

# The Old Paths – October / December : 2021 – No 32

## Contents

---

<a href="#">Editorial – The Word of God is not Bound</a>	J.A. Davidson
<a href="#">Our Individual Prayers</a>	J.A. Brown
<a href="#">Lessons Gleaned from Sampson</a>	T.J. Blackman
<a href="#">The Acts of the Apostles (Ch 10:17-33)</a>	Ian McKee
<a href="#">Get to Know Your Bible – New Testament Outline (11)</a>	J.A. Davidson
<a href="#">Waiting on the Lord</a>	Howard A. Barnes
<a href="#">How to Face Opposition and Persecution</a>	N.J. Jeyanandam
<a href="#">Men of God Series – (6) Isaac: The LORD Appeared unto Him</a>	—
<a href="#">Questions and Answers</a>	—
<a href="#">I am the Light of the World...</a>	—

---

**T**hen I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name. But *His Word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in mine bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay ... *Is not My Word* like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? ... behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal My Words every one from his neighbour...

(Jeremiah 20:9; 23:29,30)



## From the Editor's Desk

### “The Word of God is not bound”

(2Timothy 2:9)

The Word of God cannot be incarcerated within prison walls; it is not restricted by fast barred gates; it is not concealed behind dungeon bars; it cannot be restrained by iron chains.

Generations pass but the Word of God lives on. Kings, authorities, dictators, nations and empires rise and fall but God's Word liveth and abideth forever. It is hated, despised and mocked; yet it outlives the scoffers, the scorners and their sneers. The inspiration of the Word of God is denied yet it instructs in righteousness, exposes vain babblings and silences the profane. The Word of God is the firm foundation of the everlasting edifice; the workman is not ashamed; the student is never disappointed; it furnishes unto every good work.

The Word of God is a light to our path; a gate to Heaven; milk for the babe; a guide for the young; food for the hungry; water for the thirsty; a rest for the weary; refreshment for the mature and comfort for the aged. It ministers Grace in every trial; it is profitable in every circumstance; it gives manner to life and sustains in persecution. It is a cure for the canker; silences the opposers; settles strife and frustrates every device of the devil. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof and correction. For the sinner, it makes wise unto

Salvation. For the saint, it preserves the obedient unto His heavenly Kingdom.

Paul wrote; “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). The Psalmist wrote: “Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee. Blessed art Thou, O LORD: teach me Thy statutes” (Psa. 119:11-12).

[< Back to Contents >](#)

---

## Our Individual Prayers

**Introduction.** We have just looked at the perfect prayer of the Lord Jesus and have seen features about that prayer that *could* and *should* be seen in *our* prayers (See Issue No. 31). The epistles of the New Testament make it very clear regarding the importance of collective, public prayer in the assembly, but to conclude our thoughts on prayer we want to look at some aspects of individual prayer which should be practised by us in our homes privately.

**Ephesians 6:18:** “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints”.

**Prayer should be consistent (“Praying always...”).** Verses like Romans 1:9, 1Thessalonians 3:9-10 and 5:17 and Colossians 1:3 (and many more) indicate to us how the apostle Paul had such a full prayer life! He clearly spent hours in prayer. What stops us today from spending more time in prayer? Is it our busy lifestyle, is it lack of interest or possibly is it that we mean well but somehow don’t get round to doing it? The apostle Paul walked continually for miles preaching the gospel and teaching the saints, he suffered physical weakness, he endured great persecutions and dangers, yet still found time to pray constantly.

**Prayer should be thorough (“...with all prayer and supplication...”).** This suggests that our prayers should be specific and systematic. We pray for the general needs of our families, the saints and the nation, but we need also to pray for precise and specific needs. (The prayer of Jabez in 1Chronicles 4:9-10 comes to mind. He prayed for 5 specific things, recorded in just one verse!). At the present time, we are obviously praying for the effects of “lockdown” on believers and their families and possible effects on assembly testimony. There are other specific human needs that need prayer – unemployment, sickness, loneliness, depression, backsliding, bereavement, and many more. Prayer for the children and grandchildren of believers is much needed at this present time.

**Prayer should be persevering (“...with all perseverance...”).** We can certainly be discouraged and distracted regarding prayer. Satan will continually try to keep us from praying. What thoughts he sometimes brings to our minds – you’re wasting your time, your prayers haven’t been answered, you’ve got more urgent things to do, leave it until later, and so on. Dear fellow believer, don’t give up praying! Just dwell on the words of Matthew 7:7-8: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened”.

**Prayer should be wide-ranging (“...and supplication for all saints”).** The scope of our prayers should include *all* believers – those in our own assembly, those in other assemblies and also those who we know who are outside of assembly life as we know it. In 1Timothy 2:1, Paul asks for prayer for “*all men*”, and the context there includes unbelievers (see vv. 2-4). So, we should pray for all saints and all sinners! You can’t be more wide-ranging in your prayers than that.

**Conclusion.** Having looked at the perfect prayer of the perfect man, the Lord Jesus, in John Ch. 17, and having reviewed *some* aspects of prayer that should mark us as believers, let us be determined from now on to “*pray without ceasing*” (1Thess. 5:17).

We trust what has been said has been helpful, challenging, encouraging and above all, God-honouring. God bless.

[< Back to Contents >](#)

---

## Lessons Gleaned from Sampson

Joshua and Judges are both books of battles. But while in Joshua we see a united nation under Joshua taking possession of its possessions, in Judges it is a fragmented nation led spasmodically by men who are termed “judges” or “deliverers”. If the impression we get from Joshua is one of unity, the emphasis in Judges is on individuality. The judges were strong personalities, whose influence was generally mostly local and whose presence was only beneficial during their lives. At best, they just provided an interval between extended periods of idolatry and oppression.

Samson is one of those notable Bible characters who were brought into the world by means of barren women. According to Judges 13:24, it was his godly mother who gave him his name which means “like the sun”. Perhaps she was praying for a new day to dawn in Israel and that her son, who was to be a nazirite from his mother’s womb, would be the means of bringing this about.

**Samson’s Faith.** Apart from Judges 13-16 (and possibly 1Samuel 12:11, where “Bedan” may mean “a son of Dan” and may be a reference to Samson), the only other reference to Samson is Hebrews 11:32 where along with Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, time would fail the writer to tell of the great things he did “through faith” (v. 33). A superficial reading of Judges can give the impression that he was a somewhat carnal man, but we should take into consideration his mention among the heroes of faith, and see his works as “works of faith”.

In fact, there is a lovely picture of his early godliness in Judges 13:24: “the child grew, and the LORD blessed him”. Those four words, “the LORD blessed him” are full of meaning. Strong’s Concordance shows us that the word “blessed” is the very same word as in the words which God gave to Aaron in order to bless the people: “The LORD bless thee (i.e., each one of you), and keep thee: The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace” (Numbers 6:24-26; see also Psalm 67:1). No doubt these are words which Manoah and his wife would have taught their son. By faith he had laid hold upon the blessing and knew that grace, peace and divine illumination in his soul. Perhaps that was the secret of his being “sun-like” – his sunny countenance resulted from his enjoyment of the Lord.

**Samson’s Eyes.** His faith came from hearing the precious words of high-priestly blessing. But seeing was another matter, and eventually he did better without his eyes. In chapter 14:1 he sees “a daughter of the Philistines” and marries her. It seems the Lord permitted this, but only because He “sought an occasion against the Philistines”. But soon her father gave her to someone else. He did offer Samson her younger sister who was “fairer than she”. Samson refused this offer, which may indicate that it was really something more than the sight of his eyes that led him to chose the elder sister. Eventually his wife and her father were burnt with fire, and terrible vengeance was wrought on the Philistines by Samson.

It was probably the lowest point morally of Samson’s life when he went to Gaza “and saw there an harlot” (16:1). It seems Samson had walked into a trap but the Spirit of the Lord enabled him to carry the locked gate of the city to a hilltop near Hebron. Paul’s advice to Timothy was: “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2Timothy 2:22). The name Hebron means fellowship. The same Spirit who delivered Samson will deliver us when we “flee fornication” (1Corinthians 6:18), and lead us to seek fellowship with “them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart”. We cannot flee without turning our backs and no longer seeing that which allures us. We

cannot follow unless we fix our attention on that One who is the perfection of “righteousness, faith, love and peace”.

It seems to have been of God that Samson finally was deprived of his eyes by the Philistines. Truly his greatest victory was won without them.

**Samson’s Solitude.** Perhaps in this Samson is most clearly a type of the Lord Jesus. Apart from his parents he does not seem to have had anyone likeminded or anyone who would stand with him. The three women who came into his life all proved to be treacherous. Although he does not seem to have always been careful to keep the rules of naziritiship, he must have been unique in a day when the land was dominated by the Philistines and God’s people just seem to have accepted the situation and avoided offending their oppressors. Separation to God must have been otherwise unknown, and there was no other whom the Holy Spirit could move and use to realise God’s purposes.

This is but a faint picture of the Lord Jesus, who was misunderstood even by His own disciples, who all finally forsook Him and fled. His own people “received Him not”, and the world hated Him because He ‘testified of their works that they were evil’ (John 1:11; 7:7). Yet the Holy Spirit was delighted to rest upon Him, and guide and enable Him, both in His ministry and His sacrifice.

