ordered.
  - b. On the other hand, they were not in violation to the law of God.
  - c. They were within the area of expediency and man is obligated to choose the most expedient means for the promotion of righteousness.
  - d. Samuel chose the most expedient means for the choosing and encouraging of young men to preach righteousness in Israel as a means of a reformation and the saving of Israel.
5. My fifth observation is that not all of the prophets attended a School of the Prophets.
  - a. Amos is a classic example.

- b. This fact is as it should be, else many dedicated men of unusual ability would have been overlooked.
  - c. This is as it should be in the church today.
  - d. Some who make the greatest contributions have had little formal training.
- 6. My next observation is that the prophets had no certain support. They often worked in agricultural pursuits to maintain themselves and at other times they were supported by freewill offerings.
- 7. My seventh observation is that there is a tendency for counter movements or schools to rise.
  - a. In 1 Kings we have the case of Ahab and Jehoshaphat against Syria. Jehoshaphat said: "Inquire first, I pray thee, for the word of Jehovah" (1 Kin. 22:5).
  - b. Ahab had about 400 prophets, and they testified in keeping with his desires (1 Kin. 22:6).
  - c. Jehoshaphat inquired if there were another prophet.
  - d. Ahab said: "there is yet one man by whom we may inquire of Jehovah, Micaiah the son of Imlah: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil" (1 Kin. 22:8).
  - e. The point is that liberal or counter movements and schools tend to associate themselves with the political, the rich, and the powerful.
- B. In conclusion, my final observation is that there is a vital and pressing need for Schools of Religion, and Christian high schools, and Christian colleges today just as there was a pressing need for Schools of Religion in that day.

# JOHN THE BAPTIST, CHRIST'S HARBINGER

## Matthew 3:1; John 1:19-23

*Ray Peters*

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### INTRODUCTION

1. John the Baptist occupied a unique place in the history of the Bible, as may be seen by reading Luke 16:16.
2. The work of John the Immerser, although foretold in the Old Testament (cf., Isa. 40:3), was not authorized by the law of Moses; nor was it continued as a part of the Kingdom of Christ.
  - a. John's work, therefore, was a special work which God authorized him to do, and it came as it were between the two dispensations of Moses and Christ.
  - b. With the ministry of John, the old order was giving away, that is, was finishing its course, in preparation for the kingdom of Christ; but men were impatient for the new order and were trying to enter into it prematurely, that is, they were trying to get into the kingdom before it was established.
  - c. In verse 17 of Luke 16 Jesus pointed out that John's ministry marked a change in history, but that in no way affected the beginning of one system, nor the fulfillment of the other.
3. It is evident that a proper knowledge of the mission of John the Immerser, is essential to an understanding of the plan and purpose of the New Testament itself.
  - a. The Law of Moses pointed to the coming of Christ (cf., Gal. 3:24; Rom. 10:4) but would not have had the desired result without proper preparation.

- b. The entire world, including God's chosen people, was so engrossed in sin, as to make at least a partial reformation essential, before any appreciable number of people would be willing to receive the Redeemer.
  - c. Therefore, John the Baptist had the unique task of showing the people under the old covenant how they could successfully pass into the new.
  - d. But as usually the case, relatively few were wise enough to heed the harbinger's admonition and remain faithful to that which he urged them to do.
4. The date of his ministry:
- a. Luke 1:24-26 makes clear that John the Baptist was approximately six months older than Jesus, therefore, their births are put in the same year.
  - b. The point about chronology needs to be considered. Since many reckon dates from the birth of Jesus and John was born the same year, in order to establish the date of his ministry the birth date of Jesus needs to be determined.
    - i. There are many who reckon Jesus' birth in A.D. 1.
    - ii. A quotation from *The Concise Bible Dictionary*, which is also included in some editions of the American Standard Version, is a brief but satisfactory explanation of the question now before us:
 

“Chronology of the New Testament. The date of the birth of Jesus Christ the central event in the world's history, was first fixed, in the sixth century A.D., by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman monk, in the year 753 after the building of Rome (A.U.C. Anno urbis conditoe). That this was not the exact year of our Lord's birth has been abundantly provided; but the use of the date all over Christendom is too firmly established to be changed: It is certain from St. Matthew that our Lord was born before the death of Herod the Great (spring 750 A.V.C.). The nativity can scarcely be placed later than the autumn of 759 A.V.C. (B.C. 5-4). For the date December 25 there is no direct evidence whatever” (26).
  - c. This same authority also suggests A.D. 27 as the date for John's ministry (op. cit.).
  - d. Philip Schaff in Volume I of his *History of the Christian Church*, page 112 states “Christ was born A.V. 750 (or B.C. 4) if not earlier.”

- e. McClintock and Strong's, *Cyclopedia of Biblical Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. IV, page 876 puts the birth of Christ at B.C. 6.

## DISCUSSION

### I. The Harbinger and His Message.

#### A. The Harbinger.

1. A harbinger, according to Webster, was "one sent before to arrange for lodgings; a forerunner; a precursor" (cf., Mat. 3:1-3)
2. In John 1:6, the apostle John refers to the Harbinger simply as John. The probable reason for this was due to the fact that his own name was John and he therefore wrote as if the Baptist was the only John who was entitled to distinction.
3. John the Immerser was a man sent from God and is a matter of both prophecy and history (Mark 1:2-4; Mal. 3:1; John 1:31-34).
4. He is referred to as a "voice" crying in the wilderness. This implies that his personality was thrown, as it were, into the shadow of Christ (John 3:22-30).
  - a. Someone may ask, "what should be the goal and duty of a teacher or preacher of the Gospel?"
  - b. The answer can be found in the attitude and conduct of John the Baptist who shrouded his own insignificant person beneath the majesty of the message. This is also the way that the apostle Paul felt about his ministry (cf., 1 Cor. 2:1-5).

#### B. The Message of the Harbinger.

1. The greater part of John's preaching was done in the open and rural areas of Palestine; but it is certain that he experienced no difficulty in getting large audiences to hear his message.
  - a. The term "wilderness" is not used in the sense of complete barrenness, but rather of an unpopulated and unappropriated territory, which afforded free range of shepherds and their flocks. It will be remembered that Moses kept the flocks of Jethro in

- the wilderness of Midian (cf., Exo. 3:1; Acts 7:29-30).
2. It had been approximately four hundred years since a prophet of God had spoken to Israel; and inasmuch as the people were in great expectation (cf., Luke 3:15-17), they were anxious to hear anyone who claimed to have a divine commission.
  3. The dominant message of John was the call to repentance. (cf., Mat. 3:2, 11; Acts 19:2)
    - a. He had come to prepare a people for the reception of Christ; and a change in the attitudes and lives of his auditors was essential to that preparation.
    - b. The basic meaning of the term "repent" is to change one's mind, to think differently, to have another mind.
      - (1) Repentance is not forsaking sin; that is the fruit of repentance.
      - (2) It is to have another mind regarding sin, to think differently about it, to reconsider.
      - (3) It implies a true knowledge of sin, a conviction of sin, with its guilt, condemnation, and terrible consequences.
      - (4) Repentance is produced by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10) and results in a reformation of life (Mat. 3:8).
  4. John the Baptist and His Baptism.
    - a. The conditions set forth by John the Immerser to the Jew was "repent and believe."
      - (1) The Jew was to reform his life and return to obeying the Law of Moses—and to believe and obey the Gospel—when presented.
      - (2) This is the basis for Baptist doctrine—"repent and believe" and they quote from Mark 1:15 to sustain that position.
    - b. The purpose and validity of John's baptism.
      - (1) It was for the purpose of remitting sins. (cf., Mark 1:4)

- (2) It was valid until the day of Pentecost when it was “in the name of Jesus Christ” (cf., Acts 2:38; Acts 19:1-5).
  - (3) Those baptized under John’s baptism before Pentecost did not have to be re-immersed. They were the “prepared stones” of the kingdom, similar to the building of the tabernacle. The material was all read but not the “dwelling place” of God until the power of His presence. (cf., Exo. 40:33-38). In like manner, the prepared material was ready on Pentecost and with the coming of the Spirit in empowering the apostles and they giving gifts, by laying on of hands, the kingdom came into existence. The apostles and others who were baptized under John’s baptism before Pentecost were the “them” in Acts 2:41.
- II. John’s Way of Life and the Response to His Preaching (Mat. 3:4-6).
- A. The appearance of the Harbinger.
    1. We have no account of the detail of the physical features.
    2. The description Hastings gives of him, in “The Greater Men and Women of the Bible” gives us a general idea of the life and habits of this great man:  
 “The raiment of the Baptist corresponded to his Good, consisting of a garment of the very coarsest and cheapest cloth, made of camel’s hair. The girdle of the Oriental is an article of clothing on which a great deal of taste and expense is laid out, being frequently of fine material and gay coloring, with the added adornment of elaborate needlework; but the girdle with which John’s garment was confined was no more than a rough band of leather.  
 His habitual food was of the simplest order, consisting only of locusts and wit; honey; locusts, dried and preserved, form still, at the present day, an article of food in the East, but only among the very poor; people in the least degree luxurious on a scrumptious would not look at it. Wild honey, formed by hives of bees in the crevices of rocks or in rifted trees, abounds in the desert-places of Palestine, and may be gathered by any

one who wanders there. Everything in short, about his external appearance denoted one who had reduced the claims of the body to the lowest possible terms, that he might devote him entirely to the life of the spirit.”

3. Therefore, his personal habits were entirely consistent with the work which he came to do.
- B. The response to his preaching.
1. John's appearance and ringing message made a profound impression upon the people who heard him.
  2. The “all” in Matthew 3:5 we are not to understand that every single individual was included, for we are specifically told that there were those that rejected John's offer. (cf., Luke 7:30) Some have estimated that, all in all, a million people may have heard John preach.
  3. John lost his head for preaching the truth (cf., Mat. 14:2-12).
    - a. The Harbinger didn't back down or refrain from preaching the truth in the face of adversity.
    - b. He was willing to preach it at all costs.
    - c. John always got a response from his preaching. The truth demands a response and it will not always be a favorable response.
    - d. He came in the “spirit and power of Elijah” (cf., Mal. 4:5-6; Mat. 17:9-13).
    - e. The main thing, the Lord was pleased with his preaching. In fact according to the Lord's evaluation of him, John was as great, if not greater, than all people of the earth, up to that time. The only one we need to please in our teaching and preaching is the Lord (cf., 2 The. 2:4). Yet, the smaller in the kingdom was greater than John (Mat. 11:11).
- III. John's Disclaimer and Affirmation (John 1:19-23).
- A. The term “Jews” used by John., usually refers to the ruling clan, in the case before us, probably the Sanhedrin.
  - B. The Scribes and Levites were charged, among other things, with teaching the people (cf., Neh. 8:9); and it was probably for that they were sent by the Supreme Court of the Jews, to get some information regarding John.

