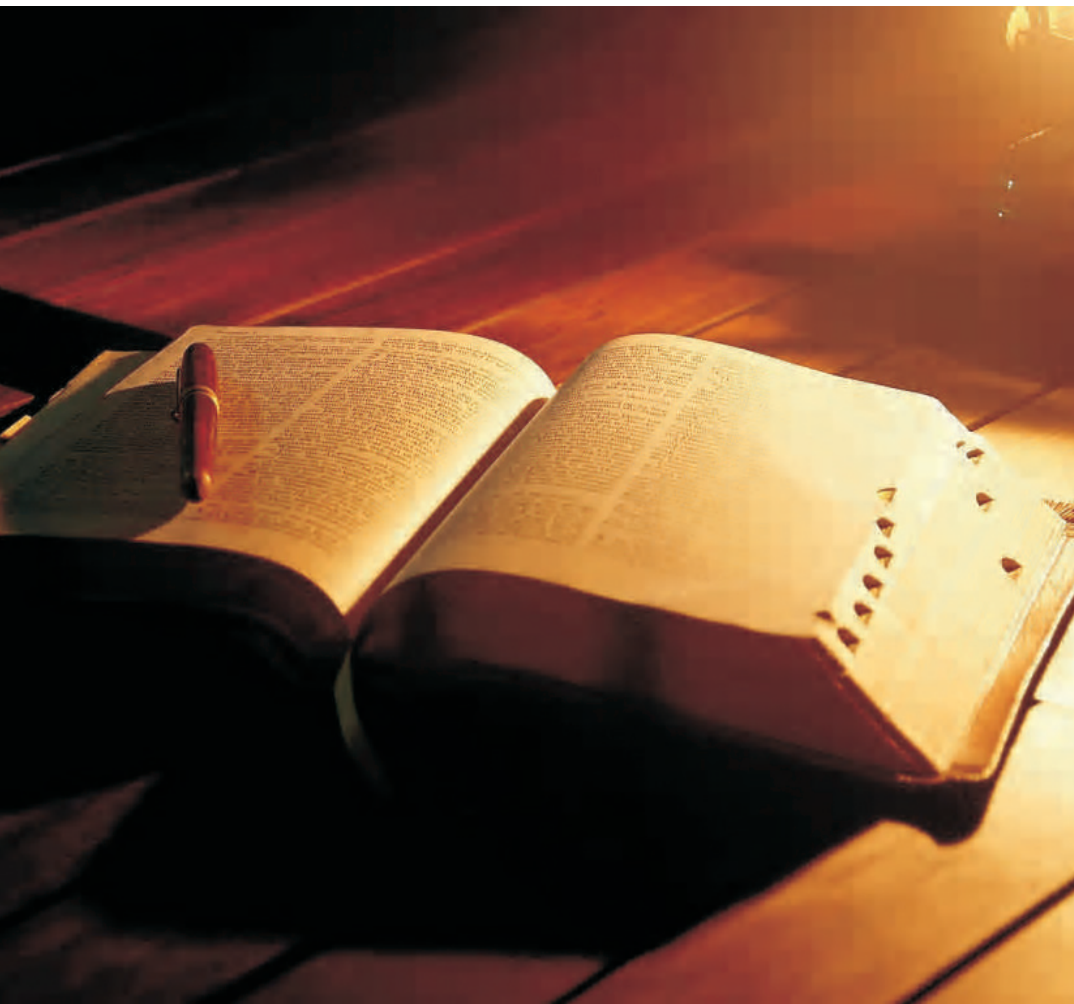


# THE OLD PATHS

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For Private Circulation Only

# The Old Paths

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For Private Circulation Only

This is a quarterly magazine for the propagation of the Word of God and thus for the encouragement and edification of the people of God.

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‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us’ ... ‘That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, ... have seen with our eyes, ... have looked upon, ... have handled, of the Word of Life’ ... ‘And His Name is called The Word of God’

(John 1:1, 14; 1John 1:1; Rev. 19:11-13)



## From the Editor's Desk

### **“Rejoice in the Lord”**

**“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord”  
(Philippians 3:1)**

Happiness depends on Happenings. Circumstances may bring gladness or sorrow. True “joy” is found in “the Lord”.

This is a sad world. The present days on earth are dark, dismal and distressing. The global Coronavirus pandemic has brought sorrow, suffering and even death to the family circles of the Lord’s dear people. Can we write, with genuine Christian sympathy, in the same issue of the magazine mentioning joy and “rejoice”, as in the above text?

Paul’s first visit to Philippi ended in fetters (Acts 16:16-40). With Silas he was captured by a howling mob and denied the rights of civil justice. They were beaten with rods on their backs and shoulders. Inflicted with many stripes, they were roughly thrown into prison. Common prisoners were constrained by “bands” (chains to confine their limbs). Paul and Silas had their feet made fast in “the stocks”. These were instruments of torture, having five holes, four for the wrists and ankles and one for the neck, tightened to stretch their limbs. “At midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God” (Acts 16:25). In spite of physical pain, the Lord’s presence gave them joy. They had “songs in the night” (Job 35:10).

Paul was again in prison awaiting the verdict of the Roman court when he wrote the above text. True “joy” is found in Christ.

The Joy of Prayer: “Making request with joy” (Phil. 1:4).

The Joy of Preaching: “Notwithstanding, every way ... Christ is

preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice” (Phil. 1:18).

The Joy of Unity: “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded” (Phil. 2:2).

The Joy of Faith: “If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me” (Phil. 2:17-18).

The Joy of Caring: “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care for me hath flourished again” (Phil. 4:10).

The Joy of Worship: “Which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3).

The Joy of Victory: “Holding forth the Word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain” (Phil. 2:16).

In this world, we have tears and trials. We have joy in our soon coming Lord Jesus Christ. “Rejoice in the Lord” (Phil. 3:1). “So stand fast in the Lord” (Phil. 4:1). “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice” (Phil. 4:4).

## Absent at Calvary

J.A. Brown

**Introduction.** Calvary was probably the most important event ever to have taken place in the history of Earth. As believers, we often consider those who were *present* at Calvary as the Lord was crucified. We know Simon the Cyrenian was there, as were the two thieves, the soldiers, “a great company of people, and of women”, the rulers, the centurion, the women from Galilee and also Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:26-56). Among the women that looked-on from a distance were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses and the mother of Zebedee’s children (Matt. 27:55-56). John’s eye-witness

account (John 19:25-26) informs us that Mary (Jesus' mother) and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas – as well as Mary Magdalene – were also present.

**Absent.** Yet it's also very revealing to think *who* and *what* were *absent* at Calvary. Certainly most of the Lord's *disciples* were not there, nor most of His earthly *family*. Neither were there any *angels* present and there was the absence of *natural, direct sunlight* for three mid-day hours! The Lord's death at Calvary is an event like no other, because there He put away sin, once for all, by His own self-sacrifice (Heb. 9:26). There are many unique and momentous aspects to this event, and in this article we shall see that the many significant *absences* point to the event's uniqueness.

**The Lord's Disciples.** These 12 men had been with the Lord for almost three and a half years. They had witnessed first-hand many of His miracles, and had heard His teaching to the multitudes and also privately to themselves, specifically revealing to them what should happen to Him at Jerusalem, the manner of His death and the reality of His resurrection (Mark 10:32-34). Yet now, at Calvary, in the hour of His greatest need, we read that His disciples "*forsook* Him and fled" (Mark 14:50). He came into a world that took no *account* of Him and had no *appreciation* of who He was (John 1:10): He was *betrayed* by Judas (Matt. 26:47-49), *denied* by Peter (Matt. 26:69-74), rejected by the nation at Gabbatha (John 1:11; 19:13-16), in addition to the disciples *forsaking* Him. The exception, of course, was John (John 19:26) and *possibly* Peter. The challenge to us today is, do we remain faithful when things become difficult (2Tim. 2:3)?

**Forsaken of God.** However, this was not the end, for at Calvary He was forsaken of His God (Psalm 22:1; Matt. 27:46). That holy communion and perfect harmony that had ever existed between Father and Son throughout the eternal ages and had continued unbroken while He was here as a man (John 1:18) was now interrupted at Calvary. We might understand the actions of the disciples, for they were mortal beings as ourselves and we would probably have reacted similarly. Yet to understand that the Eternal

Son was forsaken of His God is a profound thought and possibly it will be beyond our full understanding even in Eternity! There is no comparison between what the Lord experienced – and suffered – at Calvary and the experience of believers throughout time. However, there are believers worldwide who know *something* of what it means to be forsaken by *men*. The apostle Paul knew this in his experience (2Tim. 4:16), yet he also knew the conscious presence of the One who Himself knew what it was to be forsaken by *all* – even by God Himself (2Tim. 2:17). Today we, as believers, have the blessed assurance that we will never be forsaken by Him (Heb. 13:5).

**The Lord's Family.** We know from Scripture that the Lord's family at one time consisted of *at least* 9 persons (Matt. 13:55-56). He had 4 brothers (James, Joses, Simon and Judas) and at least 2 sisters, together with Mary and Joseph and the Lord Himself. John, in his gospel (John 7:5), informs us that his "brethren" did not believe at that time. Yet despite family opposition and indifference, the Lord was clearly committed to His Father. This illustrates to us that we should be committed towards Him in every way and every circumstance (Luke 14:26). It was after Calvary that we read of James and Jude (Judas) believing and being inspired to write their epistles. It seems that Joseph had died by this time: he certainly wasn't present at the marriage at Cana of Galilee with the rest of the family (John 2:1-11). Yet at Calvary it seems that *only* Mary, the mother of Jesus, was present from the family. Here we see a godly woman witnessing the death of her first-born son. The other members of the Lord's earthly family seem conspicuous by their absence.