**Samson’s Prayers.** The two loneliest moments in Samson’s life are also the only two occasions when his prayers are recorded – at Lehi in Judges 15:18, betrayed and bound by his own people, and in Gaza in 16:28,30, blind and bullied by the Philistines. But even in these circumstances he could cry unto the Lord and on both occasions his prayer was heard. There is no reason to think these were the only times he prayed. He obviously knew that the Lord would hear and answer, and provide His Spirit’s power in remarkable ways.

At Lehi, 3000 men of Judah deliver him bound into the hands of 1000 Philistines. But new cords were no match for the Spirit of the Lord and 1000 Philistines were no match for one man with the crudest of weapons and with God on his side. After this victory Samson was “sore athirst”. In his desperation he prays, “Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?” There are many cases in Scripture where God is addressed in a way that seems inappropriate, but He who sees in secret reads the heart, so there is no reproof and the prayer is answered. The ass’s jaw bone became the unlikely means not only of victory but also of refreshment. Something dead became a fountain of life, and the place was named after the jaw bone – Lehi.

At Gaza, sightless, Samson was being used as a spectacle in honour of Dagon, the Philistines god. The last vestige of his naziritiship was lost when the Philistines took him, but now his hair had grown again and he leans upon the two supporting pillars of the house of Dagon, and utters his final prayer, “Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes ... Let me die with the Philistines”.

It is interesting that, at Calvary, one of the two thieves addresses the One on the central cross in a similar way, “Lord, remember me...” (Luke 23:42). He, a sinner, took his last opportunity to pray for salvation, and was saved. Samson, a believer, took his last opportunity to pray for victory, and slew more enemies in his death than in his life. In this especially, Samson is a type of Christ. Those saved when He was here may have numbered a few thousand, but through His mighty Calvary love “all Israel shall be saved” (Romans 11:26) and “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (Revelation 7:9) shall praise God and the Lamb for ever.

The children’s chorus says, “Jesus wants me for a sunbeam”. Samson was a ray of sunshine in a very dark day. We are “children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (1Thess. 5:5). May the same Spirit of the Lord who strengthened Samson, enable us to be different for God, and be a blessing to those around us.

[< Back to Contents >](#)

---

# The Acts of the Apostles

## Chapter 10:17-33

### The messengers report to Peter (v.17-22)

Although Peter was in no doubt as to what he had actually seen in the vision of the great sheet with the 'unclean' creatures therein, he "doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean". That is, he was inwardly perplexed and confused. Indeed, it would be another two days (Acts 10:23,24), before subsequent events taught Peter the meaning of the vision (Acts 10:28). But God's timing for the unfolding of His purpose is always exact and now the three men sent by Cornelius stand at the outside gate of Simon's tannery, announce their presence to whoever was there, asking if Peter were lodged here.

While the three men are still at the tannery gate, Peter is still pondering the vision, knowing that it was a message of significance and importance, yet he was needing clarity and direction as to the purpose of the communication. Then in some direct and unmistakable way, apart from a vision, Peter at the same moment receives a direct revelation: "the Spirit said unto him". It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the actions of the risen Lord Jesus Christ and those of the Holy Spirit. There is also the link between the activity of the angel (Acts 10:3), and the Holy Spirit. We see the various means of communication here used by God all to emphasise and corroborate the importance and validity of the message being conveyed.

We note how the messages from divine Persons to Peter dovetail in their timing with the communications of the three messengers from Cornelius. If the thrice repeated vision was graphic, the complementary revelation from the Holy Spirit was concise and straightforward; "Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them".

This could not be clearer. Peter was to (a) make no distinction between Jew and Gentile; and (b) comply with the Holy Spirit's direction without hesitation or any misgivings. The greatest possible assurance is given: the Holy Spirit who gave Peter the direct revelation also sent these three Gentile men to him. The vision challenged Peter's understanding of the basic distinction between clean and unclean foods; the Holy Spirit's direction removed Peter's concerns which would previously have led him to make a distinction between clean and unclean people!

The warmth in Peter's words of greeting, given his orthodox background, to the three messengers was most likely seen by them as almost miraculous. That which was related to them by Cornelius at Cæsarea is being endorsed by the next step at Joppa. Peter said, "Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?" Cornelius' character is then confirmed by those from his own household: "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews." Cornelius' commission is then recounted: he "was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."

### Peter goes with the messengers to meet Cornelius (v.23,24)

Peter, who was lodging with Simon the tanner, in turn provides a night's lodging for these three messengers even though they were Gentiles. Evidently Peter had got the message of the great sheet! As he wrote later, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1Pet. 4:9).

Then, on the **morning of day No.3**, Peter went with Cornelius' servants along the coastal road towards Cæsarea. In addition, six believers from Joppa, per Acts 11:12, accompanied them, so there was a total of ten in the party. By taking this plurality of believing Jews with him, Peter demonstrates the practical function of fellowship as these would later be able to testify all that was said and happened. There is spiritual safety in the company of other believers. These six also went with Peter to Jerusalem, as we shall see in Acts Chapter 11.

Then, on **day No.4**, they arrived in Cæsarea. It would have taken the ten men longer to go from Joppa to Cæsarea than it had taken the three men travelling in the opposite direction, only two days before. It is likely those from Joppa were walking the 32 miles and rest stops and an overnight were required. Cornelius was waiting for them and had “called together his kinsmen and near friends” in expectation. These are not only Cornelius’ household but also his relatives and close, intimate, familiar friends. Cornelius had evidently estimated the time that Peter would arrive or, perhaps, some of his servants had ridden on ahead to provide him with an update on progress.

### **Peter and Cornelius’ initial conversation (v.25-33)**

Cornelius shows all due courtesy to Peter on his arrival, but then pays homage to Peter by falling at his feet and worshipping him. While this shows something of Cornelius’ humility and that he was receptive to whatever Peter had to convey, it is payment of homage to a superior of whom a favour is being asked. It suggests that Cornelius’ knowledge of God is limited, failing to recognise that Peter is the Lord’s servant.

Peter is quick to indicate that it was an inappropriate gesture on the part of Cornelius, but his manner of doing so is both courteous and consistent with the recent revelation he had received. His words, “Stand up; I myself also am a man” shows that it is inappropriate to worship men as if divine. Although Peter is a Jew, he was only a man, no different from Gentiles. Peter is now in the good of the “great sheet” revelation: he recognises that there is only one class of human beings!

Cornelius takes Peter inside having friendly conversation on the way. There Peter found “many that were come together”. Peter’s initial comments to them seeks to dispel any prejudice there may have been. He said, “Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation.” For a Jew such action was taboo. It was not explicably forbidden, but was contrary to ancient custom as it was perceived as making a Jew ceremonially unclean. But Peter goes on to say, “but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Peter acknowledges to Cornelius that he had been corrected in his outlook, without going into the details of the “great sheet” revelation. Peter declares the inappropriateness of treating Gentiles as if unclean, as a dog. He has made the proper connection that the teaching for the “great sheet” was about more than food, it had to do with people as well! So Peter clarifies his position to the whole company at the outset. He then explains that, as a result, he had come unto them without demur, without raising any objections, immediately in response to the request conveyed by Cornelius’ messengers. Peter asks “for what intent ye have sent for me?”; that is, for what reason.

Cornelius responds. We should note that the information given in vv. 30-33 ties in closely with that given in vv.3-6. “Four days ago” is what we might call ‘inclusive reckoning’; we would probably refer to this as being 3 days ago. Cornelius in saying “I was fasting until this hour”, implies that this conversation with Peter is also at the ninth hour, that is 3pm. Cornelius then gives information additional to that in vv. 3-6, yet omits any reference to his fear (v4). The angel was as “a man” in “bright clothing”, therefore the angel’s visitation was in human form and his heavenly origin is stressed by his raiment charged with the glory of the presence of God. Cornelius then rehearses his vision. We should note that both visions in the chapter are repeated twice, emphasising their importance.

In hearing what the angel said to Cornelius, “Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God”, Peter learns that God (a) hears the sincere and earnest prayers of anyone; and (b) recognises good works, whoever performs them. Peter should have been able to recognise the commonality of God’s revelation to both himself and Cornelius, which was reassuring.

Cornelius then rehearses the angel’s instructions and states “Immediately therefore I sent to thee.” This was an instant response by Cornelius, he didn’t delay, and as soon as it was practical he had sent his servants to Joppa to Peter. Lethargic attitudes and lateness in complying with any command of the Lord are to be deplored. A positive response to divine instruction is absolutely vital if further revelation is to be given. Cornelius’ promptness in complying to the communication received was not only for benefit to himself, his household and friends, but also for the ongoing spread of the gospel to Gentile nations.

In saying “thou hast well done that thou art come” he is expressing his thanks to Peter, acknowledging, in effect, ‘you are so kind to come’. In this, the greater (Peter) was being commended by the lesser (Cornelius). This is more appropriate than falling at Peter’s feet in an attempt to worship him as per verse 25.