- C. The emissaries asked John a series of questions, which received negative answers:
  - 1. He denied that he was the Christ (John 3:22-30).
  - 2. Denied that he was Elijah (Mat. 11:11-14).
  - 3. Also denied he was the prophet (Deu. 18:15-19; Acts 3:22-23).
- D. The Jews probably understood that the literal Old Testament Elijah was due to return to the earth.
- E. John affirmed Isaiah 40:3-5.
  - 1. It was an oriental practice to send a herald before the king to announce their coming and to see if the highways over which they were to pass were in order.
  - 2. Any obstacle in the way had to be removed and all rough places made smoother. If no highway existed one had to be made, even if it meant cutting down mountains and filling the low places.
  - 3. All of this was a striking illustration of the levelling influence which John came to exert and if one is a careful reader of the New Testament, he will see that the same principle is to be followed by gospel preachers today (cf., 2 Tim. 4:1-5).

### CONCLUSION

- 1. May the tribe of "John the Immerser" increase. To have men resign themselves to herald the message regardless of the cost.
- 2. John may have lost his head but he saved his and other men's souls.

# JOSHUA

*Larry Reynolds*

Larry G. Reynolds is married and has three children: Donna, 10, Mack, 6, and Gary, 2. He is a 1972 graduate of Memphis School of Preaching. Churches served full time: Dahlonega, Georgia, 1 year and Tecumseh, Michigan, 4 years. He is presently working with the West Side church in Elgin, Illinois.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The birth of Joshua.
  - a. Joshua was born about the time Moses fled into Midian. He was some 40 years of age when he saw the ten plagues and was 85 years old when he received the command to lead the people.
  - b. He was the son of Nun (Jos. 1:1).
2. The name, Joshua.
  - a. His name was originally Oshea (Num. 13:8).
  - b. Moses changed his name to Joshua (Num. 13:16).
  - c. Joshua means “Jehovah is his help.”
3. Joshua was with the great leader, Moses.
  - a. Moses chose Joshua to select men to fight against Amalek (Exo. 14:9).
  - b. Joshua accompanied Moses part of the way up Mt. Sinai (Exo. 24:13).
  - c. Joshua was with Moses when he came down from the mountain. Joshua heard the noise of the people (Exo. 32:17).
  - d. Joshua was selected by Moses to explore the land of Canaan (Num. 13:17).
4. The accomplishments of Israel under the leadership of Joshua.
  - a. Israel crossed Jordan into the promised land (Jos. 3:17).
  - b. In six years six nations, with thirty-one kings, fell to the conquest of Joshua.
  - c. Joshua divided the conquered land (Jos. 14:1-5).
  - d. Six cities of refuge were appointed (Jos. 20:7-8).
  - e. The people of Israel were faithful to God during all the days of Joshua (Jos. 24:31).

## DISCUSSION

- I. Joshua Chosen to Lead God's People.
  - A. Joshua was chosen as Moses' successor (Num. 24:18-20)
    1. Moses asked for a successor to be appointed (Num. 27:15-17).
    2. The laying on of hands by Moses was a transfer of the leadership to Joshua.
    3. The laying on of hands was also to cause the people to obey Joshua (Deu. 34:9).
  - B. The responsibility of Joshua (Jos. 1:1-5).
    1. Moses had died on Mount Nebo. The people mourned for him (Deu. 34:8).
    2. The fall of a great leader is a summons to others to assume that role.
    3. The death of an outstanding church leader should stimulate others to take up his work; For the best way to honor the dead is to rise and take up his work.
    4. Joshua had the responsibility of leading Israel into the promised land. **Think**, leading a host of millions This required a great faith!
    5. The land was given to them, but they had to take it and inhabit it.
- II. God's Charge to Joshua (Jos. 1:6-9).
  - A. He needed courage to lead the people through a series of brilliant battles, and then turn them to the most peaceful pursuits.
  - B. Now, as then, strength and courage are required to do that which God has ordained for His people (Eph. 6:10-11) .
  - C. God told Joshua that the law should not depart out of his mouth and then he would have good success (Jos. 1:8).
    1. In order to be successful today we must do things as **God says** (Mat. 7:21).
    2. There was once a violinist who gave an outstanding performance and received a standing ovation. After the performance, he was found crying because there was one man in the audience who did not applaud. The one man whom he did not please was his teacher.
    3. Good success is that which is pleasing in God's sight, our, teacher (Pro. 3:5-6).

- D. God said for Joshua to meditate on His word day and night (Jos. 1:8).
  - E. God was with Joshua (Jos. 1:9).
    - 1. Joshua gave the charge to the people and the spies were sent out (Jos. 2).
    - 2. The people crossed Jordan (Jos. 3).
    - 3. The circumcision and Passover took place at Gilgal (Jos. 5).
    - 4. Jericho was taken by Joshua and the Israelites (Jos. 6).
    - 5. God kept the promise He had made to their fathers. They received the promised land (Jos. 21:43-45).
    - 6. God is still with His people today (Mat. 28:20; Heb. 13:5).
- III. Joshua Deals with Sin.
- A. Prior to the overthrow of Jericho, Joshua had commanded the Israelites to “keep themselves from the devoted thing,” (Jos. 6:18-19).
  - B. Achan took the devoted thing (Jos. 7:1-2).
  - C. Achan’s trespass affected the whole camp of Israel (Jos. 7:25).
  - D. God’s people today need to learn the principle contained within this narrative. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Cor. 5:6).
    - 1. Failure to carry out God’s plan in dealing with sin leads to a tolerant attitude toward sin among the membership (1 Cor. 5:2, 6).
    - 2. A tolerant attitude then causes people to be less concerned about their holiness of life as they no longer hate sin (1 Pet. 1:13-16).
  - E. Israel was not victorious until the sin was removed (Jos. 7:25).
  - F. The church today will not be victorious until sin is removed.
    - 1. God wants His church to be pure (Eph. 5:27).
    - 2. The church is to have the right influence (Col. 4:5).
    - 3. Church discipline will cause respect for God’s Word (Acts 5:11).
    - 4. Church discipline is for the purpose of saving souls (Jam. 5:19-20).

- IV. Joshua's Last Charge to God's People (Jos. 24:14-15).
- A. In Joshua's farewell speech he explained that the history of God's people from the choosing of Abraham to their present state demanded that a choice be made to serve God.
  - B. Israel answered they would serve God (Jos. 24:24).
  - C. God's people today must make the same choice (Heb. 6:4-6).
  - D. We choose life or death.

### **CONCLUSION**

- 1. A great epitaph was given to this great leader (Jos. 24:31).
- 2. Reasons for the faithfulness of the people were
  - a. Joshua's faith in God was carried over to the people.
  - b. Joshua was ready to meet the challenge of leading the people
  - c. Joshua's example was good for the people. (He led them into battle.)
- 3. Joshua's leading of the Israelites into Canaan is a type. There is a rest for the people of God (Heb. 4:9).
  - a. Christ is the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:8-9).
  - b. The rest is conditional (Heb 4:11).

# “WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS”

Romans 8:35-39

*Bill Coss*

Those who even have heard him preach won't have to ask; they'll know! Others may want to inquire "Just who is Bill Coss?"

The first time that I recall having crossed trails with him was 30 years ago this past April in the office of brother A. M. Burton, in the Life & Casualty Building, in Nashville, Tennessee. During and after his preacher training at Nashville School of Preaching, he preached in and around Middle Tennessee for a few years, always desiring to do mission work starting congregations where there were none. While Haskell Chesshir was going to Korea and I to Singapore and Southeast Asia, brother Coss was invited to move to Chicagoland.

The way this happened, early in the '50s, he had baptized his brother and his wife who lived in the Chicago area. They could not find a church of Christ near where they lived, so they asked Bill to move there and start one. When he went to Chicago to see for himself, he realized that this was indeed a great mission field.

Returning to west Tennessee, after talking it over with his wife, he and she agreed that they had to go back to Chicago and that section of the Midwest with the gospel of Christ. He resigned his a secular work and his preaching in Tennessee, put his house up for sale; and his wife and children followed him to Chicago as soon as it was sold.

"I left my wife and three small children at the train station," he recalls. "I had 39 song books and a Bible and concordance in a suit case, along with a few clothes—and a prayer in my heart that I could reach a few of the millions who were lost in that great Midwest area.

"I took a job in a hamburger shop as a cook and began to visit and look the area over. In just a few weeks we had a few members meeting out on the south side of Chicago. As the word spread, I preached every Sunday, sometimes three or four times, as small groups began to meet. I was deeply concerned about the north side of Chicago where the opportunity was so great, as there were a great numbers of people from the south living in that area."

Along with a few Christians living in the area, Bill and Mae began the Lakeview church of Christ on the north side of the city.

"At our first business meeting," he remembers "we decided that we would start a new congregation every two years if it were humanly possible. We would train and have a man ready for the work.

"For the next 15 years we started and helped to start congregation after congregation, getting full support for many of the preachers from various congregations in the south."

Brother Coss preached in ten or twelve meetings a years helping to ground these young congregations—many times not receiving any money but always encouraging them to do mission work. As a result approximately 30 congregations were established in the Greater Chicagoland area and beyond.

Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Editor

*Far East/world Evangelism Newsletter*

## INTRODUCTION

1. If God is for us, justifies us, and Jesus our advocate at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit dwells within us and intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, who can separate us from the love that so guards us.  
Shall we let the things brought upon us to school us and fit us for the enjoyment of the eternal honors God has for us in heaven separate us from the love of Christ. Paul would not allow himself to be discouraged, disheartened and neither would he turn back, and forfeit those honors and glories purchased for him and for us by the blood of Jesus Christ our Redeemer.
2. This whole context refers to the suffering of God's people. This verse is typical of what the followers of Christ would suffer for His name sake. These were the trials and sufferings to discipline them and us for the eternal honors that await us. It was part of the present suffering that would work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.
3. Instead of drawing back from suffering for Jesus' sake or forsaking Him because of tribulations through these, we are to be crowned more than conquerors. But who can be "more" than conquerors? Certainly he that cannot be conquered by the devil and all his ways. Why? Because these sufferings are a mighty battle, but we can come through them more than victors. We gloriously triumph with Christ our Lord.
4. We must persuade ourselves to win where there are difficulties, with an honest desire which will convince us as it did Paul that it can be done. Without this earnestness of heart that makes us willing to sacrifice to God we cannot conquer.
5. What is needed in our brotherhood today; and for the good of the world is to realize that our religious lives should be more earnest and devoted. We cannot do this without self-sacrifice like that made by those who did prevail with God and whose examples are given for our encouragement and imitation, as was the apostle Paul.