**The Angels.** These powerful, intelligent, created beings are found throughout Scripture. They were witnesses at Creation and, with the rest of the heavenly host, worshipped and unquestioningly served their Creator. It was Gabriel that appeared to Zacharias prior to the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:8-20); he also appeared to Mary (Luke 1:26-38), and it was presumably he who appeared to Joseph (Matt. 1:19-21) prior to the birth of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus was the subject of angelic *worship* at His *birth* (Luke 2:13-14); in the

wilderness, where He was tempted of Satan, the angels *ministered* unto Him (Mark 1:13); while in the *Garden of Gethsemane*, in the intensity of His sufferings prior to Calvary, an angel from heaven appeared to *strengthen* Him (Luke 22:43). Yet at Calvary there were *no* angels present!

**Angelic Power.** Angels have God-given power and authority. Just *one* angel destroyed 185,000 Assyrians in *one* night (2Kings 19:35). At Calvary, the Lord could have called on more than 12 legions of angels (Matt. 26:53). A legion can be anything between 1,000 and 6,000 men. Taking the lower figure of 1,000 then we conclude that the Lord had *over* 12,000 angels at His immediate calling, each one capable of destroying 185,000 men in one day. We get a figure of 2,220 million men, yet the total world population at this time was barely a few hundred million, so it would not have taken 12 legions of angels very long to destroy everyone who was then alive! Yet the heavens were silent – there were no angels present. The *disciples* had been with the Lord for about three and a half years, the *family* in its entirety He had known for between twenty and thirty years, while the *angels* had been in heaven since their creation – now all were absent at Calvary. But He who had been with Him throughout *eternity*, in that timeless harmony and eternal bliss, now forsook Him at Calvary, as we have already thought. We can never enter into the abandonment endured there on that hill outside Jerusalem 2,000 years ago.

**Prophet, Priest and King.** At Calvary the Lord Jesus was mocked in connection to all the three offices He bears – of *prophet*, *priest* and *king*. As a *prophet* they spat on Him, covered His face, buffeted Him and said “Prophecy” (Mark 14:65); as *priest* they were oblivious to Him making that one offering and sacrifice for sins for ever (Heb. 10:12), and as *king* they clothed Him with purple, platted a crown of thorns on His head, saluted, smote and spat at Him and mockingly worshipped Him, saying “Hail, *King* of the Jews” (Mark 15:18).

**Alone.** The Lord Jesus was crucified between two thieves and surrounded by hundreds, possibly thousands, of different types of people, yet in one way He suffered and died alone! We think of the



prophetic words of Psalm 69:20. He was alone. There were none to support or to uphold; none to comfort or any to pity. There were none to draw near. Jeremiah speaks of his personal sorrow in Lamentations 1:12, but clearly his words only fully apply to the experience of the Lord Jesus. His experience was uniquely unjust, given His righteousness (Psalm 22:4-6). What a scene! God had spoken *to* His Son and *about* His Son at His *baptism* (Luke 3:22; Matt. 3:17), and also *about* His Son at His *transfiguration* (Matt. 17:5) but there was no voice from heaven here at Calvary. The heavens were silent!

***Times of Trial and Suffering.*** In times of trial, suffering and darkness in *our* lives our default position is to think of self; self-pity and self-occupation. We can so easily get absorbed in our own sorrows and we naturally look for comfort and support from loved ones and family, and to a certain extent, from fellow believers. Our Lord knew the enormity of what lay before Him as He anticipated the cross. As He descended the slopes of the city before entering the Garden of Gethsemane with the disciples, His audible prayer was primarily taken up with His thoughts and desires for *others* – to His Father, to those living believers and to those who would believe in the future (John 17). Even at Calvary itself when anticipation gave place to reality, His thoughts were still with others (Luke 23:28,34,42-43; John 19:26). What an example to us!

***Sunlight to Darkness.*** Scripture states that there was darkness over all the Earth from midday until 3.00p.m. (Luke 23:44). God had intervened with the Sun before in the days of Joshua (Josh. 10:12-14) and Hezekiah (2Kings 20:9-11), and He will again in the Tribulation period (Rev. 6:12; 8:12; 16:8). What caused this instantaneous darkness? It could not have been an eclipse of the Sun: this was Passover time (the time of full moon) when such eclipses are naturally impossible, as the Moon is on the opposite side of the Earth to the Sun. Eclipses never occur suddenly, and only last for a few minutes – not 3 hours! What occurred here at Calvary was supernatural and perhaps this event was *one* of the things the

Centurion had in mind when he said “Certainly this was a righteous man” (Luke 23:47) – just 2 verses after the Scripture states “And the Sun was darkened” (Luke 23:45). It was a direct intervention from God, and in His creatorial power He placed all the relevant heavenly bodies in their right order. At Christ’s *birth* there was supernatural *light* in the *night* (Matt. 2:2; Luke 2:8-9), yet at His *death* there was supernatural *darkness* in the *day*. Mankind was not to witness the intense sufferings of Christ in those 3 long hours of darkness when the sin of humanity was placed upon Him.

***Impossible with men, but possible with God.*** Despite great advances in Science and Technology, mankind still has great limitations, and always will! Only a Divine person could instantly calm the storm (Mark 4:39), raise the dead (John 11:43-44), give sight to the blind (John 9:7) and have the authority and power to forgive sins (Matt. 9:2,6). So it is with this supernatural event of midday darkness. It clearly points to *at least* two great truths. Firstly, that God is in complete control of what mankind has no control over. Secondly, that the sin of humanity was so great and so heinous to the eyes of a holy and righteous God, that created humanity had no way of dealing with it. The pain and suffering that Christ endured at the hands of *men* was allowed to be witnessed and recorded, but the unspeakable agony and judgement of God against sin in those 3 long hours of darkness were hid from human gaze. This was a scene so sacred, so Divine and so profound!

***A Unique and Momentous event.*** The events at Calvary will never *need* to be repeated – indeed *cannot* be repeated (Heb. 10:10-12). From *God’s* standpoint, it is the crucial point in (salvation) history (Heb. 9:26). For *us* today, Calvary is fundamental in the preaching of the *Gospel* (1Cor. 2:2; 15:1,3). It is something that is the focus of our weekly “*Breaking of Bread*” meeting (1Cor. 11:26), and it is part of what *Baptism* signifies also (Rom. 6:4). The death and resurrection of our Lord are also closely associated with the *transformation* accomplished in our own lives (Gal. 2:20).

So we see, the events at Calvary were unique and momentous and will have far-reaching global implications for ever – as has been rightly said, “The *birth* of Christ divides *time* (B.C./A.D.), but the *death* of Christ will divide *eternity* (saved/unsaved)!”

## Worship in Luke’s Gospel (4)

T.J. Blackman

We have noticed in previous articles in this series the constant connection between worship and joy. Having traced this rich vein of joyful worship through Luke’s Gospel it should not surprise us to find it at its richest at the close. It is rather like the hallelujah chorus which closes the book of Psalms. Luke begins with joy in heaven over One born on earth, but ends with joy on earth over One received in heaven.

We may also notice Luke begins with a prayer offered on earth and recognized by heaven. The result is: “joy and gladness” (1:14). But now Luke ends with intercession begun on earth and continuing until now in heaven, with the result that the disciples had “great joy” and “were continually ... praising and blessing God” (24:53). That great joy should be ours as well. Really, what we have in these verses forms the basis for the rest of the New Testament, from Acts onward. Not only has the Son returned to His Father’s side, but the Man Christ Jesus is in glory – that “same Jesus” who loved us and died for us.

### Vv. 50-51 – Blessing on Earth and in Heaven

**V. 50: *The Company of Followers and the Place of Fellowship.*** “He led them out ...”. This may remind us of Luke 22:39: “And He came out, and went ... to the mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him”. On that occasion it was to suffer the agony of dark Gethsemane and then face suffering and death on their behalf. Now for the last time He again led them up the mount of Olives, desiring

to be near a place associated with His happiest moments here on earth, before ascending up into heaven to “ever intercede” on their behalf in “the power of an endless life” (Hebrews 7:16,25).

It was fitting that the mount of Olives should be the place from which He ascended to heaven, for it is just there that His feet will stand when He comes again to earth (Zechariah 14:4). But how moving it is that of all the places which had been graced with His presence He should desire to be in the vicinity of Bethany immediately before returning to His Father. Bethany is said to mean either “the house of the poor” or “the house of dates”. The combination of the ideas of poverty and fruitfulness would perhaps remind us of what Paul says about the Macedonians: “the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality” (2Corinthians 8:2). What precious memories that village held for the Lord Jesus! Perhaps the fragrance of Mary’s spikenard was still in His hair as He returned to heaven. Bethany is, in fact, the place where Mary is found at the Lord’s feet three times. In Luke 10, it is to learn; in John 11 it is to be comforted; and in John 12, to worship Him. From heaven He has sent the Holy Spirit so that we can continue to enjoy these things – instruction, consolation and worship (John 14:16,26; 16:13; Philippians 3:3).

Very different to Gethsemane where He prayed prostrate in agony and wished His disciples could watch with Him, here the Lord’s hands are lifted up in high-priestly blessing. If men in the assembly must lift up “holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (1Timothy 2:8), here is the One who “hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up His soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully” (Psalm 24:4), who alone has the right to ascend into the hill of the Lord and stand in His holy place. Not “wrath and doubting” but love and faithfulness would characterize His intercession.

***V. 51: The Parting on Earth and the Reception in Heaven.*** The word “blessed” here indicates to speak well of or to speak for our good. How amazing that the Son of God can speak well of saved sinners in the presence of His Father! It is all the result of His saving work on

the cross. This indicates His constant exercise in heaven on their and our behalf.

All the titles given to the Lord Jesus as He is now in heaven speak of His relationship with His people – “Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36) indicates His authority over us; “A Prince and a Saviour” (Acts 5:31) indicates His willingness to forgive and His ability to save; “Head over all things to the church” (Ephesians 1:22) indicates His vital controlling relationship with us, as His body; “Advocate with the Father” (1John 2:1) shows how He restores fellowship if His people sin; our “Great High Priest” (Hebrews 4:14) shows how He supplies strength in our weakness and enables us to “draw nigh unto God” with holy boldness.