Cornelius then gives Peter the perfect introduction to his presentation of the gospel: “Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” Could ever a preacher be given a more welcome introduction or beneficial context in which to give his message?

“**We are all here present**” is indicative of a focused purpose for the message. They have been invited by Cornelius, they’ve accepted his invitation and a sense of expectation is suggested by these words. Sometimes a gospel preacher is discouraged by reflecting on who isn’t present before him, rather than being encouraged by who is present. The eternal potential of every gospel message cannot be calculated.

This is a reverent audience. They are “all here present **before God**”. Is it possible that when people gather for a gospel message that they are only conscious of being “before men”? Do preachers inadvertently project an attitude that it is they who are important? Those in Cornelius’ home have an attentiveness governed by an awe of being in God’s presence.

This is also an attentive audience. They want to “hear **all things** that are commanded thee of God.” They are not selective hearers, only wanting to hear what suits their taste. They recognise that God has the right to speak with commanding authority. They also recognise that they have a responsibility to listen with care to what is proclaimed.

When such conditions are fulfilled we have every right to expect that great things will follow!

(To be continued D.V.)

[< Back to Contents >](#)

---

## Get to Know Your Bible

### NEW TESTAMENT OUTLINE – Paper No 11.

#### PAUL’S PERSONAL EPISTLES

Paul wrote directly to seven churches. He also wrote to three individuals. The letter to his dearly beloved fellow labourer, Philemon, is directly personal about a specific matter. He also wrote two letters to Timothy and one to Titus. First Timothy and Titus were written after his first imprisonment. Second Timothy is his final writing during the second imprisonment pending his “departure”. Although these last three letters are addressed to individuals and contain much encouragement and exhortation directly related to their specific service for the Lord, Paul did not intend these writings only for private reception. The local church background has a definite bearing upon the assembly truth and practise as well as general Christian testimony. For this reason, the term Pastoral Epistles, is convenient though Second Timothy is largely personal.

Timothy and Titus were sent temporarily by the apostle to Ephesus and Crete, to instruct the believers and to warn against false teachers. They were not installed as settled clergymen, pastors or given the office of senior elders. (Older editions of the KJV Bible contain uninspired subscripts at the end of these epistles which perpetuate clerical error.) Paul had already sought to strengthen shepherd care among the flock at Ephesus (Acts 20:28). He therefore left Timothy at Ephesus and Titus at Crete and wrote to support these two fellow labourers and the elders with his apostolic authority.

## FIRST TIMOTHY

### TIMOTHY

Timothy is first mentioned as living at Lystra (Acts 16:1). His mother, Eunice, was a Jewess (2Tim. 1:5); his father was a Greek. He was early the subject of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures by his mother and grandmother (2Tim. 3:14-15), which made him wise unto salvation. He was well spoken of by his fellow-believers, and became the intimate friend and companion of the apostle as his true son in the faith (1Tim. 1:2). His is the only person in the New Testament. to be called a "Man of God". Six of Paul's epistles include Timothy in the salutations – 2Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1Thess. 1:1; 2Thess. 1:1 and Philem. 1.

Timothy may have been timid, retiring or passive in nature. Paul exhorted him to stir up the gift given to him and as a good soldier to "fight the good fight" (1:18; 6:12), preaching the Gospel and guarding the deposit of faith, loyally passing it on to others. In this he was not to let his relative youth hinder his faithfulness (4:12). Timothy accompanied Paul on his second and third missionary journeys and is associated with the prison epistles being imprisoned himself (Heb. 13:23). Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica to comfort the saints in trials and to Corinth to communicate much needed doctrinal teaching. Timothy came into Macedonia due to concern for Paul's needs. His visit to the Philippian believers was to care for their state and to the Ephesians to charge them that they were to teach no other doctrine. No other servant received such apostolic commendation for devoted service and selfless interest in the welfare of the saints. The older servant of God showed no jealousy or resentment and the younger man showed no youthful impatience. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, after so many experiences labouring together in the work of God, through many trials and difficulties, Paul was deserted by others in his final days in prison. From the cold, dark, dampness of his prison dungeon we can feel the earnest longing and emotional desire in Paul's heart to see Timothy once more (2Tim. 4:9).

### TIME

Paul's missionary journeys occurred possibly during the years AD 48-56. From AD 56-60, Paul after his initial arrest, was brought before various Roman authorities, arriving in Rome, and put under house arrest, AD 61-62 (Acts 28:30-31). After his release from prison, he was free to revisit some assemblies in the period, AD 63-67. During these visits he left his fellow labourers, Timothy at Ephesus and Titus at Crete, subsequently writing a letter to each. Dates for 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy and Titus can only be suggestive as possibly AD 63-66. When Paul was imprisoned again for the last time, he wrote his last letter, 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, possibly in the winter of AD 68.

Internal evidence for a later date of writing the epistles of Timothy and Titus appears in the strong language used to expose and warn against reprobate Judaism which had matured into the false teaching of later Gnosticism, godlessness and immoral living that accompanied false doctrine. These false teachers had abandoned the true use of the law (1:7-8), put away conscience as well as the faith (1:19; 4:2), speaking lies, corrupt, godless, seekers of earthly gain (1Tim. 6:5; Titus 1:11), speaking heresies, as grievous wolves among the flock foretold by Paul when he spoke to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:29). The false teaching which is challenged, which is not Judaism which upheld the law and tried to join it with faith in Christ as the way of salvation in earlier Pauline epistles, has now descended from legality to godlessness, loose living, to blasphemy and the shipwreck of named men. This development of false doctrine proves the later date of these personal epistles as compared with Paul's earlier writings.

### TEACHING

These letters differ in style and language from Paul's other epistles. Since the teaching contains different subjects, Paul uses different words and an extended vocabulary to deal with pastoral care beginning with a threefold salutation, "grace, mercy and peace" (1:2). Timothy had a special call to wage a good warfare by enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (1Tim. 1:18; 2Tim. 2:3-4). In this battle there were many trials, antagonists and enemies. In this task, considering his comparative youth and short period of service he needed to be clear in doctrine, to follow the explicit exhortations of Paul himself and certainly to experience Divine "mercy".



Ephesus was one of the most favoured assemblies in the New Testament. Paul says, “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31). There were some who were teaching wrong doctrine in relation to the Gospel, the Law and partaking of meats. Instructions were vital that those who were scripturally qualified to engage in the work of deacons and overseers should be recognised as the shepherds of the flock. There was need for scriptural teaching regarding morals, marriage, home life and relationships between old and young, brethren and sisters, rich and poor, servants and masters. The danger of the love of money, in subjection of certain women, care for genuine widows, and the danger of worldliness of believers were practical issues needing teaching and example.

With such a range of important issues to be addressed, Timothy had been left with a solemn charge. Yet, positive ministry was to be given and such words as “godliness”, “good” things, and “great” things merit further study. Wholesome words, health giving doctrine and abiding riches are the real spiritual treasure of those who study this practical epistle and its teaching with a true desire to understand and obey the teaching.

### TRUTH IN 1<sup>st</sup> TIMOTHY

In this Epistle, Christ is presented as King. “Now unto the King Eternal” (1:17); “King of kings and Lord of lords” (6:15). Apart from Matthew, the Gospel of the King, and Melchizedek, King of Salem in Hebrews, His Kingship is not stressed in the epistles. “Christ is the Head of the Church” (Eph. 5:23). Why are these aspects of Kingship the focus of the first and last chapters of this epistle? Paul is writing about godly order among God’s people. To see Divine order amid worldly chaos, rule surrounded by anarchy, government in contrast to lawlessness, standards of righteousness against the dark background of the corruption of mankind; study 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy. Christ is the key. The headline is, “The King Eternal” (1:17). In this doxology of praise there is no need to distinguish the Persons of the Godhead. The absolute Ruler works out His Sovereign purpose and control of all ages.

“King of the Ages” – Immutable; No change, Sovereignty inherent in Deity.

“Immortal” – Incorruptible; Not subject to decay as earthly things.

“Invisible” – Invincible; Not tangible, not of creation or human vision.

“The only [wise] God” – Infallible; No other, alone, solitary, uniqueness of Deity.

“Be honour and Glory” – Incomparable; No comparison beyond human evaluation, veneration, reverence.

“For ever and Ever” – Infinite; No end, will not change.

With Christ as the Example of Control, the Headline of order to follow is to be:

1. *PERSONAL CONTROL* – “Timothy ... was a good warfare” (1:18), “Be then an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (4:12). Timothy was to silence his opposers by godly living.

2. *NATIONAL AUTHORITY* – “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (2:1-2). Public prayer for national rulers, even the government of Nero was contrary to natural Jewish thinking. Peaceful conditions in the country and national tranquillity in secular life enable the believer to live in dignity and decency. Believers should have no thought of protest or be held in suspicion of subversive activities.

3. *DOMESTIC RULE* – “An overseer must be ... One that ruleth (controlleth, conducteth) well his own house” (3:2-4); having his family in habitual subjection.

4. *CHURCH ORDER* – “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in [the] House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the TRUTH” (3:15). In this key verse, there is no suggestion that Timothy was at fault, but he was to pass on the charge concerning behaviour and responsibility befitting God’s presence in the church, in testimony as House of God

character. The local assembly of saints gathered to the Lord's Name is the "Pillar" to uphold; support the testimony, and the "Ground"; foundation, bulwark in face of opposition, as the propagator and protector of, "The Truth".