## DISCUSSION

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

1. Paul Conquered Because He Was Not Afraid (Acts 20 :18- 35).

- A. In these passages we have Paul reviewing his work in Ephesus to the Ephesian elders. The record that he gives us is significant of Paul's work as a preacher. "serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind" (Acts 20:19).
- B. Here is the Spirit of Christ and the quality of a great preacher (Rom. 8:9). None has ever had more confidence in the message or less in Himself. He was humble enough to tell it like it is, even though he was smart enough to dodge the real issue.
- C. The man who is full of self-importance or self-reliance will trust in his own wisdom (education), and depart from God's Word by refusing to tackle the real trouble. He will depend upon his own judgment which causes him to fall into fear.
- D. Paul "shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Here is another vital quality for a preacher. As a mother administers distasteful medicine to her child for its own good, so a Bible preacher must often preach things distasteful to some who hear because they need them. "The power is in the Word" (Rom. 1:16-17).
- E. The preacher who will not preach what is needed whether it will make him popular or unpopular is in the wrong work. He is a coward and is a disgrace to his profession, and to his own conscience. He has no regard for the souls of men or the truth. He should be in something else, because Paul said, "I shun not"
- F. Every preacher in the brotherhood should read this verse 24 and then examine themselves in their preaching. Paul held not his life greater than that of preaching Christ. Paul was not willing to "shun" his responsibility or turn aside from an opportunity to further the Gospel of Christ even in the interest of preserving his own life.
  - 1. A true Bible preacher will not let personal privation, sacrifice, hardships, popular opinion, friendships, or anything else, no, not even danger to his own life deter him in preaching the truth.
  - 2. Paul conquered because of this remarkable characteristic. This is his statement: "I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God." There was no part of the

Gospel he was either afraid or ashamed (Rom. 1:16) to preach.

3. The world needs today, and God can use today preachers who will preach a truly full Gospel message (1 Cor. 9:16), men who will neither add nor subtract (refuse to preach what is needed) or substitute or pervert for any consideration, but who will preach the truth, the whole truth (when it is needed) and nothing but the truth in spite of the consequences, so help us God.
  4. Paul did not quit when he had told sinners what to do to be saved. He went right on and told Christians how to live, worship and serve God so as to be saved in heaven. Even when he knew they hated him (Gal. 4:16).
- II. Paul Said We Are Conquerors Through the Right Kind of Elders (Acts 20:18-35).
- A. Paul warned the elders concerning the flock, and how they should continue to feed the church on God's Word. Paul taught that the eldership of our Lord's church is not an honorary title to be bestowed upon one—that it is rather a sacred trust, a task to be performed, a responsibility to be assumed.
  - B. 1 Tim. 3:1-7—Two hurtful extremes are often observed when the selection of elders is to be considered. Down through the years I have seen this over and over again, and the church of our Lord is held back, bogged down, and in some cases carried into apostasy.
    1. One is the rigid interpretation of the qualifications so that no human being could attain them. Endless wrangles are engaged in, feelings hurt, friendships lost, unkindness practiced and in the final analysis no elders are appointed.
    2. The other is, no attention is paid to the qualifications at all. Men are chosen because they have believing children only, or the length of time they have been in the church. Others are chosen because of business or social position, popularity or other similar bases. This results in churches being paralyzed by incompetent leadership.
  - C. Space will not permit me to put all that I would like to here in this lesson, but there are some things which are perhaps the most pressing failure of elders today.

1. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 , 14-15—Upon the elders falls the responsibility to exercise discipline toward those who persist—yes I said persist—in walking disorderly. This is perhaps the most sadly neglected command in all of God’s Word today. All about us we see the tragic fruits of this dereliction of duty, and unless brethren there is a correction here the church has a dim future in growing spiritually.
2. God demands that elders be examples to the flock, worthy of our following (1 Pet. 5:3). There must be a “Do as I say, not as I do.” Like the conquering Paul they must say “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). This my brethren throws a clear light on many of the other qualifications.
  - a. His reputation must be kept blameless.
  - b. He must not be self-willed, for this would incite self-will in those whom he would attempt to lead.
  - c. He cannot soon be angry, nor can he be given to wine. This means beer or any kind of alcoholic drinks.
  - d. He must love good men and show hospitality, and just as sober as he can possibly be, so that he can lead others.
3. All these and other qualifications make him a leader who can lead others. In prayers, Bible study, attendance at all services if at all possible, liberality and soul winning, he is an exemplary. In correcting the disobedient, because they cannot point a finger at him, Satan cannot discredit him before the church or community. God help us to find these kind of men today.
4. Paul warned the elders at Ephesus of the great dangers that did exist, but what did he recommend that would turn the tide? “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace” (Acts 20:32). We must let the Word of God do the job today.
5. In order for an elder to do his work well he needs a good working knowledge of the Word of God. He needs a keen awareness of what is happening throughout the brotherhood, but above all he needs to be aware of

problems, attitudes and teachings that are causing division and hindering the work of the Lord. Ignorance in this area has brought much grief to many whose flock was scattered by a problem they did not know existed or were so naive about it they could care less. They knew it was there, but would not speak up.

6. The last point on conquering elders is: Too long we have condemned the sects for their Pastoral systems, while so many of our elders in the church today have turned their pastoral responsibility over to preachers. Surely the mature elder with years of experience as a husband, father, and Christian should be a better marriage counselor or family advisor than the young preacher, who in some cases is not even married.
7. Was there ever a time so great as now, and the work so important as that of our elders in the church of our Lord? If a man, occupying the office cannot or will not “do the work of an elder,” he should resign his position that more capable men may do the job and do it properly. Then and only then can we hope to be the conquerors for Christ. May God’s blessing be on those men who with courage and fortitude labor faithfully in the greatest of all works. My love and prayers go with them always.

### III. Paul Conquered Because He Wanted to Preach to Those Who Were Conquerors of the World (Rom. 1:14-17).

- A. Perhaps no passage more truly portrays the attitude of this great preacher toward God’s Word and the souls of men than these verses. The grace of God had been extended to Paul when he was so persistently persecuting the followers of Christ, by the vision of Christ on the Damascus Road. He understood it had not been merely for his own salvation.
- B. He knew that God saved him in order that he might save others, and he was so grateful for his own salvation that he considered himself a “debtor” knowing that all men need to be saved. He accepted the task of doing all that he Christian conquering life.
- C. This Christian service: readiness to the extent of one’s ability. The Christian will say “I am ready to do what I can.” The message of Christian responsibility is individual ability. To

conquer oneself is to conquer one's enemies. Preachers and all Christians need that kind of confidence in God's Word. It is able to direct man unto eternal salvation. It needs to be pointed out and preached so as to inspire this faith that we can be conquerors.

- D. Out of that gratitude for the salvation of his own soul, he was ready, "as much as in me is, to preach the Gospel to you also that are in Rome." God's Word has been revealed for this purpose and the church of our Lord has been commissioned to preach the Word.
- IV. The Gospel Is the Only Hope of the World.
- A. Paul knew that the hope of the world for salvation was the Gospel of Christ. We hear him declaring concerning the Gospel, "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). No man can be saved by faith unless it is by the power of the Gospel. (Rom. 10:17). For this very reason God has ordained the preaching of His Word (1 Cor. 1:18).
  - B. It alone is able to produce faith to the saving of the soul. Preaching God's Word was the only way Paul could pay his debt, by working in the interest of the salvation of as many as possible (1 Cor. 9:14-16). A complete revelation of God's will and law is found in the Gospel, and thus the Gospel is able to direct man unto the saving of his soul.
  - C. Without doubt, the apostle Paul was the greatest example and yes, exhibition if you please, of Christianity that history has produced. He won more to Christ, he established more congregations, he suffered more (2 Cor. 21:23-28). He wielded a greater influence for Christ than any we know. He was beaten, left for dead, put into prison, hated, envy and jealousy was on his trail; and yet he said, "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (Phi. 1:12). Paul's greatness was in his humility and service. He was what he was by the grace of God (1 Cor. 15:10). Paul took the Gospel that conquered the world (Col. 1:23).
- V. Paul Conquered Because He Hated Error and Loved Truth (Rom. 3:3-4).

- A. When men dissent from God's Word, how much consideration do they deserve? Paul declares that they should be given exactly none. He was not discussing it from a political point of view. But in religious matters and on whatever God has spoken, even if the whole world refused to believe it, God's Word is right, it is **Truth**. Paul let it be known that he had rather stand with God alone than have the whole world with him, and be without God. Young preachers are you listening?
- B. Sentiment has often been raised in support of the proposition that popular public opinion, or the voice of a majority of the people (even in the church) has some value in determining the truth. This Paul denies and disputes in the very "positive" words, "shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written" (Rom. 3:3-4). To put it in common words today, believe it or not, what God says is true even if the whole world dissents. Preachers of the Bible must have the "courage" to stand upon the Bible and preach the truth if it condemns all of those in High places in and out of the church. The Bible will conquer.
- C. Paul conquered because he surrendered his entire life to Christ. He knew that Christ was the truth (John 14:16). His entire life was spent to win men to truth. He preached publicly and from house to house (Acts 20:20). This is demonstrated by the fact that Paul had been converted by what he had seen and heard. An educated ministry may be desirable, but a converted one is indispensable. The Gospel was indeed good news to him—it is good news to us today.
- D. We need the exuberance of a child bursting through a doorway with a great shout "I have good news." We need to feel the unspeakable joy of a released prisoner, Christ has set me free, who has found his pardon instead of condemnation. What does the Gospel mean to us? A name? A lot of words? So many abstract truths? Or is it the purifying Power, healing man of the damaging effects of sin working in man (Col. 3:16) to a more mature life? My brethren has the truth conquered you?
- E. Much of the restlessness of this generation is caused by sheer aimlessness. This is why the church has turned in many areas

to all kinds of gimmicks. It has lost its power. Purpose makes for Power. Paul purposed in his heart he would be loyal to Christ and His truth, and he became a power to be reckoned with (Phi. 4:13). A high wall of principle guarded his life. He was "separated unto the Gospel." Paul was separated from the world (Rom. 12:1-2) and his life is a living demonstration how he conquered through truth. He was in the world, but not of the world.

- F. Paul put power and conviction in the pulpit. Paul knew and preached that the Power was in the message. "Every preacher is either a pipe or a plug; he transmits the power or obstructs the flow." By divine appointment it is the responsibility of the preacher to bring fallen men into contact with the Gospel truth (John 8:32). God has revealed no other way of making Christians (Acts 4:12).