### **Vv. 52-53 – Worship at Bethany and Worship in the Temple**

***V. 52: The Lord Jesus is worshipped.*** After His ascension, before they left the vicinity of Bethany on the slopes of the mount of Olives, “they worshipped Him”. We have noticed before that, although Luke is rightly considered to be the Gospel of the perfect Man, Luke often calls Jesus “God” (e.g. 7:16; 17:15-16; 19:37-38) and worship offered to Him is neither rebuked nor refused.

***V. 53: God is worshipped through the Lord Jesus and for Him.*** They were able to gather “in the temple” (not the inner temple, but the courts of the temple). This would indicate the transitional character of those days, which continued until the Gospel was finally rejected by the Jews, and Gentiles were brought into the church.

“Praising and blessing God” in the temple was of course nothing unusual. But there was something very different about this company. They were praising God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and thanking Him that the promised Messiah had come bringing salvation through His death and resurrection. What a testimony it must have been as they praised God “with great joy”. Ten days later the Holy Spirit would come, sent by the Lord Jesus in heaven. Then their testimony would not only be joyful, but also powerful, resulting in the beginnings of the church.

# **The Acts of the Apostles**

## **Chapter 9:32-43**

Ian McKee

### **The healing of Aeneas by Peter (v.32-35)**

The narrative then switches abruptly from Saul to Peter, who now has an itinerant ministry, probably as a consequence of the much more favourable conditions outlined in v.31. We recall that when persecutions broke out the apostles remained at Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). We also note from other New Testament references that Peter moved extensively (cf. 1Cor. 9:5), not only in gospel preaching but in teaching / encouraging “the saints”.

Luke does not use the word “saints” often, so the fact that it is used in Acts 9:13, 32 and 41 is significant. To many people in the general population this word has a wide range of meanings depending on the context. Many religious denominations, for instance, consider their deceased members to be saints in heaven; some deceased notable members are given ‘official’ ecclesiastical recognition and veneration; sometimes the word is used to indicate someone recognised to have extraordinary devotedness; or just to someone who is especially kind.

However, not even one of those descriptions fit with the meaning of “saint” in a New Testament context! A “saint” is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation sets that believer apart, they are sanctified, and they become – solely as a result of salvation – “holy ones”. This is evidenced in how the Apostle Paul later addresses the believers at Philippi: “to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops [elders, or overseers] and deacons [ministering servants]” (Phil. 1:1). These “saints” are people who are saved, believers, very much alive and constituent members of the Philippian assembly. The bishops and deacons are also, of course, saints!

Here Peter reaches the town of Lydda, some 12 miles south east of

Joppa. We have no details of who were in the assembly there or how this work was started, but Lydda was on Philip's route from Azotus to Cæsarea (Acts 8:40). At Lydda Peter found a "certain man" named Aeneas (no information is provided to clarify if he was, or wasn't, a believer) who had been paralysed eight years previously. However, the explicit announcement of the name of Jesus Christ, as 'Jesus Christ heals you' suggests that Aeneas was unsaved. Peter is being so very careful in how he speaks to Aeneas to make clear what happened.

Peter's command "arise, and make [take up] thy bed" brings to mind that given by the Lord in the healing of the paralytic man at Capernaum (Mark 2:11). "Arise" is the same verb which was used of God raising up Jesus. This miracle provides an evident demonstration that the works of the Lord continue. This was a miraculous and instantaneous healing: the man rose by power on God's part and, no doubt, there was faith on his own part. The healing of an unsaved paralytic man also conveys a deeper meaning, assuring that the Lord is able to empower and re-invigorate His people. Salvation and resultant holiness is positive, vigorous, active and maturely self-supporting, giving spiritual ability 'to stand on one's own feet'.

The miracle meant that "all that dwelt at Lydda [and the coastal plain]" witnessed the result and "turned to the Lord", that is they were saved. "All" here does not mean an all-embracing "everyone"; but indicates many, or the majority, or a crowd of people.

Miraculous recovery from paralysis was given as a visible sign of that new life into which, by the power of resurrection, repentant sinners are brought. This, presumably, includes Aeneas, even though there is no definite indication of anything other than physical blessing. The glory redounded to the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **The raising of Dorcas by Peter (v.36-42)**

The story now shifts from Lydda to Joppa. This is the nearest seaport to Jerusalem. Indeed, it is the place the prophet Jonah sailed from to avoid preaching to Gentiles (Jonah 1:3), and, as we shall see in the

next chapter, it was the place from which Peter set out to preach to Gentiles!

At Joppa there resided an esteemed lady called Tabitha, or Dorcas, depending on whether you used the Aramaic or Greek form of her name. Either way her name meant “gazelle”, which suggests gentleness and grace of movement. This woman was “full of good works and almsdeeds which she did”. Dorcas is a model of godly womanhood, doing good works, demonstrating not only individual exercise but carrying her intention through to completion. She is both diligent and persistent. Dorcas had the gift of “help”, that of “relief”.

Her good works reflected those of the seven appointed ‘deacons’ in Acts 6:1-7. We shall see a similar disposition to almsgiving in connection with Cornelius, who we shall meet in Acts 10:2,4. We shall see such a benevolent disposition from the church at Antioch (Acts 11:27-30). All of this is eclipsed by the reference to The Lord Jesus Christ “who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).

Dorcas took sick and died. Her body was then prepared for burial and she was laid in an upper chamber. Whereas Jerusalem practised same-day burial, for instance Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:6,10), elsewhere the normal period between death and burial was after three days of mourning.

During this mourning period, because Lydda was close to Joppa and the believers knew that Peter was there, two men (the minimum number needed to confirm witness testimony) were sent to find Peter, “desiring him that he would not delay to come to them”. Evidently Peter was the type of person to be sent for in an emergency, but what was it they were seeking? Remember up until now no apostle had ever raised the dead, so this was an evidence of faith in the Risen Christ?

Peter responds to the invitation and goes with the men to Joppa. Invitation is one of the indications of direction in service. Another is



direct guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2). However, an invitation is not an automatic indication for future service, e.g., “As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have a convenient time” (1Cor. 16:12).

In coming “into the upper chamber” with the dead body of Dorcas laid out, Peter surely would be reminded on the day when, with James and John, and the Lord, he entered into the death chamber of Jairus’ daughter (Luke 8:51). The circumstances were similar, but Peter did not have the power of resurrection that resided inherently in the Lord.

The widows who had benefited from Dorcas’ good deeds were here, weeping and displaying samples of the garments she had made. These were inner and outer garments, shirts and coats. After her death her life works were being rehearsed and displayed. It was well that she had not engaged in shoddy workmanship! Dorcas was evidently very much appreciated, but it is often the case that praise is left until after death! (The wicked dead are never bewailed.)

“Peter put them all forth”, which is a strong word, indicating that their removal from the chamber was perhaps with some difficulty. This action was similar to that of the Lord in relation to Jairus’ daughter. Their exclusion was necessary to allow Peter to kneel down and pray. Prayer is essential for the proper implementation of spiritual gift. Peter acknowledges that he does not possess inherent power and his actions show that he was not afraid of becoming ceremonially defiled. These details likely came to Luke from Peter himself, since no one else was present.

Peter then turned to the body of Dorcas and said “Tabitha, arise”. These are almost identical (only a letter different) to the words the Lord used to Jairus’ daughter. It is the same expression used to Dorcas as was used to Aeneas, literally “get up” (Acts 9:34). Indeed, it is the same verb that is used of God in the raising of the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, the works of the Lord continue! This was the power of

God for Dorcas who could not exercise faith. But it was not for her own sake that she was brought back, but for the gospel's and the assembly at Joppa. [NB. Of the persons raised from the dead in Scripture it is of interest to note that not one of them has told of his or her experience in the other world.]

Dorcas "opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up". Then, how like the actions of the Lord on behalf of Jairus' daughter, Peter gave Dorcas his hand and lifted her up. It is the same Lord of life on this side of Pentecost as on the other. Peter then calls in "the saints and widows": the term "saints" includes the whole company, "widows" the component of the whole company who were the most concerned.

Presenting her alive to the company in all the circumstances recounted must have provided Dorcas with an impetus for continued service. She would see the evidence of the lasting effect and value of her earlier work. She had pleased the Lord, secured the gratitude of those she had helped, was given distinct assurance by the notable miracle that had been performed. Sometimes it is necessary to be able to see the value of service in perspective to give encouragement, to continue in the same and gain reward from the Lord.

The raising of Dorcas "was known throughout all Joppa; and many [not all, as in v.35!] believed in the Lord". It is interesting that both miracles, the healing of Aeneas and the raising of Dorcas, paralleled examples in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. Also, similar miracles had endorsed the ministry of Elijah and Elisha. These miracles deliberately portray Peter as an authentic apostle of Jesus Christ, as per the later description of the Apostle Paul, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (2Cor. 12:12). Recovery from paralysis and resuscitation from death were both visible signs of new life which, by the power of resurrection, sinners are saved and raised to a new life entirely. Again, the glory redounded to the Lord (Acts 9:35,42).

### **The lodging of Peter (v.43)**

The words “and it came to pass” are always indicative of something remarkable or new, and certainly so here. The final ‘miracle’ in this chapter is the spiritual release of Peter from another aspect of Jewish prejudice. Peter does not rush back from Joppa to Lydda, but “tarried many days in Joppa” doubtless to consolidate the blessing. God’s servants do not need to be constantly on the move; God only needed Peter to be available here. However, he lodges “with one Simon a tanner”, a person making leather from the hides of dead animals. Jews considered such an occupation ceremonially unclean, (Lev. 11:35-40). A Jewess could secure a divorce if her husband became a tanner! Tanners had to work at a legally defined distance outside city limits. Peter lodging here shows that he was in readiness of mind for the instructions in Acts chapter 10. Peter is now only 30 miles south of Cæsarea, the seat of Roman administration.