The support of the "Truth" (3:15) and the substance of the "Truth" (3:16), is the corporate, open confession of the assembly, of this great "Mystery", revering God as revealed in Christ. "And without controversy (no dissent) great is the Mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in [the] flesh", existence made visible in MANHOOD, seen in incarnation; "justified in [the] spirit", RESURRECTION; "seen (hath appeared, made visible) of angels", ASCENDED, ENTHRONED; "preached unto the Gentiles", HERALDED IN THE GOSPEL among the nations; "believed on in the world", message proclaimed and faith exercised, SALVATION; "received up into glory", made welcome, seated in the presence of God in GLORY. Denial of any of these great doctrines excludes from assembly fellowship.

5. *KINGDOM HONOUR* – "I give thee charge (the exhortations of the epistle to be kept as a priceless treasure, at Ephesus) in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontious Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment (keep as a trustee, the day of vindication lay ahead) without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in His times He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (6:13-15). In God's times, He will "shew", manifest, display, from the word we have the expression "exhibition". The word "shew" is used in the expression; "He shewed them His hands and His feet". What God manifests visually is in Christ in His literal Kingdom. "To whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (6:13-16).

## SECOND TIMOTHY

### DATE

In the interval between the writing of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, Paul had travelled to Ephesus by way of Troas where he left his cloak and books (4:13), with Carpus. After a short visit to Crete he returned and wrote to Titus. Next, he went to Corinth via Miletum (4:20), and on to Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). At some stage he was arrested and brought as a prisoner to Rome where he wrote 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy shortly before his martyrdom. Paul's first imprisonment was less strict, having liberty to lodge in his own hired house, to receive visitors and be guarded by a single soldier (Acts 28). In his second imprisonment, he was chained and many had forsaken him because of the danger of being identified even as a Christian in Rome. Onesiphorous, Linus, Pudens and others seemed to find him with great difficulty. Only Luke remained with him. There was possibly a maximum of five years between 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy, AD 63, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, prior to his death in the winter of AD 67 or spring AD 68, the last year of the reign of the wicked Nero (4:21).

### DOCTRINE

The second Epistle is more personal than pastoral. Individual responsibility and behaviour is evident. Twenty three people are named personally in this short epistle, four send greetings to Timothy; twelve are not mentioned elsewhere. Some are commended (1:16-17), some have failed (4:10), and some are condemned (4:14). The epistle is evidently intended for public reading in order to give apostolic authority and strengthen the hands of Timothy in his serious and weighty task of committing the teaching to succeeding generations. "Be diligent to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2:15). 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, like 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter and other second epistles, deals with false doctrine and apostates by name (3:1-9), that require open rebuke and rejection.

Modern sceptics, who oppose the doctrine of 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, only reveal that they are guilty of the same errors, which make the teaching of this epistle very necessary in these "last days". In 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy Paul writes about; "the latter times" (4:1). In 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy he writes about perilous conditions in; "the last days" (3:1). Some believers today are so discouraged by the general abandonment of New Testament doctrine, that they excuse themselves from holding scriptural doctrine while seeking to live a personal godly life. Timothy was to be a pattern, a model of sound teaching given to him by Paul, not a creed held academically or in theory. "Hold fast the form (pattern) of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love

which is in Christ Jesus". He was to "HOLD" it (1:13); "GUARD" (KEEP) it (1:14); "TEACH" it (2:2); "STUDY" it, "APPLY" it, "RIGHTLY DIVIDE" it (2:15); "CONTINUE" in it" (3:14); "DEFEND" it (4:2).

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong (strengthened) in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2:1-2). The central teaching of this letter is that of the revelation of the true Man of God. Timothy was to stir up the gift of God given to him (1:6), and to be; "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2:1). The benefit to any young man exercised concerning the Lord's Work is to read this letter as if addressed to himself, from God Himself, by the Spirit through the apostle. The essentials are these two qualifications, "Grace" and "Gift". A man can only be a true servant of the Word when gift is bestowed upon him by the risen Head of the Church. A servant can only profitably use this gift by means of this grace of fellowship with Christ and in the character of Christ in light, life and love. These essentials cannot be bestowed by the call of men and no college can make a man a true minister of the Gospel if he lacks these. These qualities are being lost in the passing of generations. The totality of doctrinal truth was to be kept, guarded as a precious deposit, against all attack (1:14), and handed on as the torch of truth to the third and fourth generations of faithful men (2:2).

Seven figures of the man of God are seen in chapter 2; the first and last are literal. The teacher of the Word (2:3). The soldier in the War (2:4). The athlete in the Race (2:5). The husbandman in the Work (2:6). The greatest of all examples is Jesus Christ, in suffering and glory, in death and resurrection (2:7-13). Timothy was to be a workman to be approved, without deviation or distortion, guiding a straight course through the scriptures (2:15). He was to be a clean vessel, sanctified and meet for the Masters use (2:20-22). He must be a humble bondsman serving in meekness (not weakness) as he corrects and seeks the repentance of those who have been snared by the devil into denial of the truth (2:22-26).

In chapter 3 and chapter 4 there are two prophetic utterances concerning the coming apostasy, called "perilous (grievous) times" (3:1-6), and "the time" when there would be a deliberate refusal to tolerate "sound doctrine". There will be a majority who wilfully turn away, "their ears from the truth" (4:3-4). In this closing epistle, Paul is warning as to what will develop in the "last days" of church testimony. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (3:5). This is modern denominationalism, maintaining an outward appearance, (a semblance, a shape without reality) of piety; a performance without the power of the Holy Spirit. They have a theory of godliness, a body without breath, a programme without life. "But thou" Timothy, "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2:1). "But thou hast fully known my doctrine..." (3:10). "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned..." (3:14). "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (4:5).

#### DEPARTURE

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (4:6). This is the last epistle of the great apostle. He has already appeared before Cæsar (4:16,17), but the Lord overruled in his release. Rearrested, imprisoned in a miserable, cold, damp dungeon, there is now no doubt in his mind that he had finished his course. He had one urgent desire, in the will of the Lord, to see once more, Timothy his son in the faith and fellow worker in severe adversity. This led Paul to write this second epistle, full of encouragement and exhortation. There is no trace of despondency or disappointment in this final letter. Paul had lost all things but he had gained Christ. The epistle, rich in personal details now closes. The dauntless messenger of Christ dictates these words for Luke to record in the most horrendous conditions on earth, yet tender and sympathetic, majestic and grand to the very end.

Lit. "I am already being offered" (poured out, as a drink offering). A Priestly Term (4:6).

"The time of my departure hath arrived" (loosing, setting free, as raising the anchor to enable the ship to sail away). A Nautical Term (4:6).

"The good fight, I have fought" (every enemy vanquished). A Wrestling Term (4:7).

"The race, I have finished" (the endurance, obstacle race). An Athletic expression (4:7).

“The faith, I have kept” (the deposit guarded). A Military Term (4:7).

In these last three expression as the boxer or wrestler he has completed the contest, against Satan, principalities and powers, Jew and Gentile; wiles of the devil at Ephesus and Gnosticism at Colossae. As the runner, he has crossed the finishing line of the scheduled race with no regrets. He has protected the truth, he has been loyal to the trust placed in him and defended the deposit of sound doctrine against all attack.

After these aspects of the fragrance, the fight, the finish, the faith, Paul with confidence has no doubt about the future. “Henceforth there is laid up (same word as the deposits (1:12,14; 4:7,8) for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge (the just reward for faithful service at the Judgment Seat of Christ), shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (4:8).

[< Back to Contents >](#)

---

## Waiting on the Lord

The Scripture expressions ‘waiting on’, ‘waiting upon’, and ‘waiting for’ almost mean the same thing, namely awaiting someone or something expectantly (‘To wait on’ someone or something is an expression still heard in some parts of the English-speaking world: for example, in Scotland.) When any of these expressions is used in the Old Testament in connection with God, for example, “wait on the LORD”, they generally describe someone patiently waiting for God to fulfil a previously given promise or revealed purpose. However, the wait is often long, and the attendant circumstances are frequently testing. Such waiting therefore requires faith to believe that God can be completely trusted as to the timing of His promised action, and also that He will then do what is for the genuine spiritual good of the one waiting, as well as that which is for His greater glory.

We live in days when we expect instant replies to our communications, with little or no waiting. Similarly, in our prayer lives, we are often like the psalmist who pleaded for God to act “speedily” (Psa. 31:2; 69:17; 102:2; 143:7). We find the same thing elsewhere in the Psalms, where we read the question “how long O LORD” at least eight times (6:3; 13:1; 35:17; 79:5; 80:4; 89:46; 90:13; 94:3). However, God’s answer might not come immediately and if, in His sovereign will, He chooses not to answer swiftly, then we have to “wait on [upon, for] the Lord”. For us today this might be in times of recovering from illness, looking for employment, waiting for doors to open for Gospel opportunity, or many other different circumstances. Of course, by not answering immediately, and making us wait, God is thereby ensuring that we can enjoy the fulness of the blessing promised in James 1:4, “Let [patience] endurance have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (JND<sup>1</sup>).