#### VI. The Modern Pulpit Today (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

- A. The modern pulpit today has substituted the materialistic Gospel for the blood bought one. It has made Bethlehem a myth and the song of the angels a fable; it has made Christ a son only in the sense in which all are sons, just an ordinary person. I do not mean to scoff at higher learning, for surely preachers ought to be learned men, but listen my brethren—you can never know Christ by higher learning!
- B. Many of our own pulpits have lost their power because they have lost their faith. The pulpit of power is the "one faith," (Eph. 4:3-6). Like Paul, the man who stands here will be battle-scarred because of fighting with the Devil. Many who have had resolves and valiant promises, today because of their poor performances, can be heard preaching their doubts. They have lost this conquering power. Paul said "I know in whom I believe." Do you?
- C. The preacher should believe more, hope more, have a higher vision. Why? Because a saving faith affectionate in an acceptance of, and an obedience to a personal Saviour, faith in Christ because God does not lie. We, the church today, have lost our love for the preached Word, and for the sin sick and ruined world, and zeal for winning souls. Yes, my brethren, the tear stained countenance of our Master looks down and

weeps over us as He did Jerusalem (Mat. 23:37), because we are no longer conquerors.

- D. Paul conquered because he possessed a grateful heart and said, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8). The faith of the church at Rome was world renown, and he was thankful for its good name. There is something radically wrong with the church of our Lord today. Members of the Body of Christ can no longer conquer because they are not grateful. We see this in our Bible Classes, in our Sunday and Wednesday night services. So many members do not long to be in the services of the Lord, and to find real happiness in such assemblies. The words think and thank come from the same root. We often are not as thankful as we ought to be, because we are not as thankful as we should be. We must be thankful if we are going to be conquerors.

### CONCLUSION

Paul's last words show he had conquered (2 Tim. 4:1-8).

1. Paul's last words concerning responsibility to preach the Word, is to reach each man with the Word of God. Not Science, not Philosophy, but the unsearchable Word of the living God. This charge is to be discharged persistently "in season and out." It demands courage, "reprove and rebuke," and this implies earnestness "with all longsuffering." It requires watchfulness. He says "watch in all things." It also necessitates patience—"endure afflictions." It demands zeal—"Do the work of an evangelist." It requires faithfulness—"make full proof of thy ministry."
2. Then Paul said "I have conquered." "He had fought a good fight." His battles were with the Devil, the world and the flesh. "He had run a good race." He persevered. "He looked to the prize" (Phi. 3:13-14). "He kept the faith." He was a faithful steward of the Gospel (2 Cor. 4:4-7). Because he kept the faith we have him as our example (1 Cor. 11:1). Because Paul conquered he anticipated the reward—"the Crown of Life."
3. We must remember that these words were spoken from a prison cell in Rome. His last words were a victorious language, words of certainty. He knew the day when he would receive his reward from his Master. With Him he had conquered.

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

# SAUL, KING OF ISRAEL

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Saul's life has been called "The greatest shipwreck of the Old Testament," he has been termed "A failure in spite of everything," and called "The self-made fool."
  - a. It is a question as to which of these is the more apt description.
  - b. There is truth in all, but not all is so bad in Saul's life.
2. We may learn from both sides in the life of Saul, king of Israel.
  - a. We should strive to emulate his positive examples for good.
  - b. We must seek to avoid the same acts of rebellion and disobedience that characterized much of his life.
3. To profit most from the life of Saul we must glean lessons from every act, from the setting of the stage for his debut, until the closing of the curtain on that tragic scene at the end of his life.
  - a. The conditions in Israel which brings Saul on the scene.
  - b. In humility Saul makes his debut—he is anointed king of Israel.
  - c. Saul's opportunities are virtually unlimited.
    - i. God is with him, he is the Lord's anointed.
    - ii. His friend, the great Samuel, is at his side.
    - iii. The people are behind him.
  - d. Saul's first act of rebellion, his rejection as king revealed.
  - e. Saul's second act of rebellion, his second rejection as king.
  - f. Saul's relationship with David reveals a display of madness, envy, hatred, jealousy, and a spirit of stubborn self-will.

- g. The closing scene of tragedy.
  - i. The once “goodly” Saul faces the fearful end without God.
  - ii. God will no longer hear because Saul has alienated himself.
  - iii. Suicide, the bitter fruit of his folly in “playing the fool.”
- 4. Truly, “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning” (Rom. 15:4), and “for our admonition” (1 Cor. 10:11).
  - a. God’s record of events would not be replete without the account of Saul, king of Israel.

### DISCUSSION

- I. The Conditions in Israel Which Bring Saul on the Scene
  - A. Since deliverance from Egypt the Israelites had forsaken God, even to the point of serving other gods (1 Sam. 8:8).
  - B. Now, with Samuel growing old, Israel rejects God and asks for a king (1 Sam. 8:7).
    - 1. In rejecting Samuel as Judge they were rejecting God (1 Sam. 8:7).
  - C. Excuses offered for asking for a king.
    - 1. Samuel is old (1 Sam. 8:7).
    - 2. Samuel’s sons are not following in Samuel’s ways (1 Sam. 8:7).
    - 3. Israel wants to be like all the nations (1 Sam. 8:20).
    - 4. Israel wants a king to fight their battles (1 Sam. 8:20).
    - 5. Samuel warns the people of the dangers of a king (1 Sam. 8:9-17).
      - a. “Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us” (1 Sam. 8:19).
    - 6. “And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king” (1 Sam. 8:22).
    - 7. Lessons for us:
      - a. In rejecting God’s form of government and demanding a king, Israel professed to know more than God.
        - (1) When we reject any part of God’s law and do things our way we are doing the same thing.

- b. When people reject the preaching of the truth they are rejecting God and not the preacher.
  - (1) This should encourage preachers of the truth when they are not heard.
- c. If Israel had been obedient they would not have seen a need for a king. If we do things God's way we won't see a need to change .
- d. The desire of Israel to be like the nations about them caused them to go against God's will. Our desire to be like our religious neighbors will cause us to transgress God's will.
  - (1) This brought instrumental music and the missionary society into the church.
  - (2) "Children's church" and "children's worship" have been brought in as a result of our wanting to be like those about us. There is no scriptural authority for such, but some are like the Israelites, "Nay, but we will have our children's church and children's worship."
  - (3) Some churches are in the recreation and entertainment business just because our religious neighbors are. Most will admit there is not scripural authority for it.
  - (4) The version craze, which has resulted in the use of all sorts of "perversions" within the church started first with those around us.
  - (5) God will not prevent us from doing that which is contrary to His will if we persist. He allowed the Israelites to have a king, against His will.
    - (a) If we believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, it is possible He may send us a "strong delusion" (2 The. 2:11).

## II. Saul Makes Debut—Is Anointed to be the King of Israel.

- A. Kish, the Benjamite, had a son named Saul (1 Sam. 9:1-2).
  - 1. Saul was a "choice young man" and there was not a "goodlier" person among the children of Israel (1 Sam 9:2).

- a. “From his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people” (1 Sam. 9:2).
- B. Saul and a servant were sent by Kish to find some asses which were lost (1 Sam. 9:3-4).
  1. When they are not found Saul suggests they return home (1 Sam. 9:5).
  2. The servant suggests they go up to the “man of God” in the city and he will tell them where the asses are (1 Sam. 9:6-13).
  3. Saul and his servant met Samuel (“the man of God”) as he was going up to the high place (1 Sam. 9:14).
    - a. The Lord had told Samuel the day before that he would send him a man out of the land of Benjamin and that he should anoint him (1 Sam. 9:16).
  4. Upon seeing Saul the Lord told Samuel that this was the man whom he should anoint to reign over his people (1 Sam. 9:17).
  5. Samuel identifies himself to Saul and invites him to the high place to eat with him (1 Sam. 9:18-19).
  6. Before the meal Samuel reveals to Saul that the asses are found, and that “the desire of Israel” was upon Saul and his father’s house (1 Sam. 9:20).
- C. Saul displays great humility at the thought of being king.
  1. “Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?” (1 Sam. 9:21).
  2. Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the chiefest place for a special meal with thirty selected persons (1 Sam. 9:22-24).
    - a. Afterward Samuel communed with Saul on the house top (1 Sam. 9:25).
  3. On the morrow, as Samuel accompanies Saul and his servant to the edge of the city, Samuel asks the servant to pass on and Saul to stand still that he might “show thee the word of God” (1 Sam. 9:26-27).
- D. “Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *Is it* not because the LORD hath

anointed thee *to be* captain over his inheritance?” (1 Sam. 10:1).

1. Samuel tells Saul that when they are separated that day three signs will be given to Saul to show that God is with him (1 Sam. 10:2-7).
  - a. Saul will find two men by Rachel’s sepulchre who will tell him the asses are found (1 Sam. 10:2).
  - b. He would meet three men on the plain of Tabor who would give him two loaves of bread (1 Sam. 10:3-4).
  - c. Saul would meet a company of prophets, the spirit of the Lord would come upon him, he would prophesy with them, and be turned into “another man” (1 Sam. 10:5-6).
2. God gave Saul “another heart” and the signs came to pass (1 Sam. 10:9).
3. Saul, though not yet publicly proclaimed as king, does have God’s stamp of approval, as shown by the signs.

E. Lessons for us.

1. If we are the right kind of person God has a place for us. He will use us to accomplish His purpose.
  - a. Our qualifications are based upon the heart. See 1 Samuel 16:7.
2. Saul’s display of humility is a good example for us to follow, and most especially for church leaders.
  - (1) Jesus said, “For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:11).
  - (2) Those who strive, through any means, to be “big” preachers might be greater in God’s sight if they learned humility.
  - (3) Elders who fail to learn humility are more likely to “lord it over God’s heritage.”
  - (4) Saul showed humility although he was elevated from obscurity to the number one position in Israel.
3. A good beginning does not guarantee a good ending, as shown later by Saul’s example.

- (1) One must always be on guard against the danger of departing from God's way. Preachers and elders are no exception:

### III. Saul's Opportunities are Virtually Unlimited.

- A. Although the Lord says the people have rejected Him in asking for a king, He has given His approval of Saul to be king.
  1. Three signs (1 Sam. 10:2-6) were proof of God's approval.
  2. Saul faces the task with God on his side.
- B. Saul is well received by the people when publicly proclaimed king.
  1. Samuel calls the people together at Mizpeh (1 Sam. 10:17).
    - a. He again, as God has directed, warns the people they are rejecting the God who has delivered them in times past (1 Sam. 10:18-19).
  2. The tribe of Benjamin was taken, and Saul, the son of Kish, was taken (1 Sam. 10:20-21).
    - a. When Saul could not be found the Lord said he had hid himself among the stuff (baggage) (1 Sam. 10:22).
  3. When Saul was brought forth he stood head and shoulders above the other people (1 Sam. 10:23).
    - a. From the physical standpoint a more suitable than Saul could not have been found.
  4. Samuel presents Saul to the people as he "whom the LORD hath chosen" and said "*there is none like him*" among the people (1 Sam. 10:24).
  5. The response is overwhelming. "And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king [margin, "let the king live]" (1 Sam. 10:24).
    - a. Saul's only opposition, the "children of Belial" (1 Sam. 10:27).
      - (1) A "worthless" people, to whom Saul paid no attention.
    - b. What leader would not be pleased with such support in the beginning of his administration?

