

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole Counsel of GOD

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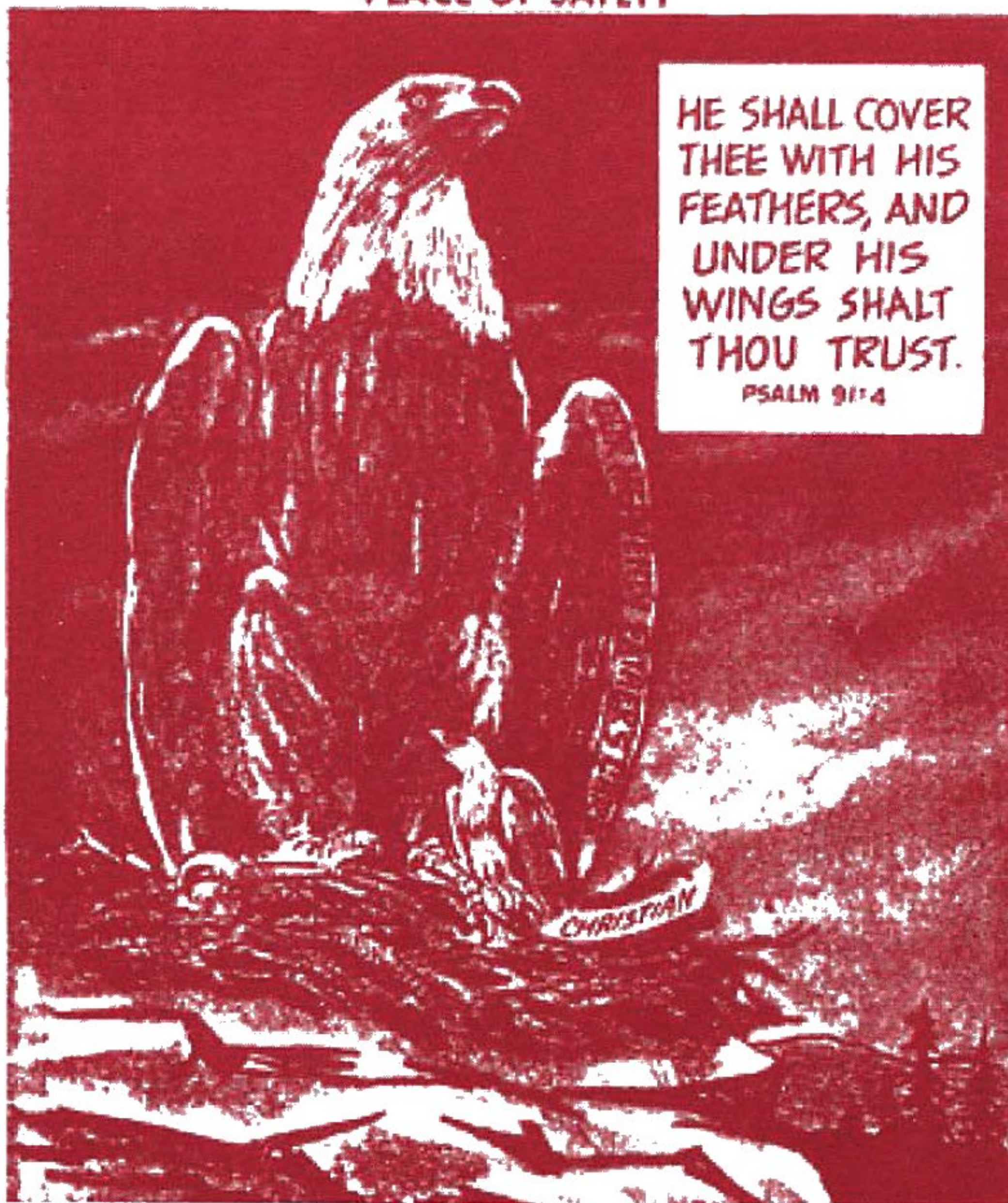
And God said,
Let there be
light:
and there was
light.

GENESIS 1:3.

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PLACE OF SAFETY



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Editor: Gene Hawkins



By Gene Hawkins

“**T**hey have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people *slightly*, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.” Jer. 6:14

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” I Thess. 5:3

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:...” Psa. 122:6

JESUS IS COMING! That is an established scriptural fact, and the signs announcing The Event which will alter the course of the entire universe for the next 1000 plus years currently abound across the globe. However, men are either totally ignorant of them, or they simply refuse to acknowledge that they are coming to pass due to gross unbelief of God’s Word. Jesus clearly promised, “Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you....” John 14:28 His discourse on the signs announcing these end times also began with the disciples’ questions “...Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matt. 24:3

When He does appear for the second time, planet earth will never be the same. First will come unprecedented devastation of which we read “...except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved:...” Matt. 24:22 After that, Jesus’ 1000 year reign of peace will prevail, followed by the creation of “...a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;” Rev. 21:1 However, God is a God of order and purpose and there is most assuredly a specific order surrounding the second coming of The Son of God. Paul clearly declared that “...yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” I Thess. 5:2 He also informs us that “...ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” I Thess. 5:4 These verses show emphatically that the earliest return of Jesus will catch the multitudes unawares. There are those in our day who vehemently declare that there is no such thing as a “secret rapture,” but how else can the above verses be interpreted? Others may interpret

Paul's warning in I Thess. 5:6: "...let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober," as applying to sinners. However, it is so very important to understand that God never refers to sinners as being asleep. They are always defined as being "dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. 2:1 Thus, the reference here is to Christians who will be asleep, and oblivious to the fact that He has indeed returned and taken that select company known as the "Bride of Christ" home to glory.