Below we will gather together the “comfort of the Scriptures” (Rom. 15:4) in the matter of waiting, which helps believers live under the often-testing circumstances of patiently waiting on the Lord. At such times there is, on the one hand, the possibility of becoming despondent or, on the other, the temptation to act hastily to try to solve the problem independently, without waiting for God to act.

In the Old Testament, the origin waiter for the Lord is the previously impatient, scheming Jacob who, towards the end of his life, exclaimed “I wait for thy salvation, O Jehovah” (Gen. 49:18, JND<sup>1</sup>). He was predicting the future of each of his sons and their descendants and, having just said some sad things about the prospects of Dan, he was about to say something similar concerning Gad, when he unexpectedly interjected this remarkable statement of faith! Albert Barns commented “The Patriarch, contemplating the power of the adversaries of his future people, breaks forth into the expression of his longing desire and hope of that salvation of the Almighty by which alone they can be delivered”.<sup>2</sup>

Not surprisingly, most of the other Old Testament quotations are subsequently found in the Psalms,

especially those written by David, but we also find a good number in Isaiah, and a few elsewhere in Scripture.

### **Statements about Those Who Waited on the Lord**

Psalm 33 begins by instructing the righteous to “Rejoice in the LORD ... praise the LORD ... sing unto Him (vv. 1-2). The reasons given for this instruction are that “the word of the LORD is right; and all His works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. By the word of the LORD were the heavens made” (vv. 4-6). Having assured themselves that “the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine” (vv. 18-19), the faithful are then happily able to say “Our soul waiteth for the LORD: He is our help and our shield” (v20). No circumstances are outside the control of such a God, so the future can be happily committed to Him!

There are two interesting illustrations in the Psalms about waiting, the first concerning servants: “Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that He have mercy upon us” (123:2). Secondly, concerning those Levites on duty in the Tabernacle, whose job was to look for and announce the break of day, so that the new sacrifice could be offered: “I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the LORD more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning” (130:5-6). The Levites, “servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD” (134:1) were watching and waiting with eager expectation for the dawn of a new day.

Isaiah often had waiting on his mind when delivering his great prophecy about the Babylonian Captivity and beyond, following the failures of the tribe of Judah. Whether for himself, or when by the Spirit he projected his thoughts to the coming days of the Tribulation, “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7), he wrote “I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him” (Isa. 8:17). Isaiah had been faithful in recording his prophecy and, although surrounded by unfaithfulness, he would wait for the Lord to fulfil His previously revealed purposes. When the answer came, it brought forth the happy exclamation “it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (25:9). The complete fulfilment of this verse will be seen in the experience of Israel at the end of the Tribulation. Then they will say “Yea, in the way of Thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for Thee; the desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee” (26:8): so God’s name, and the remembrance of Him, will be uppermost in their thoughts.

Similarly, in Isaiah 30:18 we have “A picture of the blessing reserved for the faithful remnant in the Messianic dispensation”<sup>3</sup> when we read “therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for Him.” Then the waiters will enjoy the promised blessing: “the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer thee” (v19).

In the final days of the Tribulation, just before the establishment of the Kingdom, the armies of the nations will assemble against Jerusalem, but they will be utterly destroyed. The faithful remnant in Israel will be looking on and praying “O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for Thee: be Thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble (33:2).

Hosea warned the nation of Judah that their Jacob-like character would bring the Lord’s discipline: “The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will He recompense him (Hos. 12:2). The answer to this was “Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment and wait on thy God continually” (v6).

### **Promises to Those who Wait on the Lord**

To encourage believers to patiently “wait on [upon, for] the Lord”, there are great promises to be found in

Scriptures. One such is found in Psalm 27:14: "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD". In verses 7-12 of this Psalm, David had cried to the Lord to answer his prayer and, having done so, he encouraged himself to wait for the answer. Delitzsch<sup>4</sup> makes this very helpful comment: 'the believing half of his soul [is] addressing the despondent and weaker half.' Further, three times in Psalm 37, David encourages those whom might be concerned by evildoers seeming to presently prosper (vv. 7,9,34), on each occasion telling them to wait on the Lord. The first of these is "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass" (v7). He then reassures them by saying "evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth" (v9). Lastly, he encourages them to "Wait on the LORD, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shall see it" (v34).

The idea of inheriting the land is mentioned five times in this Psalm, speaking of future blessing in spite of evildoers' present temporary prosperity. David's own experience was "I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry" (40:1).

Isaiah later gave the inspired promise that "they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31). He had been contemplating the greatness of the everlasting God as the mighty Creator, who "fainteth not, neither is weary (v28). However, His is not a distant God, but One who "giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength" (v29). This promised power was guaranteed to those that "wait upon the LORD". No matter how faint they might have been, they were promised that they would untiringly mount up, run and walk. They had faith in God, and were waiting on Him to bless them, Matthew Henry explains: 'Here [the promise] properly refers to those who were suffering a long and grievous captivity in Babylon, and who had no prospect of deliverance but in Him.' Later in Isaiah's prophecy we read "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him" (64:4). Paul, quoting Isaiah, expressed "waiteth for Him" as "love Him" (1Cor. 2:9), since waiting for Him must arise from loving Him.

When Micah, speaking for the nation of Israel, realised that all men would fail them, he said "Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me" (Mic. 7:7,8). Sin had brought judgment, but Israel's enemies were not to think that they would always oppress them, because eventually God would save His people.

Bullenger notes that Zephaniah 3:8 contains all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet: "Therefore wait ye upon Me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey...", and suggest that 'this implies that the verse takes in the whole purpose of Jehovah concerning Israel.' Judgment was pending on Jerusalem's enemies, so the faithful remnant should "wait on the LORD".

### **Prayers of Those Waiting on the Lord**

Like any spiritual exercise, waiting on the Lord requires prayer. David thus prayed, "Yea, let none that wait on Thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause" (Psa. 25:3); "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on Thee" (v21): "Let not them that wait on Thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek Thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel" (69:6). Sometimes there is much pain in waiting, as in Psalm 69:3: "I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God." While this Psalm has a clear prophetic application to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus on the cross, historically it describes David's exhaustion following his pleading prayer. Isaiah prayed "O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for Thee: be Thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble" (Isa. 33:2). The Lord will judge the oppressors of Zion but, while His people wait, they need His daily support.

## A Warning for Those Waiting on the Lord

Waiting has a very practical application in any individual's life: "Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and He shall save thee" (Prov. 20:22). The New Testament commentary on this verse is "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men ... Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:17,19).

## Waiting on the Lord in the New Testament

The spiritual descendants of Jacob, David and Isaiah also waited on the Lord: "Simeon ... just and devout, waiting for the consolation [comfort] of Israel" (Luke 2:25), and "Joseph of Armathæa, an honourable counsellor ... waited for the kingdom of God" (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51). Otherwise, waiting in the New Testament was often for a divine Person to come from Heaven, rather than for a divine purpose working itself out on earth. At the beginning of the book of Acts, Jewish believers were waiting for "the promise of the Father" (1:4), the Holy Spirit, as the Lord Jesus had "commanded them [the disciples] that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me" (1:4, see also 2:33 and Luke 24:49). The Thessalonian believers turned to the living God "to wait for His Son from Heaven" (1Thess. 1:10), and the apostle's desire for them was "the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2Thess. 3:5).

The Roman believers were taught "if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:25). Help in this waiting comes from the Holy Spirit, "for we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Gal. 5:5). Paul wrote to the assembly at Corinth, saying that they "come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Cor. 1:7). Likewise, when mentioning Heaven to the Philippians, he said it is "from whence also we wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20, RV). Later, the Hebrew believers were reminded that "Christ ... shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation (Heb. 9:28, RV).

## Conclusion

In all ages, faithful saints have waited on the Lord, eagerly anticipating the fulfilment of His promises: God works, they wait! Certainly "the LORD is good unto them that wait for Him" (Lam. 3:25).

Wait my soul, upon the Lord,  
To His gracious promise flee,  
Laying hold upon His word,  
'As the days thy strength shall be.'

William Freeman Lloyd (1838)

<sup>1</sup> J N Darby, The Holy Scriptures – A New Translation from the Original Languages

<sup>2</sup> Notes on the Old Testament, Blackie & Son: London, 1884

<sup>3</sup> Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

<sup>4</sup> Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (1Peter 1:13)

## How to Face Opposition and Persecution

**“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven” (Matthew 5:44-45)**

We will now try to give some helpful suggestions on how opposition and controversies can be faced. We shall try to learn from the experiences of several servants of God of the past generation.

### **Assess the Audience**

As preachers, we must constantly be aware of the nature and mood of our audience. For example, when fresh interruptions occur we say to the cultivators, “Hold hard, I’ve not finished ploughing yet, so the land is not ready for you to sow”. To the blacksmiths, “The iron is not red hot. You may not yet strike with your hammer”. To the carpenters, “I am sawing the log. You shall not handle the planks presently”. To the potters, “the wheel is not spinning fast enough yet. Wait a bit to fashion the vessel”, and so on, to show that their intervention is premature. So a preacher should divert the attention of his hearers from such distractions and handle such incidents with good humour and induce them to listen and respond.