- C. Saul goes home to Gibeah, accompanied by a band of men “whose hearts God had touched” (1 Sam. 10:26).
  - 1. Saul has the support of the right kind of people around him.
  - 2. God has given him “another heart” to prepare him for the job (1 Sam. 10:9).
- D. Saul is successful in his first military venture.
  - 1. Nahash comes against Jabeshgilead (1 Sam. 11:1).
    - a. A seven day truce is arranged, during which time Saul learned of the plight of Jabeshgilead (1 Sam. 11:2-5).
  - 2. Saul, through a strong display of leadership, raises an army of 300,000 from Israel and 30,000 from Judah (1 Sam. 11:6-8).
  - 3. Saul completely discomfits the Ammonites (1 Sam. 11:11).
    - a. After the victory the people want to put to death Saul’s critics, the men of Belial, but Saul refuses (1 Sam. 11:12).
- E. Samuel called the people to Gilgal to renew the kingdom (1 Sam. 11:4).
  - 1. Saul and all the men rejoice greatly (1 Sam. 11:15).
- F. Saul has the support of Samuel, the man of God.
  - 1. Though Samuel may have felt rejected when the people first asked for a king, he is now at Saul’s side to offer help and guidance.
  - 2. Samuel offers advice, which if followed, would make Saul’s reign easier.
    - a. Samuel reminds Israel that they have asked for a king, when God was their king, now they must respect the king they have (1 Sam. 12:1-2, 13).
    - b. Samuel clears himself of fault before the people (1 Sam. 12:3-5).
    - c. He recalls past history, how that when Israel forgot the Lord they were overcome by heathen nations, yet when they cried to the Lord for deliverance they were delivered (1 Sam. 12:6-12).
    - d. Samuel assures the people that “the LORD will not forsake his people” (1 Sam. 12:22) but if they do

wickedly they shall be consumed, including their king (1 Sam. 12:25).

- e. Samuel shows his concern for Israel in that he said he would not sin against the Lord in “ceasing to pray for them” (1 Sam. 12:23).

G. Lessons for us:

1. As children of God we have great opportunities.
  - a. We have been called by God, through the gospel, to do a great work. Not to fight a carnal war, but the “good fight of faith.”
  - b. God will be with us unless we let sin cause a separation (Isa. 59:2).
2. We need friends who are godly people like Samuel to encourage us, to advise us, and to tell us when we are wrong.
  - a. As church leaders we need friends like this.
  - b. We are often remiss in encouraging others, and each other, and lack the courage to tell one another when we are wrong.

IV. Saul’s First Act of Rebellion, and his Rejection as King Revealed.

A. After reigning two years Saul chose an army of 3,000 men of Israel. One thousand of these were with Saul’s son, Jonathan (1 Sam. 13:1-2).

1. Jonathan smote the Philistine garrison at Geba (1 Sam. 13:3).
  - a. Saul proclaimed the victory among the people and the Philistines were provoked, and prepared for battle (1 Sam. 13:3-4).
2. Saul gathered his people at Gilgal (1 Sam. 13:4).
  - a. At Michmash the Philistines gathered an army of 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen and a multitude of people (1 Sam. 13:5).
3. The people of Israel, terrified at the sight of the Philistines, hid themselves in thickets and caves, some deserted (1 Sam. 13:6-7).

B. Saul tarried seven days, as commanded by Samuel, for Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice (1 Sam. 13:8).

1. When Samuel did not arrive on time, Saul offered a burnt offering himself (1 Sam. 13:9).

2. As soon as Saul had made the offering Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to meet him and salute him (1 Sam. 13:10).
- C. Samuel's question to Saul—"What hast thou done?" was proof that Saul had erred (1 Sam. 13:11).
  1. Saul tries in vain to justify his actions (1 Sam. 13:11-12).
    - a. The people were scattered from me.
    - b. You, Samuel, didn't arrive on time
    - c. The Philistines had gathered and I thought they would come upon me before I had made supplication to the Lord.
    - d. In view of all this "I forced myself" to offer an offering.
- D. Samuel reveals the seriousness of the offence (1 Sam. 13:13-14).
  1. "Thou hast done foolishly."
  2. "Thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee."
  3. The Lord would have "established thy kingdom upon Israel forever," but "Now thy kingdom shall not continue."
    - a. The Lord has sought a man after His own heart because you (Saul) did not keep that which the Lord commanded thee.
- E. Samuel now goes to Gibeah (1 Sam. 13:15).
  1. Saul and Jonathan, with 600 men, abide in Gibeah, but the Philistines are in Michmash (1 Sam. 13:15-16).
    - a. The relations between Saul and Samuel still appear to be cordial, as they are in Gibeah together.
    - b. Saul does not seem to realize at this time that his rejection is real.
  2. The Philistines now make raids by three companies into Israel, apparently feeling that Israel's strength is almost nil (1 Sam. 13:17-18).
    - a. The Israelites are armed only with their farming tools, which they sharpen at the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam. 13:19-22).
  3. The Philistines send a garrison out to the passage of Michmash (1 Sam. 13:23).

4. Jonathan and his armourbearer, without the knowledge of Saul, go over to the Philistine garrison to see if the Lord will deliver the Philistines into their hand (1 Sam. 14:1-6).
  - a. By a sign Jonathan and his armourbearer know the Lord has delivered the Philistines (1 Sam. 14:7-10).
  - b. They climb up to the garrison and slay about twenty men (1 Sam. 14:11-14).
- F. With the Lord's help, Saul and his people win a great victory.
  1. After the 20 men were slain there was great confusion among the Philistines, and they turned on one another and the multitude melted away (1 Sam. 14:15-16).
    - a. Saul now discovers that Jonathan and his armourbearer are not with them (1 Sam. 14:17).
    - b. Saul asks that the ark be brought, but changed his mind when the noise of the Philistine host increased (1 Sam. 14:18-19).
  2. Saul and his people assemble and go to the battle but the Philistines turn against one another (1 Sam. 14:20).
    - a. The Hebrews from among the Philistines and those who had departed, and those who had hidden themselves, now join Saul's forces and pursue the Philistines (1 Sam. 14:21-22).
    - b. "So the LORD saved Israel that day" (1 Sam. 14:23).
- G. Saul gives an order, confirmed by an oath, that no man eat on that day of battle (1 Sam. 14:24).
  1. Jonathan did not hear the order, and ate some honey (1 Sam. 14:27).
    - a. That day they smote the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon, but the people were "very faint" (1 Sam. 14:31).
      - (1) The people flew upon the spoil and ate the sheep and cattle with the blood, which was unlawful (1 Sam. 14:32).
      - (2) When Saul heard this he ordered the livestock be brought to him to be slaughtered (1 Sam. 14:33-34).
      - (3) At this place Saul built his first altar (1 Sam 14:35).

- (4) Saul, desiring to pursue the Philistines during the night, asks counsel of God, but received no answer (1 Sam. 14:36-37).
  - (5) Saul suspects that sin has been committed, and says that even if it is Jonathan he will be put to death (1 Sam. 14:38-40).
  - (6) Saul asks the Lord to give a lot, Jonathan was taken (1 Sam. 14:41-42).
    - (a) Jonathan admits eating a little honey, and Saul says he shall die (1 Sam. 14:43-44).
    - (b) The people intervene and rescue Jonathan (1 Sam. 14:45).
  - (7) Saul now stops pursuit of the Philistines (1 Sam. 14:46).
- H. Saul's military ventures in defense of Israel listed.
1. He fought against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, kings of Zobah, the Amalekites, and Philistines (1 Sam. 14:47-48, 52).
    - a. All the strong and valiant men taken for the military (1 Sam. 14:52).
  2. Saul's family and others mentioned (1 Sam. 14:49-51).
    - a. Daughters: Merab and Michal. Sons: Jonathan, Ishui and Malchishua. Wife: Ahinoam; father: Kish; Abner captain of host (1 Sam. 14:49-51).
- I. Lessons for us:
1. God's commands are not to be lightly taken.
    - a. Transgression of God's law is sin (1 John 3:4).
  2. Situations and circumstances do not allow us to make exceptions.
  3. The situation ethics advocate would likely justify Saul's actions.
    - a. If a situation could justify setting God's law aside this one would have qualified.
    - b. Saul's soldiers were so terrified that they were hiding and deserting him.
      - (1) Saul feared the Philistines would attack any time now.

- (2) Since Samuel has not arrived to make the offering, surely it will not be wrong for Saul to do it himself under such circumstances.
      - (3) But Saul did “foolishly,” he did not keep that which the Lord had “commanded him.”
    - c. The progression of sin in Saul’s life might not have continued if he had realized the seriousness of this first act of disobedience.
      - (1) There is no indication of true repentance for this wrong. His next act of disobedience must have been easier than the first.
      - d. Would Samuel have been called a “legalist” for demanding compliance?
- V. Saul’s Second Act of Rebellion, and his Second Rejection as King.
  - A. Saul is commanded to go and “utterly destroy” the Amalekites, including all the people and livestock (1 Sam. 15:3).
    - 1. Amalek laid wait for Israel when they came up from Egypt (1 Sam. 15:2).
  - B. Saul masses 210,000 men, and the Kenites are warned to flee lest they be destroyed with the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:4-6).
  - C. The Amalekites are smitten from Havilah to Shur (1 Sam. 15:7).
    - 1. But Saul and the people took king Agag alive and spared the best of the sheep and cattle, destroying only the vile and refuse (1 Sam. 15:9).
  - D. The Lord tells Samuel, “It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king” (1 Sam. 15:11).
    - 1. “He is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments” (1 Sam. 15:11).
    - 2. Samuel, grieved by Saul’s sin, cried unto the Lord all night (1 Sam. 15:11).
    - 3. Samuel is told that Saul came to Carmel and set him up a “place” (a monument) and went on to Gilgal (1 Sam. 15:12).
  - E. Saul tells Samuel, “Blessed *be* thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD” (1 Sam. 15:13).
    - 1. But the “bleating of the sheep” and the “lowing of the oxen” tell Samuel that Saul is not telling the truth (1 Sam. 15:14).