(To be continued D.V.)

## **Get to Know Your Bible**

J.A. Davidson

### **NEW TESTAMENT OUTLINE – Paper No 9.**

#### **PHILIPPIANS**

The secret of our salvation and the strength of our service is to know the Joy of the Lord. Though written amid persecution and in captivity, Paul says, “Fulfil ye my joy” (Phil. 2:2). “Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me” (Phil. 2:17-18). “Rejoice in the Lord” (3:1). “Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord” (4:1). “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice” (4:4).

The key to this epistle is Christ, the believers pattern; “Let this mind

be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (2:5). "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (4:13). Paul opens his heart in this lovely epistle in intimate unrestrained love and spontaneous unalloyed joy. In Philippians we will discover the secret of a Christ centred life. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (1:21).

The Position he gained through Grace was; "in Christ" (1:1).

The Purpose that governed his life was to; "live Christ" (1:21).

The Preaching that gave him joy was to; "preach Christ" (1:18).

The Prize that he grasped after was to; "win Christ" (3:8).

The Prospect ever growing brighter was to; "be with Christ" (1:23).

### AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

"Paul and Timothy, [the] servants (bond servants) of Christ Jesus" (RV), (Phil. 1:1). The definite article, "the", in the English translation may imply that these men thought of themselves as special servants. The Greek text does not have the definite article. They were slaves belonging to Christ Jesus. The authenticity of Paul's apostleship needs no defence as he writes to the church at Philippi. External evidence of his authorship is clearly and fully established from the background of the work recorded in Acts. Internal evidence is likewise conclusive as the epistle completely reveals Paul's love, joy and mind in characteristically Pauline words and expressions.

References to "Cæsar's household" and the "Prætorian Guard" point to the conclusion that Paul was a prisoner in Rome. The letter indicates that his presence has caused considerable interest in the Gospel (1:7;13-20), and had encouraged others in the city to preach the Gospel. Paul rejoiced that even these circumstances had resulted rather in the furtherance of the Gospel over a period of time (1:12). It would require a considerable period of time for news of Paul's imprisonment in Rome to reach Philippi where money was collected and sent to Rome by Epaphroditus. The long journey, news of his subsequent serious illness at Rome and the report of their concern about this faithful "messenger", all indicate that considerable time has elapsed. Another indication as to the date of writing is that the

judicial court at Rome had begun to consider Paul's case and that a verdict was expected (2:23). This places the epistle in the closing months of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, possibly AD 63/64 perhaps after the writing of Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon.

### AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

Philippi was the first European city visited with the Gospel after Paul received the Macedonian call (Acts 16:9-12). The first records of salvation were a devout woman, "which worshipped God" (a Jew); a demon possessed girl (a heathen) and a rough jailor (a Roman). These three were representative of the different nationalities and social levels in the church. Each of these three cases needed and could have salvation when the Gospel reached them, at a time of prayer, preaching and praising, respectively.

A threefold theme of the Gospel is developed by Paul as he writes in Philippians chapter 1 about, the "fellowship of the Gospel" (1:5), "the furtherance of the Gospel" (1:12); and "the faith of the Gospel" (1:27). The membership of the church was cosmopolitan in character but mainly Gentile. The mention of women in the church is noteworthy, Lydia, Euodias and Syntyche by name as well as, "those women which laboured with me in the Gospel" (4:2-3).

Philippi was a Roman colony (Acts 16:12). It was named after Philip, King of Macedonia. The residents were treated as Roman citizens exempted from taxes. The exhortation, "only let your conversation (citizenship) be as it becometh the Gospel" (1:27). "Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven" (3:20), had special meaning to the believers at Philippi.

### AFFECTION AND THANKSGIVING

This epistle is an eloquent testimony to true joy and the triumph of faith. The apostle was in prison, chained day and night to a Roman soldier, only a few friends to cheer him, conscious of enemies seeking to add to his affliction (1:15-16; 2:20-21). He was encouraged by the arrival of Epaphroditus with renewed fellowship from the assembly at Philippi. "Your care of me hath flourished again" (4:10). "Not that

I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content" (4:11). His primary reason was to thank them for "the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God" (4:18). Written in a tone of intimacy, tenderness and prayer, Paul has four main themes woven into these four chapters:

To Thank them for their Generosity.

To Encourage against Despondency.

To Warn against Disunity.

To Strengthen against Legality.

### AFFLICTION AND PERSECUTION

Paul and his fellow workers first came to Philippi during the second missionary journey. Persecution arose when Paul cast out the spirit of divination from the slave girl. Her masters seized Paul and Silas, dragged them before the magistrates, accusing them of teaching a religion which was illegal for them as Romans to receive. Without investigation, the mob threatened violence, the magistrates commanded them to be beaten with many stripes and put in prison, their feet being made fast in the stocks. This was a serious violation of Roman law against Paul and Silas, who were Roman citizens. The earthquake that opened the prison doors and loosed everyone's bands alarmed the magistrates who sent the message in the morning, "Let those men go". Paul's refusal to be sent away without public recognition of their rights was not a desire for personal justice but a defence of the Gospel showing that it was no illegal or sect message. When Paul and his companions departed from Philippi, the testimony of the church was vindicated within Roman law (Acts 16:40). About ten years later, Paul wrote to the Philippians confirming that he was again in prison and encouraging them in their sufferings for the sake of Christ. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me" (1:29-30).

## APPEAL AND EXHORTATION

Philippians was not occasioned by any special crisis such as caused the writing of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians or Galatians. It does not develop specific doctrine but exalts Christ. It is therefore better to consider it as a letter rather than an epistle. There is no apostolic introduction but all the marks of a free personal letter to intimate friends. His appeal and affection is based on his acquaintance with their current circumstances communicated by the oral report from Epaphroditus. His exhortations do not lend themselves to rigid analytical outline but flow from his fatherly counsel to encourage unity, promote the common good of the believers, avoid personal disagreements by humble mindedness following the example of the Lord Himself. With terms of endearment and love, he seeks to foster the spirit of joy and thanksgiving. Warnings are given against the Judaisers (3:1-16), who prowl around seeking to mutilate the Gospel, and the enemies of the Cross (3:17-4:1), who debase themselves in the gross immorality of godless society.

Helpful outlines of the four chapters have been suggested:

Ch. 1: CHRIST OUR LIFE – “For to me to live is Christ” (1:21).

Ch. 2: CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE – “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (2:5).

Ch. 3: CHRIST OUR OBJECT – “That I may win Christ” (3:8).

Ch. 4: CHRIST OUR STRENGTH – “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (4:13).

Thus Christ is – The Passion of a Devoted Life (Ch. 1); The Pattern of a Selfless Life (Ch. 2); The Pursuit of an Ardent Life (Ch. 3); The Power of a Victorious Life (Ch. 4).

The study of “Fellowship” is rewarding: Ch. 1:5 – The “Fellowship in the Gospel” (Evangelically); Ch. 2:1 – The “Fellowship of the Spirit” (Spiritually); Ch. 3:10 – The “Fellowship of His sufferings” (Personally); Ch. 4:14 – The “Fellowship (share) with my afflictions” (Materially).

Philippians, like each of the other prison epistles written by Paul,

contains a great Christological passage as presented in Ch. 2:5-11. The pre-existent Deity of Christ Jesus and its continuance for He never gave it up, (He could rise no higher); His self-renunciation, which is parallel with the themes of the four Gospels; His obedience unto cross death (He could go no lower) and His exaltation. This appeal to be like Christ, the Supreme Example is developed (2:12-30).

CHRIST THE PATTERN – To save He gave Himself (2:6).

PAUL AS THE PRIEST – To serve he offered himself (2:17).

TIMOTHY AS THE PASTOR – To seek he submitted himself (2:22).

EPAPHRODITUS THE PROVIDER – To supply the need, he yielded himself (2:30).

## **COLOSSIANS**

There are four prison Epistles, written by the apostle Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians, probably written in that order. The latter two contain indications that Paul is expecting an early release; Philemon 22 and Philippians 1:25-26. Ephesians and Colossians are closely linked doctrinally. An approximate date for the writing of this epistle is AD 63.

### **THE CITY**

Colosse was situated east of Ephesus near to the city of Laodicea (4:16). Paul had not been to Colosse (2:1). Epaphras, a servant of Christ, and fellow labourer with Paul in Rome, came from Colosse (1:7-8). The apostle became acquainted with conditions in the church at Colosse as he listened to the prayers of this faithful servant of God. “Always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (4:12). These cities were located in the Lycus valley in the region of Phrygia. Visitors from Phrygia heard the apostles preach on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10), and so the people of that area may have had early contact with the Gospel. Paul was exercised to visit Colosse after his first imprisonment (Philemon 22).



## THE CHURCH

Beside the indigenous Phrygians and a considerable colony of Jews, Greek traders made their livelihood in Colosse because of the rich trade route between Ephesus and the Euphrates. There was a mixture of ethnic backgrounds and social classes; the highest and lower, the masters and the slaves. It was a place where new ideas and different philosophies were likely to flourish.

## THE CONCERN

False teachers, under the false guise of piety and humility were introducing serious error. This was an attack upon the Gospel and upon the saints of Colosse. They claimed to be able to reach higher spiritual elevation than the Gospel. This false humility was based on their “neglecting of the body” (2:23), and an outward show of fake godliness.

This was a mixture of oriental mysticism and Greek philosophy, called “philosophy and vain deceit” (2:8); angelic intermediaries, “a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels” (2:18); and rigid asceticism, “a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh” (2:23).

The heresy at Colosse also included Jewish observances of circumcision (2:11), law keeping (2:14), and feasts (2:16). All these elements of blasphemous doctrine seem to combine so that their Gnostic teaching was an all-out frontal attack upon doctrines of Christ and the Gospel.