About the apostle Paul it has been said, “To the Jews he invariably speaks, to begin with, about the heroes of their national history; to the ignorant heathen, he talks about the weather and the crops; and to the Athenians he quotes their own poets and delivers a high-voltage oration; yet in every case he arrives naturally at his own subject, and preaches the gospel to each audience in the language of their own familiar ideas”.

### **Be Patient and Prepared**

It is also necessary that the messengers of the gospel must always be prepared to suffer for Christ’s sake. We have to rely fully on God’s grace, and His provisions. For God has said, “My grace is sufficient for thee”. One of God’s servants who had long-time experience in gospel work writes, “We must be patient and loving and should never use carnal weapons. If a mob either attacks or ridicules us, or even if they assault us for Christ’s sake, we must bear it gladly. Should the people throw stones at us, or otherwise molest us, we should never contemplate vengeance, but bear it patiently”. Another has said, “Answer reproach with silence”.

Missionary C. Harding states this as to why a preacher should endure opposition and persecution:

1. The most ignorant and debased man in the crowd has a soul of inestimable value.
2. God bears with them, loves and pities them, and hence you also ought to do the same.
3. Christ is present to see how you are delivering His message and how you are behaving as you preach.
4. Men as bad as any of them have been saved, and there may be hope for everyone you addressed, even the most debased.

### **Avoid Controversy**

Another writer discusses *controversy*:

Avoid controversy as much as possible, without diminishing the positive message that all men are sinners and Jesus is the Christ and He is the *only* Saviour. The testimony of those who have been actually saved is of more value than the best polemics (arguments) that are devoid of testimony. If controversy becomes necessary, whether with men or other ideologies and religions, mention first that point on which you can agree with your opponent. Even in condemning seek ‘flank movements’ rather than ‘frontal attack’. Reviling is never argument, nor is ridicule. We have the promise of God that we shall be given “mouth and wisdom,



which the adversaries shall not be able to withstand or gainsay” (Luke 21:15). About Stephen it is written, “They were not able to resist the *wisdom* and the *spirit* by which he spake” (Acts 6:10).

But with all the care and tact in the world, opposition cannot always be averted, as at time some are sure to abuse the preacher. A gifted missionary of last century, Mr L. Bissel, has much to say on this subject.

“After letting a man go on with a tirade of abuse, I have quietly said to the people: ‘This man has given you an illustration of the truth of what I was saying, that the heart of man is full of evil, and he must have a new heart or he cannot see God’ or ‘This man is demolishing faster that I can. I was telling you about it in words, but he gives you a living specimen of its evil nature’.”

### **Avoid Arguments**

Let us remember there is *no argument needed* to prove the truth of the gospel. Two and two makes four and if we argue for forty-five hours it will not alter the fact. One might say, “*There is no country called India*”, but it doesn’t alter the fact that India exists”

Sometimes the preacher can cry out the name of the village or town he is in, saying, “*There is no Chennai or there is not Mumbai!* There is no place like that, all an illusion and a lie”, then he can turn to the surprised audience and say, “Will Chennai cease to exist because I say such words?” They will readily agree with him that it will not, and then the preacher can resort by saying that so it is with the gospel of Christ. It is a fact that Christ Jesus came to *save sinners*, that *He died*, that *He arose* and is now in the *heavenly glory* and that He will *come again* soon. Biblical facts have to be accepted and cannot be challenges by argument.

A word of caution will be helpful here. Years ago, an incident took place in a village, where the gospel had seldom or never been preached, though some of the villagers had heard about in it the nearby town. At the close of the meeting, a rather talkative and presumptuous man began to ask questions. He was obviously a troublemaker and the worker dealing with him had very little patience and forethought. He dealt with him in such a manner, which made him appear a fool before others. Some amongst us thought that our champion worker had done most creditably. As a matter of fact, he had only been too clever, but what he could not achieve was to get the people of that village receptive to the gospel and to listen for months thereafter. What a sad testimony it was.

Yet another instance comes to mind, as the writer was also involved, which took place during the 1950’s. Those were days when a good number of people would come around to hear when the gospel was preached in the open air and would show interest. The presence of the Lord would be real on such occasions and we used to sense His overruling hand in our midst. A good number of Gospel portions would be sold out. We were preaching in one part of the town. Those were days, when a certain class of people would raise country pigs, and they were allowed to roam freely in the town. Actually they used to do the real scavenging work! A brother was preaching and another was repeating the message in a louder voice, using a hand megaphone. (It was only a tin sheet rolled into a cone shape and used as a megaphone.) Over 60 or 70 people, men and women, young and old from that locality were eagerly listening to the message.

At the peak of the message a violent young man from the same locality suddenly appeared and wanted us to stop the preaching and began to shout and challenge, about Jesus Christ and Christianity, raising several questions against the gospel. Obviously some group had taught him to behave in such a way. Finally, he settled down to this question, “You say Jesus Christ is a loving God. If so, why should he allow 2000 swine to die in the sea? Is this love?” We were at a loss to control the situation. But suddenly, at that very moment, a pig, which was in the nearby ditch got frightened because of the crown and noise and started to run through the crowd. When this commotion was settled, the preacher came out with a bold and a commanding voice and addressed the troublemaker, “Now, tell me frankly my friend, do you think that this *pig* which ran through the crowd and *you* are similar? Are you not much more that a pig? Do you not have a soul that should answer to a living and a just God?” That man was speechless. Then an old woman who was listening to the gospel from the beginning came out from the crowd and vehemently scolded that trouble maker, in her own colloquial way, “Oh, you reckless wretch! We all know who you are and what kind of man you are. Get away from this place”. That person quietly left the place and we had a very attentive crowd

with a good response. Our Lord has a way out to overrule each and every situation and all circumstances. He is in control of everything. We must always look to Him for guidance, yielding ourselves unto Him.

### **Helpful Suggestions**

Here are a few useful suggestions borne out of experience that would help a preacher, as he stands up to proclaim the glorious gospel:

- Never get angry, or lose your temper and balance even under extreme provocation. Christ's example is the perfect model for us.
- Do not threaten anyone as it always results in negative reactions.
- At times, answer a fool according to his folly.
- Do not take cognisance of minor oppositions and hindrances: just ignore them and keep going on. Very often the opposition will automatically ward off by itself, whereas if you react, it might only increase – fanning burning coals will only increase the flame.
- Do not invite opposition yourself by criticizing others and by your faulty manner of speech.
- Avoid any comment on local politics and religions, especially in the open-air ministry. Always present the gospel in a positive way.
- Appeal to the fair-play instinct of your audience. Try and show them that you are only asking for a fair deal. This will often help to overcome opposition. If possible try to avoid asking questions, and raising controversial issues.
- Be prepared to suffer for Christ. Be prepared to take a lower place. Endure evil speaking and open scolding with utmost patience. It will influence the onlookers far more positively. We are to overcome evil with good.
- Try and always keep your audience gospel friendly, remember that you may have to meet them again, and you are responsible for their individual souls.

### **Anticipated Questions**

Before beginning his message, a preacher of long experience says that he would ask the crowd to listen till he finishes, promising the audience an opportunity to ask any questions they wished. Only once in twenty times would questions be asked. Many times they would say, "You have answered all the questions that we intend to ask". Also, we should not avoid questions, any more that did Christ. We should meet them fairly and answer them to the extent possible. If we cannot answer them honestly, express that, but try to maintain your calm and cool, and continue preaching the truths of the blessed gospel.

Questions are generally raised because of the false notions about Christianity and the inconsistent life of Christians whom they know. Questions such as "foreign religion" should be answered *before* they are asked. Jesus Christ was born and brought up in Asia and that He is not a westerner or white-coloured foreigner as Indians generally think, and it should be clarified. All Europeans are not Christians. It takes more than natural birth to Christian parents to make a true born-again Christian – it requires a *second birth*. So-called Christians with false motives and with a poor testimony are the greatest enemies of the gospel and will suffer the greatest condemnation from man and God.

### **Questioning the Questioner**

Sometimes a well-put question may turn the tables on them. "Friend, you have been on a pilgrimage to such and such places (according to whatever belief the audience has), you have sacrificed to the gods according to your rituals and customs (or you have regularly kept the feasts and fasts and daily prayers). But do you experience soul satisfaction? Forgiveness of sins? Deliverance from the power of sin? And reconciliation with the Holy and Just God? Do you have peace with God?"

As a believer in Christ, you may briefly relate your personal testimony as to how the Lord Jesus Christ in His mercy, has saved you; and the resultant deliverance from sin and the sweet preciousness of forgiveness,

the present joy of fellowship with God, and the blessed prospect your eternal future holds for you.

### **Opposition does Help**

Do not forget that sometimes opposition also helps us in our Christian work. "A certain amount of opposition is of great help to a Christian worker, in his ministry. Kites rise *against* and not *with* the wind. So must we! Wind is needed and no man ever worked his voyage anywhere in the dead calm. Let no one wax pale, therefore, because of opposition. Hardship is the native soil of gospel preaching. When one braces himself for the fight, when the wind blows, he calmly rests when it is done, and enjoys the stillness that follows".