- a. Two common excuses for sin: Blame it on someone else, and contend that it was done for a good purpose.
- F. Saul is informed by Samuel as to what the Lord has said about his (Saul's) actions (1 Sam. 15:16).
1. When Saul was "little" in his own sight the Lord had anointed him king over Israel (1 Sam. 15:17).
  2. Saul was commanded to utterly destroy the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:18).
  3. Therefore, why hadn't Saul obeyed the voice of the Lord, but did "fly upon the spoil" and "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (1 Sam. 15:19).
- G. Saul again claims he has obeyed the **Lord**, but admits that he brought back king Agag (1 Sam. 15:20).
1. The excuse again that the people brought back the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord (1 Sam. 15:21).
  2. Samuel informs Saul that to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22).
  3. The gravity of Saul's sins emphasized (1 Sam. 15:23).
    - a. Rebellion is as sin of witchcraft and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry. Saul has rejected the word of the Lord—the Lord has rejected him from being king.
- H. Saul's confession of sin to Samuel.
1. "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandments of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice" (1 Sam. 15:24).
    - a. Saul even offers an excuse in his confession.
  2. Saul asks Samuel to pardon his sins and turn with him that he may worship the Lord, but Samuel refuses him because he has "rejected" the word of the Lord (1 Sam. 15:25-26).
  3. As Samuel departs his mantle is rent by Saul. Samuel tells Saul that the Lord has rent the kingdom from him to give to one better (1 Sam. 15:27-28).
- I. Saul again says, "I have sinned" but asks Samuel to honor him before the elders and Israel and to turn again with him to worship God (1 Sam. 15:30).

1. Samuel turned after Saul and Saul worshipped the Lord (1 Sam. 15:31).
- J. Samuel orders Agag to be brought before him. Agag is hewn to pieces (1 Sam. 15:32-33).
  1. Samuel goes to Ramah and Saul to Gibeah, and Samuel comes no more to Saul until the day of his death (1 Sam. 15:34-35).
- K. Lessons for us:
  1. Obedience, only in part, amounts to disobedience:
    - a. Saul proudly claims he has obeyed the commandment of the Lord. But the Lord had already informed Samuel that it “repented him” that he had made Saul king. Saul has “turned back” and not performed the commands.
  2. There is nothing that can take the place of obedience.
    - a. Obedience is better than sacrifice.
    - b. Religious intent does not excuse one from obeying God’s law.
      - (1) Catholics have used this to justify gambling, etc.
      - (2) Some churches among us justify providing recreation and entertainment on the basis that “it will do good.”
      - (3) Some justify women exercising authority over men on the basis that it is for good. Cf., Bill Banowski and Helen Young. Elder on workshop for bussing.
    - c. “The people made me do it” doesn’t excuse us.
      - (1) God didn’t accept it in Eden, and will not accept it now.
    - d. True confession of sin doesn’t include an excuse for the sin
    - e. The progression of sin in Saul’s life.
      - (1) Proud of his accomplishment. Sets up monument in Carmel for self.
      - (2) “Brought Agag king of Amalek” (1 Sam. 15:24).
      - (3) Admits sin but has excuses ready to justify it.
      - (4) No longer is Saul “little in his own sight.”

## VI. Saul's Relationship With David.

- A. Samuel is told that he would be sent to Jesse to anoint one of his sons to be king (1 Sam. 16:1).
  - 1. Samuel takes an heifer and calls Jesse to the sacrifice (1 Sam. 16:2-5).
  - 2. Samuel thinks Eliab is to be anointed but the Lord said, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).
- B. The youngest of Jesse's sons, David, was called from keeping the sheep and the Lord told Samuel to anoint him (1 Sam. 16:11-13).
- C. Saul is troubled by an evil spirit and his servants recommends that David, a cunning player on the harp, be sent for to make Saul well (1 Sam. 16:14).
  - 1. Saul sends for David. Jesse sends David to Saul (1 Sam. 16:19-20).
  - 2. David came before Saul and loved him greatly, and became his armourbearer. Saul asked Jesse that David be allowed to stand before him for he had found favor in his (Saul's) sight. When the evil spirit was upon Saul David played and Saul was refreshed (1 Sam. 16:21-23). (Note: It is believed by some that the incidents referred to in these verses took place after David killed Goliath, as is discussed in 17:50-51, 55-58).
- D. David volunteers to fight Goliath and is given permission by Saul (1 Sam. 17:31).
  - 1. Rejecting the armour Saul supplied, David goes forth to fight Goliath with a sling and five stones (1 Sam. 17:40).
  - 2. Goliath is killed and beheaded. The Philistines flee (1 Sam. 17:50-51).
  - 3. Abner brings David before Saul (1 Sam. 17:57).
  - 4. David and Jonathan loved each other and Saul took David and let him go no more to his father's house (1 Sam. 18:1-2).
- E. David set over men of war. Accepted by all the people (1 Sam. 18:5).

- F. The beginning of Saul's jealousy and envy toward David (1 Sam. 18:9).
1. The women said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18:7).
  2. Saul is very wroth and tries to kill David (1 Sam. 18:8, 11).
  3. Saul fears David because the Lord is with David but has departed from Saul (1 Sam. 18:12).
  4. Thinking David will be killed, Saul offers David his daughter Merab, to wife, if he will fight the "Lord's battles" (1 Sam. 18:17).
    - a. But Saul gave his daughter to another to wife (1 Sam. 18:19).
  5. Again, hopeful that David will be killed, Saul offers him his daughter, Michal, to wife on the condition that David bring Saul a hundred foreskins of the Philistines (1 Sam. 18:25).
    - a. David slew 200 Philistines and Saul gave him his daughter (1 Sam. 18:27).
    - b. Knowing the Lord is with David, Saul was more afraid and became David's enemy continually (1 Sam. 18:28-29).
- G. Saul continues his efforts to destroy David.
1. Saul tells Jonathan that he should kill David but Jonathan intercedes for David and Saul swears not to kill David (1 Sam. 19:1, 6).
    - a. But after David is victorious over the Philistines Saul tries again to kill him (1 Sam. 19:8-10).
    - b. David flees Saul but Saul sends messengers to David's house to slay him. Michal helped David to escape (1 Sam. 19:11).
  2. David escapes to Naoith in Ramah (1 Sam. 19:18).
    - a. Saul sends messengers three times to take David but each time they prophesied with the prophets. Saul goes himself and also prophesies (1 Sam. 19:21, 24).
  3. David flees Naoith and contacts Jonathan. They renew their covenant (1 Sam. 20:1, 16).

- a. Jonathan will warn David if Saul is angry still (1 Sam. 20:18-22).
- b. Saul is angry with Jonathan and commands him to bring David to him that he may kill him (1 Sam. 20:30-31).
- c. Saul casts a javeline at Jonathan to kill him but Jonathan escapes and warns David of Saul's anger. David departed (1 Sam. 20:33, 41-42).
4. David goes to Nob to Ahimelech the priest, but Doeg the Edomite, Saul's chief herdsman was there (1 Sam. 21:1, 7).
5. David fled to Achish for fear of Saul, because he believed that Doeg would tell Saul where he was (1 Sam. 21:10; 22:22).
6. David escaped to the cave Adullam, where his family and others joined him. About 400 of them (1 Sam. 22:1-2).
7. Gad, the prophet, tells David to go to Judah from Mizpeh (1 Sam. 22:5).
  - a. Saul learns of David's presence in Judah (1 Sam. 22:6).
  - b. Saul accuses his servants of conspiring against him by keeping secret the covenant of Jonathan and David (1 Sam. 22:7-8).
  - c. Doeg tells Saul of David's visit to Ahimelech and David's receiving food and the sword of Goliath (1 Sam. 22:9-10).
  - d. Saul calls Ahimelech and all the priest that were in Nob and orders 85 of them put to death (1 Sam. 22:11, 16-18).
8. David goes to Keilah to fight the Philistines (1 Sam. 23:1-5).
  - a. David and his 600 men flee Keilah when they learn that Saul has raised an army to besiege the city (1 Sam. 23:7-8, 13).
9. David dwells in wilderness of Ziph but Saul seeks him daily (1 Sam. 23:14).
  - a. Jonathan assures David that Saul will not find him (1 Sam. 23:16-17).

- b. The Ziphites promise Saul that they will deliver David (1 Sam. 23:19-20).
    - c. Saul asks them to make sure of David's whereabouts and then let him know (1 Sam. 23:22-23).
- H. David and his men are now in the wilderness of Maon (1 Sam. 23:24).
  - 1. Saul pursues David until a messenger tells of the Philistine invasion of the land (1 Sam. 23:25-28).
- I. David in wilderness of Engedi when Saul returns from pursuing the Philistines (1 Sam. 24:1).
  - 1. Saul takes 3,000 chosen men to seek David (1 Sam. 24:2).
  - 2. Saul goes into a cave to sleep, where David and his men are (1 Sam. 24:3).
    - a. David cut off the skirt of Saul's robe while Saul slept (1 Sam. 24:4).
  - 3. Saul leaves the cave. David follows and cried after Saul (1 Sam. 24:7-8).
  - 4. David shows the skirt and Saul knew he could have killed him (1 Sam. 24:9-11).
    - a. David points out his actions as proof that he did not wish to harm Saul (1 Sam. 24:12-15).
  - 5. Saul responds in tears, "Thou *art* more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil" (1 Sam. 24:17).
    - a. Saul admits David's well doing and that David will be king (1 Sam. 24:18-20).
    - b. Before their separation Saul asks David to swear that he (David) would not cut off his seed or destroy his name out of his father's house (1 Sam. 24:21-22).
- J. David's presence in wilderness of Ziph revealed to Saul by the Ziphites a second time (1 Sam. 26:1).
  - 1. David is aware that Saul, with 3,000 chosen men, is coming (1 Sam. 26:2-4).
  - 2. David spares Saul's life a second time when David approaches Saul in his sleep (1 Sam. 26:5-10).

- a. David takes Saul's spear and cruse of water to show Saul he had the opportunity to kill him (1 Sam. 26:11-12).
  - b. David, some distance away, calls out to Abner to chide him for not protecting Saul. David shows Saul's spear and cruse (1 Sam. 26:13-16).
  - c. Saul recognizes David's voice (1 Sam. 26:17).
  - d. David questions Saul as to why he is trying to destroy him. Has Saul come out to "seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains" (1 Sam. 26:18-20).
    - (1) Again Saul says, "I have sinned" and promises no harm to David anymore (1 Sam. 26:21).
    - (2) Saul admits, "I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly" (1 Sam. 26:21).
  - e. David reminds Saul of the opportunity to take his life and asks him (Saul) to be as considerate as he has been (1 Sam. 23:22-24).
    - (1) Saul replied, "Blessed *be* thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great *things*, and also shalt still prevail" (1 Sam. 26:25).
- K. David, convinced that Saul would kill him, goes to Gath in the land of the Philistines (1 Sam. 27:1-2).
1. David, his men and their households, dwell there (1 Sam. 27:3).
  2. Saul was told that David had fled to Gath but he sought him no more (1 Sam. 27:24).
- L. Lessons for us:
1. Jealousy and envy will lead to every manner of evil, even hatred and murder.
    - a. Preachers, and elders, susceptible to jealousy and envy when others receive more praise of men.
    - b. If others are worthy of praise we should be glad.
    - c. When people do all manner of things just for praise of men we should be sad.
  2. David did not repay evil for evil.
  3. David, in spite of Saul's evil, respected him as the Lord's "anointed."