## CHRIST – THE FULNESS

With this dark background, so dishonouring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the epistle to the Colossians rises to a majestic description of the Person and Work of Christ. As we are brought to such incomparable revelations of His fulness, sufficiency and supremacy, we bow in worship to acknowledge Him as, “All and in All”. The theme of this epistle is the Fulness of Christ. His supremacy is set out in three declarations: “In Him should all fulness dwell” (1:19); “In whom are

hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:3) and “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (2:9). These great doctrines of Christ answer all the errors to which the believers were being exposed.

### THE CONTENTS

The language of this epistle is lofty as the inspired writer uses accumulated synonyms and rich clauses built up from words not used in other epistles. The tone is anxious and perturbed, dealing with great doctrinal and spiritual challenges which are perplexing and dangerous to the assembly at Colosse. The heresy at Colosse did not claim Old Testament authority, hence there is no reference to the Old Testament Scriptures.

The contents are cumulative rather than sectional. The marvellous passage (1:15-23), presents Christ in relation to God, creation and the church. This threefold theme relative to the Person of Christ can be traced throughout the epistle:

His revelation of God: He is the “Fulness” (1:19); the “Image” (1:15-2:9); He “sitteth on the right hand of God” (3:1).

His relationship with Creation: He is the “Firstborn” (1:15); Creator (1:16-17); Sustainer (1:17).

His unity with the Church: “He is the Head of the body, the Church” (1:18); “The firstborn from the dead” (1:18); the Source of all “wisdom and knowledge” (2:3).

The work of Christ; His death, resurrection and ascension, is woven into the epistle as follows:

In relation to all things in heaven and earth: The offer of “reconciliation” and “peace through the blood of His cross” (1:20).

In relation to the church: “redemption” (1:14), “forgiveness of sins” (1:14), “life” (3:3) and “glory” (3:4).

Relative to the law: “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross” (2:14).

Relative to our enemies: “And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (2:15).

These great devotional truths bring practical responsibilities. “If ye be dead with Christ” (2:20). “If ye then be risen with Christ...” (3:1). Individual responsibilities are developed in the putting off of “the old man” and the putting on of “the new” (3:1-17). Ethical responsibilities are developed in natural relationships between wives and husbands; children and parents; masters and servants (3:18-4:1). Spiritual requirements follow in prayer, walk and watchfulness (4:2-6).

Personal encouragements and exhortations are given as Paul mentions fellow servants, soldiers and saints; Archippus, Aristarchus, Barnabas, Demas, Epaphras, Jesus Justus, Luke, Marcus, Nymphas, Onesimus, Timothy and Tychicus the bearer of the two letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians. The apostle was deeply interested in the welfare of fellow believers he had never met. The Lord Jesus Christ is personally acquainted with every one of us.

### THE COMPARISON

The epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians complement each other. A study of the comparisons is to be recommended: similarity of time, writer in bonds, same message and similar plan of introduction, salvation, thanksgiving and prayer. Both speak of the Gospel for the Gentiles. Ephesians stresses the Unity of the Body which has Christ for its Head. Colossians has the focus upon the Greatness of Christ, the Head of the Body. Both epistles have a practical section. Ephesians outlines responsibility arising from the Unity of the Church; Colossians stresses responsibility as a result of the vital Union with the Head. Both have direct exhortations to the same classes of believers and appeals for watchfulness and prayer.

The comparison of internal themes merit further study:

Ch. 1: Hidden mystery, “The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (1:27).

Ch. 2: Hidden wisdom, “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:3).

Ch. 3: Hidden life, “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (3:3).

Ch. 4: Hidden ministry, “Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak” (4:3-4).

Ch. 1:3-8: The Gospel – Faith in Christ: Fruit on Earth: Fitness for Heaven. The Truth of the Gospel (1:5); The Hope of the Gospel (1:23).

The Fulness – of suffering (1:24); of the Scriptures (1:25); of the Saviour (1:19; 2:9).

Having been established in the faith through the study of this epistle; we pray that the reader may be “rooted” (*downward*); “built up in Him”, (*upward*); “stablished in the faith” (*firmness*), “as ye have been taught, abounding” (*fulness*) “therein with thanksgiving” (*thankfulness*) (2:7).

## “The Man Christ Jesus”

The Late H. Bailie, Belfast

Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, brought Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. The Saviour of the world standing in silence before the tribunal, Pilate said, “Behold the man” (See John 19:5).

**The Sinless Man.** The angel Gabriel declared His sinlessness to the virgin, “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house

of Jacob for ever: and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:31-35). The demons confessed it when they said, “Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; The Holy One of God” (Luke 4:34). The dying thief bore testimony to it in rebuking his fellow when he said, “Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due rewards of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss” (Luke 23:40-41). God Himself hath inspired it, “For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb. 7:26). Ransomed saints delight to sing about it:

Touched with a sympathy within,  
He knows our feeble frame;  
He knows what sore besetment’s are,  
For He endured the same.  
But spotless, innocent and pure,  
Our great Redeemer stood;  
No stain of sin did o’er defile,  
The Holy Lamb of God.”

“And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought this Man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in this Man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him” (Luke 23:13-14). Pilate said He was a **Faultless Man**. ***Faultless in His Talk***: “Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought Him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this Man” (John 7:45-46). ***Faultless in His Walk***: John, “looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:36).

***Faultless in His Providence:*** “And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea: and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of Man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!” (Matt. 8:23-27). ***Faultless in His Atoning Work:*** “How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot (‘fault,’ margin) to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:14).

“As many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52:14). What painful words! He was a **Suffering Man**. “A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”. He suffered at the hands of His own people, the Jews. “Then the high priest rent His clothes saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands” (Matt. 26:65-66). He suffered from the rulers of earth, “And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate” (Luke 23:11). He suffered at the hands of the devil; we can see Satan’s hand behind the sword of Herod when he bathed in blood the innocents of Bethlehem, in search for the Saviour of the world. Then again, in the wilderness, he tempts the true Israel face to face; and last of all we see him at the cross as the Lion of Hell in all his ferocity, “Save me from the lion’s mouth” (Psa. 22:21) is the lonely cry from Calvary. He suffered at the hand of God: “Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27:45-46).

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holded of it” (Acts 2:22-24). He is the **Glorified Man**. Peter preached it: the angels announced it: “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). Stephen was eyewitness to it: “He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). The church sings it:

“By faith I look where Christ has gone  
And see, upon His Father’s throne,  
A Man with glory crowned.”

In the upper room, on the eve of His departure from this world, He said to His Own, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself: that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3). He is the **Coming Man**. He Himself has promised it, and angels came down from the glory to proclaim it (See Acts 1:11 above). The Thessalonians waited for it; they, “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1Thess. 1:9-10). Servants should live in the light of it; “He called His ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13). Believers meet on the first day of the week to keep the feast in anticipation of it; “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come” (1Cor. 11:26). It is the Lord’s last word from the

glory: “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

Reader, can you say with the Bride in the Song, “This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend” (Song of Solomon 5:16). His wondrous death has saved us from Hell; His unknowable love constrains us to serve; His unspeakable joy points us forward to His day of glory:

There we shall see His face,  
And never, never sin;  
There from the rivers of His grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in.

## Visitation Work

N. John Jeyanandam

**“I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house” (Acts 20:20)**

Visitation work plays an important role in evangelism. The ministry of a servant of God is not complete without visitation. Homes are where people live and it is there that we will be able to meet them in their natural habitat and realities. It would be interesting to note how our Lord visited many homes of individuals. As we know, our Lord visited Peter’s home and healed his mother-in-law and this made a lasting impression in the minds of all His disciples (Matt. 8:14,15). He voluntarily visited Zacchæus’ house and showed the way to salvation to its inmates (Luke 19:1-10). His acceptance of the Pharisee’s invitation for dinner had resulted in the conversion of the sinful woman (Luke 7:36-50). He preached the word in a house at Capernaum, which resulted in the salvation and healing of the man with palsy (Mark 2:1-12). It would do well for us if we too follow this



excellent example of our Master, and emulate this in our ministry.

Visitation work does not end in visiting the homes of Christians alone. Visiting sick people in hospitals, lonely persons staying at old age homes, hostels, orphanages, homes for the blind and disabled and other such places where people live in groups are target areas where we can meet needy souls and win them for Christ. Our Lord's visit to the pool at Bethesda resulted in the healing of the infirm man (John 5:2-9).

However this work needs spiritual preparation, prayer, and constant close fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ. We should dwell in the Spirit and take His guidance and counsel and possess the assurance and leading of the Holy Spirit. This is much needed.

The power of the Spirit of God should form the core of the visitation ministry. We are able to observe that this was very true in the ministry of Paul the apostle in all his pioneering efforts. Passages such as 1Corinthians 2:1-5, 1Thessalonians 1:5, would clearly reveal this, where we find that the emphasis is on the guidance of the Lord and the filling of the Holy Spirit. It was this kind of visitation work done at Philippi, when Paul and his followers "sat down, and spake to the women which resorted" at the riverside (Acts 16:11-15). These women were found in a group, perhaps cleaning and washing their purple-ware at the riverbed. The Lord was pleased to open the heart of Lydia, which brought salvation to her household. Thus the first person, who was brought to the Lord in Europe, was a woman.

### **Personality Trait**

We must develop a sanctified life and a strong spiritual personality. It is said that "personality is the kind of person you are". It is the outward expression of the inner life, which influences other people favourably or unfavourably. A strong and positive personality is the dynamic outward expression of the inner man, dominated by positive and pleasing qualities, such as courtesy, courage, graciousness and truthfulness. This would attract people and influence their lives. It makes a man a leader in the day-to-day affairs of life, instead of a

follower, and becomes the greatest and most vital power in influencing the lives of others. Some have personality without spirituality and power, yet some others may have spirituality and power without personality. Though the latter option is certainly the more preferred of the two, when both qualities are combined in one person, then it is admirable and could be well used of God. Spiritual fellowship is our hold *on God*, and our personality is the hold we have *on man*.