"Indeed we are benefited by the persecution, as frankincense, when it is put in the fire, gives us the fragrance of fine perfume; as spice, if it be pounded and beaten, smells the sweeter and as the field, where it is torn up by the cutting plough, yields more fruit. Even so the children of God receive great benefits by persecution. By allowing us to go through persecution, God is purifying us. By such schooling, He grades us. He nurtures us through them, so that through many tribulations we may enter into our rest" (Acts 14:22).

A faithful Christian who was severely persecuted during Queen Mary's rule in England wrote thus, "A prisoner for Christ! What is this for a poor worm! Such honour is not for all His saints. Would it be the university degrees, or worldly honour not set on me, as the honour of becoming a prisoner of the Lord". So let us rejoice being counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake (Acts 5:41).

An evangelist who was serving in North India was imprisoned a few years ago for preaching the gospel in the open air. His testimony was, "I was privileged to be a prisoner for Christ's sake. It is nothing more than that".

The blows struck at members of the body of Christ, that is the church on earth, are like those that struck at their exalted Head in heaven (Acts 9:4,5). The most rewarding experience is that through such persecutions of His members, even though they are still on this earth, the Lord Jesus Christ can work in the minds of the persecutors (See 1Pet. 2:20-23). Evil will be judged – but that is the prerogative of God. *To respond to evil with evil gives the devil the victory. To meet evil with good makes the sufferer the victor* (Rom. 12:21).

### **Suffer Persecution**

"Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2Tim. 3:12).

As faithful gospel workers we are expected to be afraid of any spiritual movement that does not arouse the bitter opposition of entrenched evil. We must remember that our Lord, when He cast the demons out of a man, the demons entered the hogs. The hogs then ran into the sea and committed suicide. As they saw this, the hog owners asked Jesus to leave their country immediately. Similarly at Philippi, when Paul healed the spirit-possessed damsel, he was caught and put into prison after a severe beating (Acts 16:16-22). It is true that when the power of God is manifested in saving souls, it is natural that those whose business is affected will raise a protest. True revival today would create commotion in the activities of the evil. Dislocations will arise and we will be counted as people who turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

### **Suffering for the Gospels Sake**

A herald of the gospel must always be prepared to suffer. For this, sufficient grace is needed. If applied to our heavenly Headquarters, God has promised to us: "My grace *is* sufficient for thee", and, "I am with you always". We must be patient and loving and should never use carnal weapons. If a mob should ridicule us, or even assault us, for the gospel's sake, we must bear it gladly. Should the people throw stones at us, or otherwise molest us we should never take vengeance, but bear it patiently.

### **Be Encouraged and Strengthened**

The world in which we live is full of opposition, persecution, vandalism, rowdiness, destruction of men and property and the exhibition of hatred. Vengeance and deception have become the order of the day. There appears to be no respect for truth and justice. The end-days are here. The classic writing of the famous preacher C.H. Spurgeon should always encourage us and strengthen us, as we face an unknown future:

“Oh!” said Cæsar, “we will soon root up this Christianity. Off with their heads!” The different governor’s hounded one disciple after another to death; but the more they persecuted them, the more they multiplied. The pro-consuls had orders to destroy Christians: the more they hunted them, the more Christians there were, until at last, men pressed to the judgment-seat, and asked to be permitted to die for Christ. They invented torments; they dragged saints at the heels of wild horses; they laid them upon red-hot grid irons; they pulled off the skin from their flesh piece by piece; they were sawn asunder; they were wrapped up in skins, and daubed with pitch, and set in Nero’s gardens at night to burn; they were left to rot in dungeons; they were made a spectacle to all men in the amphitheatre; the bears hugged them to death, the lions tore them to pieces; the wild bulls tossed them upon their horns: and yet Christianity spread. All the swords of the legionnaires which had put to rout the armies of all nations, and had overcome invincible Gaul and the savage Briton, could not withstand the feebleness of Christianity; for the weakness of God is mightier than men.

If that was the plight of the Christians of the first few centuries, what had happened during the later centuries was still more severe and brutal. In spite of all these persecutions there had been rapid multiplication in the number of persons who turned to the Lord Jesus Christ, and numerical increase in churches. Innumerable “house-churches” sprang up. The “Iron-curtain” and the “Bamboo-curtain” could not contain this and were powerless before the propagation of the gospel, and they all quickly folded up.

Perhaps the savage cruelty found in the first century was missing, but we read about more sophisticated and refine methods of torturing Christians. They were barbarically cruel. One cannot erase from memory the brutality of mass killings in gas chambers during Hitler’s time. Mental tortures have increased. Christians were put in jails for no reason whatsoever. They were tortured in dark cells with no food and basic amenities ... They were separated from their families ... Church properties were destroyed and set on fire. Exercise of conscience was denied. Personal faith and independence were treated as antisocial and falsely accused as forced conversion. Anti-conversion laws enacted only to prohibit preaching of the gospel.

Tribulations, sufferings and persecutions are like huge waves that should only bring a sense of thrill to Christian swimmers because of the love of God that would keep them “as conquerors through the risen Lord Jesus Christ”. We are super-victors and they produce abundant joy in us. We are more than conquerors through Him in all these things (Rom. 8:35-39), not in spite of them, but in the *midst* of them. “I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation” (2Cor. 7:4).

Concluded

---

Reprinted with kind permission from the book “MEN IN GOD’S SERVICE” by N. John Jeyanandam

---

[< Back to Contents >](#)

---

## MEN OF GOD SERIES

### (6) ISAAC : THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM

**“In Isaac shall thy seed be called”  
(Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7; Heb. 11:18)**

He was promised before he was born. His birth, though long delayed was miraculous. He was Divinely named before his birth as being in the line of an “Everlasting Covenant” (Gen. 17:19). His life was marked by submissive obedience; the place of his sacrifice upon the altar was called, “Jehovah-jireh” (Gen. 22:14). In a figure (type) he was received again from the dead (Heb. 11:19), to take a wife of his father’s providing.

Isaac lived longer than Abraham or Jacob whose lives stand out prominently in the Genesis record. Of Isaac,

much less is revealed and there are years of his pilgrimage about which the Bible is silent. His character was quiet and passive yet he was a vital link in the chain of Divine promise.

Repeatedly God is pleased to be called; "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob". The value of meditations on the story of Isaac is that he is a beautiful portrait of the mind of God pointing forward to the Child born and the Son given. The inspired writers of the Bible are guided to only give us accounts of brief public exploits for God in the lives of men of faith. These men come to know God in their private lives before the public demonstrations of the power of God working with them. Public service is necessary, work for God is good; but all too often godliness and spirituality is buried in the graveyard of our activity. When life is over, what counts before God is Christ-likeness. Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). In this vital lesson, there is much to be learned from the portrait of Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit in Isaac, the son of promise.

### THE PROMISED SEED

The first book of the Bible is the book of beginnings. Mankind still spends enormous time and finance trying to find the beginning and origin of things. Instead of probing black holes in space or big bangs of theory, all is revealed in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". The origin of the grass of the earth or the tree yielding fruit is repeatedly said to have, "The seed in itself" (Gen. 1:11-12). God made promise of the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15; to the serpent the LORD God said; "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (He) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel". Thus God prophesied the future of mankind, the line of faith down the long corridors of time ultimately fulfilled in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The two lines are developed in the chapters of Genesis; the fruits of God will always be attacked by Satanic forces of evil.

The seed holds the *Secret of Life*. The promise of life to Eve, and to Abraham was as the sand of the seashore and the stars of the sky. The Lord Jesus is the *Source of Life*; "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). Believers, have found in Him the *Substance of Life*; "I give into them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:28). This has been brought about by His *suffering*, death and resurrection; "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand" (Isa. 53:10).

Isaac was the seed promised to Abraham. "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (Gen. 17:19). Isaac was "persecuted" by Ishmael. "As Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit" (Gal. 4:28-29). Abraham was called by God to offer up Isaac on Moriah. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Heb. 11:17-18). Following Abraham's surrender of the one who was most precious to him, God again repeated His promised relative to the seed, making a covenant of richer blessing and greater multiplication of his seed. "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:17-18).

These promises to Abraham, through Isaac as the promised seed, merit detailed quotation, as the covenant extends to the unlimited blessing of the Gospel. Paul writes, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8). As the apostle is inspired to point out, four hundred and thirty years before the law was given, God was giving a beautiful picture of justification by faith in Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

## THE TIME APPOINTED

“And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah, as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him” (Gen. 21:1-2). Twenty five years had lapsed between God’s promise of a son (Gen. 12:3), and the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21:2). In this he is a beautiful type of God’s only Son. “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4). Isaac was born contrary to nature. Sarah, “Was delivered of a child when she was past age ... Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead” (Heb. 11:11-12). “He considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb” (Rom. 4:19). The name “Isaac” means “he will laugh”. Sarah laughed with incredulity. Abraham’s laughter was of faith. At his birth there was joy in the house. He was circumcised the eighth day. Abraham made a great feast at his weaning.