4. David demonstrated that one can do good to those who are our enemies.
- VII. The Closing Scene of Tragedy.
- A. The Philistines gather at Shunem, Israel at Gilboa (1 Sam. 28:4).
    1. Samuel is now dead (1 Sam. 25:1; 28:3).
  - B. Saul's heart trembles with fear at the sight of the Philistines (1 Sam. 28:5).
    1. Saul inquires of the Lord but receives no answer (1 Sam. 28:6).
      - a. 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 seems to indicate that Saul was not calling upon the Lord in sincerity. Here one of the reasons for his death is that he "Inquired not of the Lord."
  - C. Saul resorts to the woman of a familiar spirit at Endor (1 Sam. 28:7).
    1. Since Saul had put away those with "familiar spirits" and "wizards" out of the land (1 Sam. 28:3) he goes in disguise (1 Sam. 28:3, 8).
    2. Saul asks that Samuel be brought up (1 Sam. 28:11).
  - D. Saul perceives that Samuel has come up, and bows himself (1 Sam. 28:14).
    1. Samuel asks Saul why he has disturbed him to bring him up (1 Sam. 28:15).
    2. Saul replies that he is distressed because of the Philistines, and that God has departed from him (1 Sam. 28:15).
      - a. Therefore, Saul wants Samuel to tell him what to do (1 Sam. 28:5).
    3. Samuel informs Saul that the Lord is departed from him and hath rent the kingdom from him, and given it to David (1 Sam. 28:16-17).
    4. This has happened because Saul had not obeyed the voice of the Lord, nor executed his wrath upon Amalek (1 Sam. 28:18).
      - a. More will happen. The Lord will deliver Israel into the hands of the Philistines and tomorrow Saul and his sons will be with Samuel (dead) (1 Sam. 28:19).

5. Saul falls straightway on the earth and is afraid because of what Samuel had told him (1 Sam. 28:20).
- E. The curtain closes, the final battle.
  1. “The Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa” (1 Sam. 31:1).
    - a. Saul’s sons, including Jonathan, are slain (1 Sam. 31:2).
    - b. The archers severely wound Saul (1 Sam. 31:3).
    - c. Saul asks his armourbearer to slay him before the Philistines reach him (1 Sam. 31:4).
    - d. When the armourbearer refuses, Saul falls upon his own sword (1 Sam. 31:4).
  2. “So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together” (1 Sam. 31:6).
- F. Lessons for us:
  1. Truly, as we sow, so shall we reap:
    - a. Saul has sown a life of disobedience and is now reaping the results.
    - b. His former glory is now fear and despair.
  2. It is sad to think of what might have been.
    - a. Saul could have been another Samuel, or another David.
    - b. But Saul’s desire for greatness was not in that direction.
  3. Our objectives in life should be such that we will not come to the same end as did Saul.

### CONCLUSION

1. There is hardly a more interesting chapter in God’s book of history than that of the life of Saul, king of Israel.
  - a. That God would record the history of Saul is proof that the Bible is not a work of men.
2. Saul comes on the scene with everything in his favor.
  - a. He is physically “fit for a king.”
  - b. He has the support of God, Samuel and the people.
3. But Saul ceases to be “little” in his own sight.
  - a. He becomes proud, stubborn and self-willed.
  - b. It is not difficult to reject God now.

- c. A truly spiritual man, Saul never becomes.
4. Saul comes to the end of the rebel's road in Mount Gilboa.
  - a. He comes to the end in great fear and distress when it did not have to be that way.
  - b. God, whom he has rejected, will not hear him now.
  - c. Saul has done wickedly, now he is "consumed" just as Samuel had warned.

# JEROBOAM—A POWERFUL INFLUENCE

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The subject assigned me in this lectureship is that of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.
2. Jeroboam could rightly be called “The Man Who Could Have Been.”
3. He was a man who had everything in his favor
  - a. God had promised to be with him.
  - b. He had allies through his marriage
  - c. He had the respect of the people
  - d. He had the background for the making of a great leader
4. In the total overview of Jeroboam’s life, however, he must be considered a miserable failure.
5. Whatever may have been his life, he exerted a lasting influence on the Northern Kingdom and its subsequent kings.
6. In this lesson we shall view the life of Jeroboam, making application to our present generation.

## DISCUSSION

- I. The Events Leading up to the Time of His Kingship.
  - A. 1 Kings, chapter eleven, tells of Solomon’s idolatry.
    1. He allowed his many wives to influence him to build altars to idol gods and to “go after them.”
    2. The Scriptures tell us that he went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, Milcom of the Ammonites. He

- built a high place for Chemosh of Moab, and for Molech of Ammon.
- B. Because of his idolatry God told him that the kingdom would be taken away from him.
  - C. In Solomon's kingdom was a young man by the name of Jeroboam.
    1. He was the son of Nebat; his mother's name was Zeruah—a widow—some say a harlot.
    2. He is described as a mighty man of valor.
    3. He was industrious.
    4. He was given charge of the conscription labor of the house of Joseph—Ephraim.
  - D. Jeroboam is visited by Ahijah the Shilonite, a prophet of God.
    1. Ahijah tears his new garment into twelve pieces.
    2. He instructs Jeroboam to choose ten portions, stating that God has given ten of the tribes of Israel to him.
    3. Jeroboam is told that God will be with him if he will heed the commandments of God.
  - E. Because of Solomon's attempts on his life, Jeroboam flies to Egypt where he remains until the death of Solomon.
  - F. Upon Solomon's death Jeroboam returns to Israel and goes with the people to Rehoboam in Shechem with a request to make the load lighter.
  - G. Rehoboam sends them away for three days so that he might ask counsel.
    1. He asks counsel of the old men who advise him to make the load of the people lighter.
    2. He asks counsel of the young men who advise him to increase the load.
  - H. Jeroboam and the people come to Rehoboam after three days to hear his decision.
    1. Rehoboam answers them harshly.
    2. The people—ten tribes—rebel.
  - I. The ten tribes make Jeroboam king, thus the prophecy of Ahijah concerning him is fulfilled.
- II. Jeroboam's Reign over Israel.
- A. He built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim to be his capital, but later built Penuel for this purpose.

- B. In the very beginning of his reign Jeroboam displayed absolute faithlessness in God.
    - 1. God had given him the ten tribes.
    - 2. God had promised to be with him as long as he hearkened unto Him.
    - 3. In his faithlessness Jeroboam fears the people will return to Jerusalem, and to Rehoboam.
  - C. Jeroboam causes Israel to sin.
    - 1. He changed the object of worship—he built two golden calves for Israel to serve. (cf., Exo. 20:3-4).
    - 2. He changed the place of worship. He placed one of the calves at Dan and one at Bethel and encouraged the people to worship there instead of at Jerusalem.
    - 3. He changed the priesthood. He made priest from among the people and not from the sons of Levi.
    - 4. He changed the time of worship from the seventh month to the eighth month.
    - 5. Through his influence Israel accepted each change.
- III. The Result of Jeroboam's Sin.
- A. The people of his generation who were under his rule were led away from God and violated His commandments.
  - B. The majority of the kings of Israel for the next two hundred and thirty (230) years would follow in the steps of Jeroboam and continue to cause Israel to sin.
    - 1. Not a single one of the eighteen (18) kings who succeeded Jeroboam as Israel's leader can be classified as a godly person.
    - 2. Of at least fourteen (14) of them such statements as: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam" (2 Kin. 13:11), "he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (2 Kin. 15 18), and, "he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom" (2 Kin. 3:3).
  - C. Because of the lasting influence of Jeroboam the people were led deeper and deeper into idolatry until finally in about 722 or 721 B.C. God allowed the Assyrians to take these ten tribes into captivity, and into oblivion.

- D. Great and terrible was the influence of **one** evil man upon a nation of people, God's people.
- IV. Practical Applications to Be Made, and Lessons to Be Learned from the Life and Influence of Jeroboam.
- A. The qualities of leadership which Jeroboam possessed must be those qualities possessed by church leaders today.
1. He was courageous—"a mighty man of valor."
  2. He was a worker—industrious.
  3. Without hard working and courageous leadership in the church today there will be little, if any, spiritual growth.
- B. The qualities of leadership can be abused and misdirected.
1. Jeroboam misused his abilities by doing evil rather than good.
  2. Many today and in the past who have and do possess the qualities of leadership have, and continue to abuse them.
    - a. Leaders of hobby factions.
    - b. Some in the administration of some colleges.
    - c. Some in college campus and "youth ministries."
- C. We learn from the life of Jeroboam that numbers do not necessarily constitute the way that is right.
1. Ten tribes followed Jeroboam into idolatry while only two remained.
  2. Today in the church a philosophy is portrayed which says, "numbers at all costs," or, "the end justifies the means." Such was the philosophy of Jeroboam.
- D. Influence—evil or good—lives on long after one dies.
1. Jeroboam's influence lived on long after his flesh had returned to the dust.
  2. In our time we have seen the influence of men, both sound and unsound, have its lasting effect.
    - a. The influence of good college and preacher training school administrators.
    - b. The influence of godly elderships.
    - c. The influence of anti-ism, modernism, and liberalism.
- E. Only by obeying God can we ever be acceptable to Him.
1. Jeroboam's power, his fear, his changes, and his disobedience did not gain him the favor of God.

2. All the frenzied activity, the numbers, and intellectualism of church leaders today does not make them right with God.
3. Only as one obeys is he acceptable to God.

### CONCLUSION

1. Jeroboam had tremendous possibilities for good.
2. Because of his faithlessness he abused his abilities and disobeyed God.
3. Through his disobedience he influenced those of his generation, and others for centuries, to disobey God.
4. As was Jeroboam, so are many today in the church.
5. May we all consider the issue of our lives that we may exert such influence as to draw men to God.
6. “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do *men* light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Mat. 5:13-16—ASV).

# SAMSON

*Gerald R. Reynolds*

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## INTRODUCTION

1. **Purpose:** To set forth the character of Samson.
  - a. Showing his strength and weakness through the biography of his life.
  - b. Showing undesirable characteristics of leadership which Samson possessed.
  - c. Showing desirable characteristics of leadership which Samson possessed.
2. **Aim:** To strengthen the church and those who would be leaders in the church.