### **Preparation Needed**

Visiting people and making contact with different types of individuals needs much preparation in our ministry. A certain amount of study and common understanding of people of different faiths and cultures will help. Psychological factors also need to be taken into account.

***Prayer Preparation*** – Sufficient prayer preparation and unhindered fellowship with our Lord is very essential before we embark on visitation work. We are to be filled by the Holy Spirit and controlled by Him while we interact with souls. We need the Holy Spirit's guidance as we meet people. Prayer is needed as we face each person, so that we may be able to discern his *inner needs* and to help him in his requirements properly from the word of God.

***Patience Required*** – It is said that “pray and stay” are two blessed monosyllables. We must prayerfully develop the virtue of patience in our visitation work. We have to patiently look for a God-given opportunity and be patient with the individual whom we seek to help. His character, his views, his behaviour, everything would demand our patience and tolerance. Please see Romans 5:3,4 and 2Corinthians 12:12. “Who is blind, but My servant? Or deaf, as My messenger that I sent? Who is blind as He that is perfect, and blind as the LORD'S Servant?” asks God in Isaiah 42:19. In this work it is absolutely necessary for us to cover our eyes and ears to worldly distractions and questionable activities around us.

### **Personal Etiquette**

We have to be patient and allow the word of God and the Spirit of

God to work, as we deal with the troubled souls. We cannot carry out this work with our knowledge and ability, or just rely on our past experiences. Each case would be different and needs special treatment and wisdom from above. When we try to force something on others, we often hinder the work of the Spirit. It is like opening the petals of a rose before it blossoms or trying to help a butterfly out of its silken cocoon before it is fully grown and developed. Much patience is therefore required, until some people undo their ways and views and unlearn what they are, and then learn “the more excellent way”. We know that some good brethren were once rough uncut diamonds, but patience and perseverance moulded them into artistically cut and polished diamonds. Many others with the potential to grow spiritually were stumbled because of impatience on the part of the worker and fellow-Christians (Eccl. 7:8).

We should also guard ourselves from objectionable body movements and expressions, and our language should be as pleasant and winsome as possible. We not only talk with our mouths but speak with our body movements. Body language is important and we should be careful. Gestures and words should agree. When they are in conflict that would repulse the seekers.

We need to develop a communication relationship with those whom we try to help. The tone with which we speak is also important. Our tone would generally reveal our underlying emotions. If the tone is harsh or judgmental, it is generally suspected as arrogance or self-righteousness. A negative tone generally denotes a negative impression about the subject.

### **Perseverance Required**

The knowledge that we are acting in the will of God, will enable us to persevere. To have God’s assurance as Paul had at Corinth, that we have “much people in this city” (Acts 18:10), will give utmost confidence and assurance. As he writes, “Therefore, I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2Tim. 2:10). Whenever

Paul visited a city, he knew some of the elect were there and he preached and *endured* difficulties and *persecutions* until God's chosen precious material viz, "the living stones" needed for building a local assembly, were gathered in.

The following entry appeared in an old devotional booklet:

A dear servant of God, John Vassar, spent much time in spreading the Gospel by house-to-house visitation work. One woman, who heard that he was soon to be in her neighbourhood distributing tracts and doing personal work, resolved that she would treat him badly if he asked her to accept Christ. Sometimes later, John Vassar came to her home and as soon as she recognized him, and ere he could speak, she slammed the door in his face! Realizing that she would not have been so rude if the Holy Spirit were not sending her strong conviction, he decided to sing his testimony upon her door-step. The words were those of the precious hymn: "But drops of grief can ne'er repay the debt of love I owe." God spoke to the woman's heart and she found peace of soul at the Cross. Afterwards, whenever she gave her testimony, she would say over and over, "Twas those 'drops of grief', that made me realize the value of grace apart from works, and touched my soul with the fire of heaven!"

### **Persistence Necessary**

Apart from prayer, patience and perseverance, this visitation ministry needs much persistence as well. It is true that God in certain cases works in mysterious way and just that one contact, or the touch of one word of God may yield results. But in several others, we have to visit people repeatedly, speak and counsel them and extend the love of God, present the claims of the gospel again and again, and help them in all possible ways. We will be experiencing a deep sublime joy in our hearts from the Spirit, when we thus visit them repeatedly and demonstrate the love of God.

A sculptor was once patiently chiselling a beautiful figure on a marble stone, kneeling and bending in the process. An evangelist was observing the posture and the perseverance with which the sculptor had engaged himself labouring stroke by stroke and he was greatly

interested. The evangelist said to himself, if only I could follow the same pattern with the souls I am dealing with, with prayerful humble persistence, and visiting them day after day until Christ is formed in them, how good it will be. Yes, our ministry amidst inconveniences and discouragements needs patience and persistence. In the end, we will be able to see Christ sublimely formed in their lives.

We know about the experience of an evangelist who was preaching the gospel to a staunch non-Christian young man. During one of his visits, the father of that young man became very violent and with abusive language chased him out of his home forbidding him from entering any more. However, on the other hand, the evangelist, whenever he used to meet that young man, either on the road or elsewhere, continued to share with him the gospel and encouraged him and showed the love of Christ persistently. Praise God, that young man was gloriously saved, and now has turned out to be a very useful and a profitable member of the church. His is now a great support to that servant of God.

Our ministry will yield results if it corresponds to the basic qualities listed above because God delights and rewards such faithful labour.

### **Practical Suggestions**

We would suggest a few practical points that would help workers in their visitation work.

**Team Work** – The most ideal way to visit homes and other centres is in two's rather than singly. In visiting homes, a husband and wife team would be most suited and ideal. Where there are only women folk in a house, it is better for men not to visit such homes. This is wise. Women workers are more suited for such places.

**Visiting Time** – Care should be taken to choose the right time, and circumstances, so that our visiting time is most suited and convenient to those whom we visit. All our personal inconveniences should be set aside. Lunch and dinner time, busy morning hours and late night visits should be avoided. While on a visit, if we sense that the time

chosen by us is unsuitable to those visited, then we must politely excuse ourselves. After ascertaining a convenient time for them, we may visit again.

***A Point of Contact*** – It would be good if we could have the introduction of a friend or a relative, or some earlier contacts such as an acquaintance made during a train journey, meeting at a hospital visit or at a wedding, etc. Such earlier acquaintances or references given by others would build our intimacy and evoke confidence in the minds of those we try to reach out to.

***Need to Discern*** – During our visits both our eyes and mind should be alive to take stock of the situation, the needs and the problems of those visited. We must be able to sympathise with their difficulties and problems and understand their background. As we do this, we will be able to feel the discerning voice of the Holy Spirit, softly and gently, leading and guiding us to comfort them with the word of God. We must therefore, be adequately trained to present the most appropriate passages taken from the word of God and present them with the most helpful thoughts and messages which would soothe their troubles hearts. This should be followed by a suitable prayer. Our visit should not be just a social call but a God-ordained one that would meet their spiritual needs and problems.

## **Pastoral Work**

In Christian ministry, pastoral work takes an important place. It is otherwise described as “shepherding” in His holy word. This needs love and real concern for the individuals and the flock that are entrusted by God. We are accountable to God as well. Visitation takes an important role in pastoral work. We have to visit His people when they are sick or passing through a difficult situation, and at times of bereavement as well as joy, such as a wedding or childbirth. This aspect of spiritual shepherding is beautifully pictured in the words of Jacob of old, “These twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of the beasts I

brought not unto thee. I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus was I; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house” (Gen. 31:38-41). Visiting His people not only at times of need, but also for the constant spiritual growth of the Lord’s flock is essential.

## **A Building Ministry**

We are called to build the eternal kingdom. That shows us how much labour, patience and careful planning it would need. Visitation work, therefore, needs utmost persistence and spiritual preparation. The apostle Paul said, “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon (1Cor. 3:10).

Often, we have been foolish learners and try to build a big structure, instead of being a wise builder. The one who labours to plant an assembly lays the foundation by gospel preaching. Then he presents and instructs the believers on the foundational truths about the gospel, attaining of salvation by grace and its assurance, baptism, the Lord’s supper, distinction between law and grace, the two natures, the second coming of the Lord and soul winning. We have to invest in all these inputs, before a strong foundation is laid and the work is to flourish.

At times, the pioneer worker or the one who lays the foundation has to wait long enough to set the framework. Often it may be others who build the superstructure, which also requires continuous hard work and labour. Paul describes this as, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God *gave* the increase” (1Cor. 3:6). Finally, in the building ministry the finishing work takes a long time and patience, which is the most difficult part.

## **“You Didn’t Ask”**

I got up early one morning,  
And rushed right into the day;  
I had so much to accomplish,  
That I didn’t have time to pray.

Problems came tumbling about me,  
And heavier came each task;  
“Why doesn’t God help?” I wondered;  
He answered, “You didn’t ask”.

I wanted to see joy and beauty,  
But the day toiled on, grey and bleak;  
I wondered why God didn’t show me;  
He said, “But you didn’t seek”.

I tried to come into God’s presence,  
I used all my keys at the lock;  
God gently and lovingly chided –  
“My Child, you didn’t knock”.

I woke up early this morning,  
And paused before entering the day;  
I had so much to accomplish,  
That I had to take time to pray.

Author unknown

## **The Death of Christ Procures Propitiation for Sins**

Selected

“Propitiation” is one of the words employed in Scripture to set forth the Godward aspect of the work of Christ, though even here there is a secondary, but connected, manward aspect.



In the New Testament three Greek words are employed to bring before us the truth of propitiation, the noun "*hilasmos*", the verb "*hilaskomai*" and the adjective "*hilasterios*", which is used in its neuter form "*hilasterion*" as a noun.