Before the birth of Isaac celestial beings visited the tent of Abraham with the news; “Sarah thy wife shall have a son” (Gen. 18:10). The question was asked: “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” (Gen. 18:14). At the birth of John the Baptist, the angel said; “For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37).

When Joseph found Mary to be with child, he sought to put her away privately. The angel of the Lord said, “Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 1:19-20). Mary said, “He that is Mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His Name” (Luke 1:49). When the Lord Jesus was born the host of heaven rejoiced saying; “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14).

As with Isaac, so with the Lord Jesus, Satan attacked the promised seed. “He that was born after the flesh (Ishmael) persecuted him that was born after the Spirit (Isaac)” (Gal. 4:29). Likewise, Herod sought, “The young child to destroy Him” (Matt. 2:13).

### “JEHOVAH-JIREH” (Gen. 22:14)

Close fellowship with God involves severe tests. The entire transaction upon Moriah was between the father and the son. Isaac was now a mature young man. God said, “Offer him there for a burnt offering” (Gen. 22:2). Unhesitatingly they set out for the place together. “They went both of them together” (Gen. 22:6,8). Why is this statement repeated twice? Why was there no resistance from Isaac? “Where is the Lamb?” (Gen. 22:7). God had said, “For I know him (Abraham), that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD” (Gen. 18:19). Isaac willingly lay upon the altar. He allowed his limbs to be bound. They word for “slay”, is used in the offerings, to plunge the knife into the victim’s neck. This submission was not just a natural act of obedience to his father. Abraham literally intended to carry out God’s word and for three days he considered Isaac to be as good as dead. On Moriah, father and son were together entering into the will of God. They were getting to know God in one of the clearest figures of Calvary to be found anywhere in Scripture. This is one of the mountaintops of the Old Testament which reveals Jesus, the Son of God. “Thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest” (Gen. 22:2). “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...” (John 3:16). “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32).

Dear fellow believer, let us bow in holy wonder and worship. They left the young men with the ass, the transaction was solely between father and son. For three hours on the cross, no human eyes beheld the agony. Isaac carried the wood. “And He (Jesus) bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified Him...” (John 19:17-18). There was no resistance of any kind by the son, “both together”, perfect agreement, complete submission, as in the Garden, the Son said; “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). Abraham believed God who had already performed a miracle in the birth of Isaac. In order to fulfil His future promise concerning Isaac, Abraham believed in death and resurrection. “Accounting that God was able to raise him (Isaac) up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb. 11:19). “And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh”. The word “Jireh”

means “to see ahead”. The Lord Himself said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and He saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56).

“TAKE A WIFE UNTO MY SON ISAAC” (Gen. 24:4)

In the Bible record there is no reference to any deeds of Isaac, between Genesis chapter 22 – the sacrifice of Isaac upon the mountain – and his reappearance to meet his bride (Gen. 24:62). “And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her” (Gen. 24:67). In Genesis chapter 22, Isaac is seen in obedience to his father; as a result he learned submission to God’s will. In Genesis chapter 24, we read how Isaac took a wife of his father’s providing.

In this chapter we again see the continuation in type of the Lord Jesus Christ. In His first coming into the world we read; “Thus said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:9). As the Lord spoke of returning to the Father, He said; “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). Like Rebekah, we journey through the wilderness, laden with the riches of Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, looking for the Saviour, Whom having not seen we love. His desire and our longing is to be with Him in glory, as the wife of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7).

“O! the blessed joy of meeting  
All the desert past!  
O! the wondrous words of greeting  
He shall speak at last!  
He and I together entering  
Those bright courts above;  
He and I together sharing  
All the Father’s love.”

(Trans. – E. Frances Bevan 1827-1909)

[< Back to Contents >](#)

---

## Questions and Answers

**Question:** Does the reference to “Kings of kings, and Lord of lords” in 1Timothy 6:15 refer to the Lord Jesus or to God the Father?

**Answer:** This verse is preceded by the statement; “Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ”. The word “appearing” (v14, epiphaneia) means a glorious manifestation, a shining forth; describing that visible and glorious display when Christ returns to establish His Millennial Kingdom. His manifestation is the context of verse 15.

The phrase “in His (own) times” draws attention to the precise moments in history that God has determined and appointed for the working out of His Own plan. The time of Christ’s manifestation is entirely in God’s hands. God Himself, “the blessed and only Potentate”, “shall shew”. He will exhibit, act to display Christ to the visible sight of men.

The next two expressions, “the King of kings, and Lord of lords” relate back to “our Lord Jesus Christ” (v14). The visible manifestation will be centred in this One who takes precedence with absolute deity and yet with true humanity. The title “King of kings, and Lord of lords” is only used of Christ in the New Testament.

The noun to which the relative pronoun, “who” (v16), refers is “Potentate”. Here the inaccessible majesty of God, as God, is presented. He alone has essential immortality; He dwells in unapproachable light; He is never visible to the eyes of men.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb, is clearly identified; “For His is Lord of lords, and King of kings” (Rev. 17:14) and again, the One who is called Faithful and True had on His thigh a Name written; “King of kings, and Lord of Lords” (Rev. 19:11,16).

[< Back to Contents >](#)

---

**Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying,  
I am the light of the world: he  
that followeth Me shall not  
walk in darkness, but shall have  
the light of life. (John 8:12)**

Light is essential for our existence; plants need light to grow and mankind and animals need plants to survive. Further, for our daily movements, we need light to direct and guide us. This is how God has ordered life on earth, interweaving into His physical creation, lessons regarding our spiritual wellbeing. The first recorded command of God in the Bible is, **“Let there be light: and there was light”** (Gen. 1:3). Not that light did not previously exist as God’s eternal dwelling is a place of transcendent light, but now caused to shine forth on the newly created earth.

The apostle Paul picked up on this theme when writing to early Christians, contrasting the blinding work of the devil: **“God, Who commanded the light to shine of out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory God in the face of Jesus Christ”** (2Cor. 4:6). These people had been engaged in gross sin before their conversion but the glorious gospel had changed their walk and their destiny as it can ours, if we respond to the heavenly light as they and Paul had so done previously. It is in such a context that the Lord Jesus Christ stated one of His great **“I AM”** sayings during His days on earth.

### **I am the light of the world:**

The background to this utterance is that a woman caught in the **“very act”** of adultery, had been brought to the Lord by religious rulers in an attempt to ensnare Him. She was **“walking in darkness”**, having abandoned the fear of God and the instruction of her youth, and could have been stoned to death under the law, with the guilty man, for their immoral behaviour. The Lord however, without much ado, brought both the woman and the hypocritical religious men under the conviction and guilt of their own sin, all being as guilty of violating God’s law as each other.

The Lord had earlier taught that **“God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved”**, and that **“this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved”** (John 3:17, 19,20). While His physical presence necessarily did expose sin, turning men against Him, He came to bring forgiveness of our sins against God and to impart new life.

### **He that followeth Me**

To follow Him means to accept Him for all that He is and all that He accomplished on the cross when He endured not just three hours of physical but of impenetrable darkness and pain as He suffered for the sin of the world. It means to embrace His teaching, to practice His commandments and at times to suffer for His cause as we live out our short lives on earth in this sphere of spiritual wickedness and darkness.

We cannot follow Him in a life of holiness and righteousness unless we are prepared to repent of all such practices that He hates, both in a moral and spiritual sense, all that conflicts with the God of Heaven, Who is Himself **“Light”** (1John 1:5).



## Shall not walk in darkness

The apostle Paul was tasked to engage in gospel endeavours among the Gentile nations to ***“Open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me”*** (Acts 26:18). Those saved by believing in Christ know from firsthand experience the transforming power of the glorious gospel through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Satan in his deceptive ways masquerades as an ***“Angel of light”***. He has exploited many individuals over the centuries who’ve claimed to have received divine light, initiators of teachings and fake gospels that have trapped multitudes by deceit. Likewise enticing snippets on media screens or the bright lights in the lurid places of the world cities are all out to lure and trap unwary souls, professing ‘pleasure’ but which will result in eternal darkness. These are like the anglerfish (one variety called the ‘black devil’) in the dark and murky depths of some oceans that dangle a light in front of their mouths to lure unwary fish to certain death.

Christ is the ***“True Light”***, that genuine and sure light from God. He alone is able to guide us off of the sinful and unfruitful pathways of sensual pleasures, religious delusion and warped intellectual arguments of science which daily criss-cross our lives, and ultimately from the torments of hell from which there is no deliverance.

## But shall have the light of life

Those who know Christ as their Lord and Saviour know the Light of Life; their ***“life is hid with Christ in God”*** (Col. 3:3). While a believer may stumble at times, the trait of their life should show that they are set for glory; they are not earth bound. Their life has a sure purpose with an objective goal to please Christ and a destiny at the close of being with Christ. They are not interested in leaving behind their memoirs or a name or renown for some earthly achievement. They may be despised by the world and challenged to ‘get a life’ by ignorant men. It may mean hardships, trials and misunderstandings but they ***“have the LIGHT of LIFE”***. Now dear reader, do you? The Lord’s closing words of public testimony were these: ***“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light”*** (John 12:36).

[< Back to Contents >](#)

---