## DISCUSSION

- I. Biography of Samson
  - A. Angel of the Lord announces his birth (Jud. 13:2-23).
    1. Gave instructions concerning mother's care as she carried Samson (Jud. 13:4, 7-14).
      - a. Mothers today many times don't seem to be aware of their responsibility as they carry their child.
      - b. They will use drugs, drink alcohol, which weaken, or addict the child.
    2. Gave instructions concerning the care in raising him (Jud. 13:5, 12).
      - a. "How shall we order the child and how shall we do unto him?"
      - b. "No razor shall come on his head." He was to drink no wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing.
  - B. The Spirit of the Lord moved him and the Lord blessed him (Jud. 13:24-25).

- C. Samson desired a Philistine woman to be his wife (Jud. 14:1-9).
  - 1. The woman was to be the means by which God would use to set Samson to judge the Philistines (Jud. 14:4).
  - 2. Samson visited the woman and she pleased him (Jud. 14:7).
  - 3. Samson after a time returned to take her (Jud. 14:8).
- D. Samson propounded the Riddle at the marriage feast (Jud. 14:10-14).
  - 1. Told the riddle based upon his killing the lion on his first trip to the Philistine woman (Jud. 14:6).
  - 2. And the second trip seeing the bees and honey which was in the carcase of the lion (Jud. 14:8).
- E. Samson was betrayed, and killed the thirty men (Jud. 14:15-20).
  - 1. Samson's wife was pressured to get her to entice Samson to declare the riddle.
  - 2. Samson's wife wept before him to gain the answer (Jud. 14:16-17).
    - a. Wept seven days (Jud. 14:17).
    - b. Consider what it would be to have a wife crying seven days of your honeymoon.
  - 3. Samson yielded to her request (Jud. 14:17).
  - 4. The riddle answered (Jud. 14:18).
  - 5. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him (Jud. 14:19).
    - a. Went down to Ashkelon and slew thirty men.
    - b. Used the Spoil to settle with those who had expounded the riddle.
    - c. Samson's wife was given to the friend of the bridegroom (Jud. 14:20).
- F. Samson again becomes enraged because his Philistine wife was given to the friend of the bridegroom (Jud. 15:1-5).
  - 1. "Caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails" (Jud. 15:4).
  - 2. He then set the brands on fire, and let the foxes run through the fields of corn, vineyards, and olives.
- G. Samson made the Philistines mad, and they burnt his wife and her father with fire.

- H. Samson came to avenge their death (Jud. 15:7-8).
  - 1. “he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter” Jud. 15:8).
  - 2. Then went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.
- I. The Philistines came again to bind Samson for what he had done (Jud. 15:9-20).
  - 1. Philistines got three thousand men of Judah to bring Samson bound unto them.
  - 2. Samson willing to go peacefully rather than to fight with his brethren (Jud. 15:12-13).
  - 3. “The Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him” (Jud. 15:14).
    - a. “His bands loosed from off his hands” (Jud. 15:14).
    - b. He took a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and slew a thousand men (Jud. 15:15-17).
- J. Samson was sore athirst and called upon the Lord (Jud. 18-20).
  - 1. God provided water.
  - 2. Samson’s spirit came again, and he was revived.
  - 3. Samson, “judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years” (Jud. 15:20).
- K. Samson went to Gaza and went in unto a harlot. Plot to kill Samson was stopped.
- L. Enticed by Delilah and loses his strength (Jud. 16:4-20).
  - 1. Philistines offered eleven hundred pieces of silver to Delilah for the information concerning where Samson’s strength came from.
  - 2. Three times refused to tell Delilah where his strength lieth (Jud. 16:15).
  - 3. After her continued questions, he yielded and told her that his strength lieth in his hair (Jud. 16:16-19).
  - 4. Samson’s strength was taken away and he knew it not. “And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him” (Jud. 16:20).
- M. Samson was blinded and bound (Jud. 16:21).
  - 1. Eyes were put out.
  - 2. Put him to work in a prison house.
- N. Samson destroyed over 3,000 in his death (Jud. 16:22-31; Heb. 11:32-34).

1. Out of weakness he became strong.
  2. “The dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life” (Jud. 16:30).
- O. Samson judged Israel twenty years (Jud. 16:31).
- II. Samson’s Undesirable Characteristics of Leadership.
- A. Samson was self-willed and rebellious.
1. “Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well” (Jud. 14:1-4).
  2. Elders are not to be self-willed (Tit. 1:7).
    - a. Elders who are concerned about their own desires will not be good leaders.
    - b. An elder may go against the wise council of others. A self-willed elder will not work well with other elders.
- B. Samson chose evil associations.
1. Woman of Timnath; Harlot in Gaza; Delilah of Sorek (Jud. 14:1-3, 7; 16:1-3, 4-20).
  2. Women can encourage or discourage leaders.
    - a. The saying, “Behind every great man there is a great woman,” is often true but it is also true that behind every weak man there is a weak woman.
    - b. Think of Samson’s life and the bearing these women had on it.
  3. Many men never become leaders in the church because they have chosen evil companions.
    - a. Amos 3:3—“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”
    - b. If a Christian marries a child of the devil he is going to have trouble from his father-in-law.
  4. Preachers will often yield because of evil associations.
    - a. Peter while warming by the devil’s fire denied the Lord (Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62).
    - b. Preachers need a good wife to stand along side, and not one who will undermine him.
- C. Samson gave in.
1. Woman of Timnath after seven days, he told her the riddle (Jud. 14:17).
  2. Samson revealed to Delilah the secret of his strength (Jud. 16:16-17).
  3. Elders who will give in are like Samson.

- a. Elders are to rule their own houses.
  - b. No man can serve as an elder and not rule his own house ( Tim. 3:4).
  - c. If preachers or elders give in on one point of truth, he has become weak, for he loses the strength that comes from God's Word (Psa. 119:28—"Strengthen thou me according unto thy word").
    - (1) Elders have fallen.
    - (2) Preachers have fallen.
  - d. When one turns from the truth he loses his strength.
- D. Samson courted temptation.
- 1. After problem with one woman, he went to the Harlot, and then on to Delilah.
  - 2. Samson lacked temperance or self-control.
  - 3. An elder is to be "temperate" (Tit. 1:8).
  - 4. Preachers and elders need to look at Samson and learn.
    - a. Pray, "lead us not into temptation" (Mat. 6:13).
    - b. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 The. 5:22).
      - (1) Often preachers and elders fall into trouble with counseling women with marital problems.
      - (2) Troubles can be avoided by having others or one's wife present.
    - c. Paul told the young evangelist Timothy to "Flee also youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22).
  - 5. Elders and preachers should never over estimate their strength to endure temptation.
- E. Samson committed fornication.
- 1. He went in unto a harlot.
  - 2. Such action was condemned in the Old Testament (Exo. 20:14). Samson, judge of Israel, defiled Israel by his action.
  - 3. Members of the church can and do bring reproach upon the church by actions such as Samson engaged in.
    - a. Elders and preachers, whether they like it or not, are watched closer than other members.
    - b. When elders or preachers commit fornication, it takes a long time for the church to live it down.
  - 4. The New Testament forbids fornication (1 Cor. 6:15-20; Mat. 5:27-28).

- a. The sexual relationship is confined solely and wholly to the marital relationship (1 Cor. 7:2).
  - b. Elders and preachers need to have a solid marriage, based upon God's teachings.
- F. Samson forfeited the source of his strength.
1. "If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me" (Jud. 16:17).
  2. Paul wanted Timothy to be strong (2 Tim. 2:1-3).
  3. Elders and preachers forfeit their strength when they get away from God's word.
    - a. Ephesians 6:10—"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."
    - b. 1 Corinthians 16:13—"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."
  4. We do not need leaders who will forsake their sources of strength.
    - a. Bible reading.
    - b. Prayer.
    - c. Worship
    - d. Fellowship with the saints.
  5. preacher or elder will forfeit his strength when he neglects:
    - a. His study of the Bible.
    - b. His opportunity of prayer.
  6. Often this is why preachers quit preaching, and elders quit shepherding. They forfeit their sources of strength.
- G. Samson became disloyal to his vow.
1. The Nazarite vow (Num. 6).
    - a. Not to partake of the fruit of the vine.
    - b. No razor was to come upon his head.
    - c. Not to contact a dead body.
  2. The record shows that he violated the vow in at least two ways.
    - a. His head was shaven.
    - b. He contacted dead bodies as he slew 30 men at Ashkelon, later smote others hip and thigh with a great slaughter, and then a thousand with the jawbone of an ass.
  3. The fact that he broke his vow is clear.

- a. He did not need to also drink the fruit of the vine.
  - b. James 2:10—“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.”
4. See context of James 2.
- a. Elders are to stand for all the truth.
  - b. Preachers are to preach all the truth.
  - c. Sometimes we see or hear preachers and elders back off on truth.
    - (1) Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.
    - (2) Showing respect of person. (Today we hear of Dr. so and so, and brother so and so.)
    - (3) Immodest apparel. (Whether you hear a sermon on it depends on locality or the season of the year.)
    - (4) The one church. (How often do you hear sermons on the one church?)
    - (5) Grace, Law, and Faith. (Hearing a lot of “grace only” sermons today.)
  - d. Samson did not need to break all three points to break his vow.
    - (1) Elders and preachers can and do become disloyal when they fail to preach and stand for all the truth.
    - (2) Several congregations are lost today because of disloyal preachers and elders. It ought to cause us to mourn and weep.

### III. Characteristics of Samson Desirable in Leaders.

- A. Samson was not a good example of a leader.
- B. Possibly the only thing we can see in him is a man who realized he needed God.
  - 1. After losing his strength and sight, he called unto the Lord (Jud. 16:28).
  - 2. He asked the Lord to strengthen him, only this once.
  - 3. Leaders in the church must humble themselves before God and ask for strength.
- C. In Samson’s death he slew more than he slew in his life.
  - 1. Sad but true, but some who preach and serve as elders will hinder the church while living, and when they die the church can take on new life.

2. Sometimes people refer to problems within a congregation and say the only way they will be solved is by having some funerals.
3. I hope no one will say that the church would be better off without Gerald Reynolds.
4. One who loves the church will give his whole life to preaching the word.

### **CONCLUSION**

1. We have looked at the biography of Samson's life
2. From it we noted undesirable characteristics of leadership.
3. And possibly one desirable characteristic of leadership, as he called upon the Lord in a humble state.
4. All children love the story of Samson, the strong man of the Bible.
5. While he was strong physically, he left much to be desired in the characteristics of leadership.