The idea of propitiation figures largely in the Old Testament, especially in the religious ritual of the Jewish ceremonial law, and although the word itself is not to be found there in our English Bibles, the three Greek words so translated in the New Testament all occur in the Septuagint Version, or Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Basically the idea is one of appeasement or pacification. A strengthened form of the verb is used in the Septuagint in Genesis 32:20, where Jacob says of his offended brother Esau, "I will *appease* him with the present". The same word is employed in Proverbs 16:14, where we read, "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will *pacify* it". By far the most common usage, however, is in connection with the Levitical offerings, when the word is used nearly one hundred times as the equivalent of the Hebrew word "*kaphar*" (lit. to cover), and it is translated in approximately three quarters of its occurrences by the term "make atonement". The neuter adjective "*hilasterion*" is the equivalent of the related word "*kapporeth*" (lit, covering) which denotes what our English Bibles call "the mercy-seat" i.e. the lid of the ark of God, otherwise "the propitiatory".

Putting these thoughts together we see that the fundamental Old Testament idea of propitiation is that which was set forth especially on "the Day of Atonement (propitiation)", when the sin offering was burned to ashes outside the camp under the consuming fires of God's just wrath against sin, and the blood was brought within the holy place by the high priest and sprinkled upon and before the mercy-seat. This enabled God to be merciful, in virtue of the sacrifice made, the abiding tokens of the sacrifice in His holy presence becoming the basis of relationship between Him and His people.

In a most striking way the New Testament usage of the three related words corresponds to the Old Testament figure of the ritual on the Day of Atonement, presenting three aspects of propitiation or three stages in its full accomplishment.

The noun "*hilasmos*" appears in 1John 2:2 and 4:10 only. In the first passage we are told that "Jesus Christ the righteous ... is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for (the sins of) the whole world". This teaches us that Christ personally is our propitiation, that the necessity for such a function is "our sins", that the work was done consistently with the claims of divine righteousness, and that the scope of this work is "the whole world". Since all men have sinned, all have aroused the righteous wrath of God against themselves. Only One whose person and work were absolutely "righteous" could quench the fires of divine judgement and furnish a holy God with the moral and legal right to be merciful to those who deserved judgement.

Let us never forget that God's essential and eternal nature, love, can never permit Him to ignore sin, or to waive its just punishment. Such is the perfection of His purity, and the unfailing justice of His government, that sin necessarily arouses in Him an indignation that must be expressed in just punishment of the sinner. We are living in shallow days, when even well-taught saints can lose the awful reality of the wrath of a thrice-holy God against sin. We do not suggest that God is a vicious being who needs to be persuaded to be merciful: judgement is His "strange work". He "delights in mercy", but the claims of His nature and the honour and stability of His throne alike demand a moral and legal antipathy to the sinner because of his sins. "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11). The wonder of His love is rather seen in the lengths to which He is prepared to go in order that propitiation might be made, so that justice might be satisfied, His wrath appeased (because exhausted), and His mercy set free to pardon the guilty.

1John 4:10 tells us, indeed, that God "loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins". While the previous reference spoke

of what Christ “is” presently, this verse speaks of what He came into the world “to be”. It is true that the latter words are an interpolation, but the implication is obvious – we are pointed to His work on earth. The measure of the love of God is the length to which Christ went in suffering and death at Calvary. He is seen here as the Sin-offering, the One who bore the wrath of God against “our sins”, suffering “without the gate”. Here we learn that propitiation is based upon atonement made, made by sacrificial death. This form of the word either signifies propitiation in the abstract, or concretely, the means of propitiation, the propitiatory sacrifice, so that either implicitly or explicitly Christ is presented here in relation to propitiation as the sacrifice.

The verb “*hilaskomai*” is found twice in the New Testament, in Luke 18:13 and Hebrews 2:17, the latter passage only referring to the work of Christ. Here however the idea is of Christ, not as the Sacrifice, but as the Priest; He is a “merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (R.V.). For a full explanation of this we have to read chapter 9 of the epistle. The verb form of the word here alludes not so much to the shedding of the blood of the Sacrifice upon earth, as to the presentation of the blood by the High Priest in resurrection in heaven, for the imagery of the Epistle to the Hebrews is essentially that of the Day of Atonement (propitiation).

In general we may say that propitiation was made by the blood upon the altar (Leviticus 17:11 Sept.), but on the Day of Atonement, the atonement was made by the blood upon the mercy-seat in the Holy Place. On the Day of Atonement the blood sprinkled upon the altar was simply to make atonement for the altar. Doubtless propitiation was made effectively at Calvary, but it was made formally and completely when Christ as High Priest presented Himself before God in virtue of His own blood.

The third form of the word, “*hilasterion*” is also to be found twice in the New Testament, in Hebrews 9:5 and Romans 3:25. In the first reference the word is used in the very same sense as in the

Septuagint, i.e. of the mercy-seat, and this suggests that this is the meaning in Romans 3:25 also, though here it is used figuratively. "Whom God hath set forth (to be) a mercy-seat through faith in His blood" says Paul. Christ is represented here neither as the Sacrifice nor as the High Priest, but as the blood-besprinkled Mercy-seat, or Propitiatory. Christ is present before God, as the One upon whom the eyes of the cherubim, the symbols of divine holiness, may rest complacently, finding there the answer to every claim of justice, and the ground of appeasement of God's righteous wrath. In virtue of Christ's blood alone, God can withhold His indignation against the sinner, and can instead hear with favour his cry of repentance and his believing plea for mercy on the grounds that One has been "set forth a propitiation", even "Christ Jesus".

We should notice that the three stages or aspects of propitiation have been presented here in chronological order; firstly Christ's sacrificial death, secondly His priestly ministry in resurrection and ascension, and thirdly His presence before God in the heavenly sanctuary as the mercy-seat or meeting place between God and man. This is not, however, the order of the types on the Day of Atonement. On that day the blood was taken in to the holy place and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, an action which Hebrews 9:6-14 indicates to be a representation of Christ entering the presence of God in virtue of His own shed blood: then later the bodies of the sin-offerings were taken without the camp and burned to ashes, which Hebrews 13:11,12 presents as symbolizing Christ's death outside the walls of Jerusalem. The order here is moral rather than chronological, and this shows the moral oneness of the work of Christ. His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His presence before God in virtue of His shed blood, all are seen as vital elements in the providing of a propitiation which could enable God to be gracious towards, and continue in relationship with, a sinful people. The blood shed on earth is the basis of everything, but the blood accepted in heaven provides faith with its all-prevailing plea.

It is helpful to compare propitiation with reconciliation (Death of Christ – TOP No. 29):

- Both are basic features of Christ's work. If anything propitiation is more basic, for if reconciliation is the result of Christ's work, propitiation is the means by which this result is achieved.
- Both have a twofold aspect, both Godward and manward, though because it is more basic, propitiation is more predominantly Godward than reconciliation.
- Both are based on Christ's blood.
- Both bring before us the universal scope of Christ's death.
- Both represent Christ as God's Agent accomplishing God's will by His work.
- Reconciliation regards men as enemies of God; propitiation gets behind this enmity to the cause of it, sin against God.
- Reconciliation has reference to persons, propitiation to sins.

## **MEN OF GOD SERIES**

### **(4) ENOCH : GOD TOOK HIM**

**"Enoch ... pleased God"  
(Hebrews 11:5)**

The first man hid from God. The seventh man walked with God.

"They heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden" (Gen. 3:8). Adam had every opportunity to walk with God in most pleasing circumstances. His surroundings were Paradise. He could explore the verdant pastures of the garden, valleys of herb yielding seed, waters abundant with life, the sky full of every winged fowl, trees yielding fruit to eat. He could hear the voice of God, he could walk

with God by the rivers that flowed out of Eden. It was for Adam to dress and keep. He gave names to the animate creation. The gold of the land was good, there was bdellium and onyx stone. God said it was good. God created for Adam, a helpmeet. The most beautiful woman that ever lived. God said it was very good. "The LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:9). "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God" (Gen. 3:8).

"Enoch walked with God" (Genesis 5:22)

Enoch habitually walked with God. In this simple short statement the consistency of his life is revealed. He lived in God's sight, he spoke into God's listening ear, he took no step without leaning upon God. God was his Guide for every step. Hence he took no deviating walk, he had no divided heart, he had no double motive, he was not double tongued. Enoch's companionship was close; his fellowship was sweet; his focus was clear, his walk was straight forward with God. Adam lived 308 years after Enoch was born. Adam may have told him about God's voice in the garden but Enoch lived in completely different circumstances. Mankind was now marked by great wickedness; there was open rebellion against God, and manifest sexual perversion. In those days of the antediluvians, there was a population explosion of vile people; tyrants and violence.

"Enoch walked with God" (Repeated the second time for emphasis) (Genesis 5:24)

This was a great contrast to Cain who was a fugitive and a vagabond dwelling in the land of Nod ("wandering") on the east of Eden. The people sought migration, adventure and excitement. The development of society brought building, commerce, arts, loud music, pleasure and entertainment. They were filled with hatred, inventing weapons of destruction in defiance of God's punishment of sin. Enoch was like a green oasis in this wilderness of corruption. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,

nor standeth in the way sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1).

God said, "Walk before Me" (Gen. 17:1 – in sincerity); "Ye shall walk after the LORD your God" (Deut. 13:4 – in obedience); "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Col. 2:6 – in fellowship). So in the New Testament we are to; "Walk by faith" (2Cor. 5:7); "Walk in the spirit" (Gal. 5:16); "Walk in love" (Eph. 5:2); "Walk in wisdom" (Col. 4:5); "Walk honestly" (1Thess. 4:12); "Walk in the light" (1John 1:7); "Walk in truth" (3John 4).

In this expression concerning Enoch there is more than this outward conformity. There is the blessedness of heavenly companionship. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). In this there is the thought of intimacy, communion with God, abounding joy and perfect rest as at the Mercy Seat. This is the reality of true priesthood. "The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity" (Mal. 2:6). Enoch, in this wretched world, before the flood was a priest, a worshipper, in communion with God. Dear fellow believer, do you lament your distance from God? Often our prayer life is infrequent, vague and pointless. Our worship is not centred on Christ. The heart is cold and the Spirit is grieved. Somehow, our feet have wandered, our thoughts stray far away, our focus becomes worldly. "Enoch walked with God".

Enoch was well pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:5-6)

"For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5). His name appears second in the venerable listings of Old Testament worthies in Hebrews 11, because of his faith. "The just shall live by faith" (Heb. 10:38). The emphasis in Hebrews is "Shall have life". Faith is the power that continues through all the obstacles and difficulties into the realm of preservation, survival, conquest in light of the certain enjoyment of eternal blessedness. Abel worshipped; his offering was accepted by God. Enoch walked;

he himself was acceptable to God. By faith, Enoch knew God. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit". "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:4,8). Paul prayed for the Colossians; "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10). The practical exhortation to the Thessalonians was; "How ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (1Thess. 4:1).

#### Enoch witnessed for God (Jude 14-15)

"Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, To execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly" (Jude 14-15). In these two verses the word "Ungodly" occurs three times; warning about ungodly men, ungodly deeds and ungodly speeches. The outstanding feature of mankind before the flood as today, was lack of reverence or the fear of God. They were hurtful, harsh, offensive, and defiant in their speech against God. Enoch lived Godly in an ungodly age. He was the first recorded prophet who warned of the second stage of the Lord's coming in manifestation to judge the world. He exposed their irreverent defiance, their shameless deeds and their illicit desires. All who listened to his faithful warnings would know that the coming judgement was just, righteous and deserved.

#### "Enoch was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:24)

It says in Hebrews 11:5 that he was translated, transformed, transported that he should not see death. He was not found implies that search was made. He broke the monotony of living and dying, mentioned eight times in Genesis chapter 5. He changed his location but not his company. "God took him" (Gen. 5:24). This is the culmination of God's purposes for His own. This life of faith continued in a victorious entrance upon the life of perfect fellowship above. This companionship, began with the gift of birth at sixty five



and lasted for 300 years. The naming of his son, Methuselah (“When he is dead it [the deluge] shall be sent”) reveals that the inventions and commerce of a doomed world were of no interest to Enoch; the wickedness of this earth was no place for Enoch any longer. Enoch lived in light of coming judgement. The length of his life was greatly curtailed. A shortened life may be relief from the toil and trial which sin has brought upon this world.

“Behold, the Lord cometh” (Jude 14)

In pleasing God, Enoch was a type of the Lord Himself. “He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him” (John 8:29). In the Lord’s walk we see God’s ways. In His Words we hear God’s wisdom. In His Work we have the manifestation of God’s Will. In this hallowed and unbroken communion, God found all His rest, His joy and His pleasure. To His accusers before His death on the cross the Lord testified; “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26:64). “Enoch ... was not; for God took (received) him” (Gen. 5:24). The Lord said; “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself” (John 14:3). He has promised us a pre-tribulation Rapture, “I also will keep thee from (out of) the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world” (Rev. 3:10). To the faithful few at Sardis who had not defiled their garments, He promised; “They shall walk with Me in white” (Rev. 3:4).

“Break every barrier down  
And reign triumphant Lord;  
Make every breathing of my heart  
With Thine be in accord:  
Grant me to enter in  
The secret place with Thee;  
To walk with Thee, as Enoch walked  
Into Eternity.”

Bertha Mullan (BHB № 371, Verse 4)

## Questions and Answers

**Question:** Paul writes; “Be careful for nothing” (Phil. 4:6). Peter writes; “Casting all your care upon Him” (1Pet. 5:7). What can we learn from these two statements?

**Answer:** The context of Philippians 4:6 follows the exhortation, “Rejoice in the Lord alway” (4:4), and the assurance, “The Lord is at hand” (4:5). This means that the Lord is near, standing by, beside us in all circumstances. The command (not an optional exhortation) is literally, “Do not in any circumstances worry about anything” (4:6). Stop being anxious, troubled, fretful when things harass you or people treat you unkindly. The chapter is dealing with unity among believers. Rather than have contention in personal matters show forbearance, reasonableness and patience rather than the attitude of self seeking. The proper reaction is to leave the issue with the Lord (4:6)

“By prayer” – speaking to God; do not take it out of God’s hands by worry or anxiety.

“Supplication” – pleading in the case of urgent special need, ask God to assume responsibility for He cares for His children.

“Thanksgiving” – based on the previous knowledge of God’s goodness.

“Let your requests be made known unto God” (4:6). You will know, “the peace of God” and “the God of peace shall be with you” (4:7,9).

This is in perfect agreement with the practical exhortation of 1Peter 5:7, Lit. “Casting all your anxiety upon Him, for He is concerned about you”. Commit once for all, “having cast” (JND), present and future worries or anxieties amid the suffering and humiliation Peter is writing about. The Greek word for “anxiety” comes from a root which means, “divide”. Anxiety divides, distracts the mind from wholehearted submission and devotion to God.

... Who will go for Us?

(Isaiah 6:8)

I delight to do Thy will, O My God.

(Psalm 40:8)

Wilt thou go with this man? (Gen. 24:58)

### *Who will go for Us?*

Four times in the Old Testament we get a hint of Divine conversation within the Godhead. (i) ***“And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness”*** (Gen. 1:26) at the formation of man, that special creature, brought into existence to enjoy communion with God, possessing soul and spirit, placing him far above all other creatures of the earth. (ii) ***“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become one of Us, to know good and evil”*** (Gen. 3:22), after Adam’s rebellion, who unlike God, became a sinner and practised sin, causing enmity between God and mankind. (iii) ***“Go to, let Us go down, and confound their language...”*** (Gen. 11:7), when God found it necessary to confound man’s speech as they sought a name for themselves by the building of the tower of Babel. (iv) ***“Who will go for Us?”*** (Isa. 6:8) in Isaiah’s vision of heaven’s throne room. Isaiah offered himself to be God’s servant to the rebellious and sinful house of Israel amongst whom he dwelt in his day. Ultimately it speaks to us of a far more **WILLING** and able Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who came into this rebellious world with a far greater commission, to provide a way for reconciliation of guilty mankind with God. Isaiah writes often of this glorious, elect Servant in Whom God found great delight. Unlike Isaiah, He needed no cleansing with coals from the altar prior to His sending forth from God’s throne, remaining undefiled during His sojourn among mankind.

### *I delight to do Thy will, O My God*

This is a delightful expression revealing the **WILLINGNESS** of the Son of God through the days of His Manhood to undertake that great work of salvation which could not be accomplished through the nation of Israel’s sacrificial system. God could really take no delight in those sacrifices. While needful as they were in the Old Testament period, they could not ultimately deal with sin, although enabled man to draw near to God. A far superior sacrifice was needed of an infinite value.

The Son came to satisfy God’s righteous demands against sin. At Gethsemane He would pray, ***“Not My will, but Thine, be done”*** (Luke 22:42). He came to obtain a bride for Himself at great expense, by His Own voluntary death on the tree. He showed the worth of His unique perfect character during His days on earth; His meekness and might, His grace and glory, manifesting His tenderness while speaking truth. Those awakened by the Holy Spirit were drawn to Him and blessed.

## ***Wilt thou go with this man?***

Genesis chapter 24 contains the once familiar and remarkable story of the mission of Abraham's servant to a far country to win a bride for his son Isaac.

The servant comes at last by God's guiding hand to the home of Rebekah and her parents. Here he faithfully reveals his errand and displays the tokens of his master's love and wealth, his willingness and sufficiency to meet all the needs of one willing to become his wife. The matter is to the servant one of urgency. So Rebekah is called and the matter is put before her for her decision, ***"Wilt thou go with this man?"*** To this she gives a prompt and ready reply, ***"I WILL go"***.

The servant then accompanies her across the wilderness to meet the man she has never seen, but of whom she has heard, and the tokens of whose love she already possesses. Finally she meets Isaac and, ***"She became his wife; and he loved her"***.

It has long been appreciated that this ancient story is a beautifully apt illustration of a great mission being fulfilled today. The Son of God was offered upon the altar, as it were, dying a sacrificial death upon the cross of Calvary. Now He is back home with the Father in heaven, and God has sent His Holy Spirit into the world to win a bride for His Son, a people to be His own special possession.

The Holy Spirit speaks to men and women, boys and girls about the Father's Son. Through the Holy Scriptures and by His servants He brings to them the message of the gospel, revealing to them the love of the Son of God in dying for them to put away their sins, making it possible for them to be forgiven and saved, and to enjoy a place in heaven with Him as His own special, beloved people. He reveals to them the saving power of the Lord Jesus, and His sufficiency to keep them for ever after.

**A**nd then you are faced with the same decision, which comes personally to you, dear reader, as to Rebekah of old, ***"Wilt thou go?"*** As the Spirit of God has convicted you of sin, of righteousness and of judgement, and has taken the things of Christ and revealed them unto you (John 16:8,14,15), so you are faced with an inescapable decision. Will you respond positively to the ministry of the Spirit, and commit yourself to union with God's beloved Son, and accept His Spirit as your guide to lead you safely to Him in glory (Rom. 8:1-17); will you say, "I will"? Or will you reject the offer and refuse to commit yourself to Christ, saying in effect, "I will not"?

In one sense if you say, "I will" regarding Christ you will never say it again, for having taken Him as your Head, thereafter it is His will that rules your life, not your own. And that is why many refuse to say, "I will", because they want to go on in their own way, fulfilling their own will. Will you surrender to Christ and go His way to heaven and happiness, or will you wilfully go your own way through life, through death and into the lake of fire for ever? God will not save you against your will, nor force you into union with His Son Who willingly gave His life for your eternal salvation. You have a decision to make. What about it? ***"Wilt thou go?"***