This company is represented by the Church at Philadelphia, who were not only spared Jesus' scathing rebuke "...repent or else,..." which is directed to five of the seven churches in Rev. 2-3, but this special group also received this promise. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. 3:10 This simply means that those who are very much aware and looking steadfastly for the arrival of Jesus will be taken out of this world BEFORE the tribulation even begins. This same elite group is also seen as the "...four and twenty elders....and four beasts full of eyes before and behind," who will witness the inauguration of Jesus when He is crowned King of kings and Lord of Lords. Rev. 4 Thus, God's order is clearly manifest. The enthronement of King Jesus will mark the beginning of the tribulation period. After that, the time when a number of events will occur in this devastating time is often marked in specific days.

Daniel begins this precise order with this declaration. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." Dan. 12:11 This simply means that from the time the daily sacrifice is taken away by the false prophet until the antichrist sets up his image in the middle of the week (Dan. 9:17) will be exactly 1290 days. Since there are only 1260 days in the first half of this same tribulation week, the daily sacrifice must be taken away 30 days before the tribulation begins. Some have concluded down through the years that if the bridal company must be in heaven before the tribulation starts, then Jesus must of necessity come during this 30 day interval. If this scenario be true, the question must be asked: "If He is coming as a thief, why would a 30 day warning be issued?" Thus, Jesus

must surely come for this choice company BEFORE this daily sacrifice is taken away.

God's order is further revealed by virtue of the fact that the bulk of the Church is seen in Rev. 7:9 as "...a great multitude, which no man could number." John is then told that, "...These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:14 While the Philadelphia Church is kept "...from (out of) the hour of temptation,..." this innumerable company "...came out of great tribulation..." meaning that the bulk of the church must endure a part of that devastating time.

The next group seen in heaven is the 144,000 also known as the ten wise virgins of Matt. 25, and the "...man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." Rev. 12:5 This company is all of Israel (Rev. 7) but they are also a part of the Church, the heavenly seed of Abraham, since they are also caught up to heaven.

Scripture defines a number of specific days assigned to certain purposes of God, such as the 1260 days allotted the two witnesses (Rev. 11:3) and 1260 days assigned to the antichrist. Rev. 13:5 However, today we are still in the time which Jesus described as "... the beginning of sorrows." Matt. 24:8 It is a period wherein the signs which Jesus described are all around us, but all of them will increase both in intensity and frequency as the actual week of tribulation begins.

One of those signs describes an era known as "...peace and safety..." as can be seen in the opening texts of this article, and such peace especially centers around Israel. It is again so very important to understand that the ultimate "peace and safety" will encompass the entire world, but not until after Jesus has taken His throne and opened the first two seals of judgment in Rev. 6:1-4 However, like all these other signs, that same pattern will be manifest even before the tribulation starts. The current "Abraham Accords" between the United Arab Emirates and Israel is a good example of this same pattern. Jeremiah is very emphatic. "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." Jer. 6:14 The word "slightly" means "light, small, somewhat," meaning that this peace is in no wise the peace Israel will experience when she,

as a nation, accepts her Messiah, The Prince of Peace. However, this is most assuredly a glorious example of the path which this nation will follow until they come to the full blown counterfeit peace which will transpire when she makes her covenant with the antichrist as seen in Dan. 9:27. “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,…” Thus, the current agreement is only a precursor of that which is to follow.

6 The Psalmist exhorted all men to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:....” Psa. 122:6 Such an atmosphere, at least here in America, has been non-existent in regard to this historic agreement between Israel and The UAE. There have been a number of opinions offered in regard to it, but the motivation behind them remains unclear. Some have declared that this is really not a “peace agreement” at all because Israel was not at war with the UAE, nor with Bahrain which also adopted these accords. It is almost certain that some of these attitudes stem directly from the extreme dislike leveled against the present administration and Israel, but direct resistance against God’s purposes may also be a contributing factor. Rather than focus on the tremendous benefits of the accords, much of the news media chose to simply criticize the participants for not wearing masks due to the pandemic. All of this is quite a contrast to the atmosphere that prevailed when the Camp David Accords were signed on March 26, 1979. Those agreements were also brokered by an American President, Jimmy Carter, but the celebratory tone which was reported in the Sign Posts at that time seems far different than that which prevails today. “THE BIG NEWS IS THE SIGNING OF THE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN PEACE TREATY ON MARCH 26. In the afternoon 1,500 invited guests and millions of television viewers throughout the world watched Sadat and Begin put their signatures on the Arabic, Hebrew, and English versions of this the first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab state.

Later at night, a celebration party of 1,300 invited guests toasted the signing of the agreement. In their toasts, the leaders of Egypt and Israel joined in proposing President Carter for the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. Both leaders credited Carter with making the agreement possible. President Carter stated in his speech that –‘Peace has come. We have won, at last, the first step of peace - a first step on a long and difficult road.’”

President Trump has also been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, but there seems to be much opposition against it, even to the extent that some have suggested the Prize be abolished rather bestowing such an honor on the President.

One great tragedy in opposing the Abraham Accords is that some would reject the likelihood of other Arab nations following the lead set by the UAE and Bahrain. Some reports indicate that Saudi Arabia might be the first in line to follow that example since they have already granted Israel permission to fly over their airspace to reach the UAE. Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, and Bahrain now have treaties with Israel, and the hope is that a number of other such nations would join them, thus promoting this idea for peace in the Middle East for which so many world leaders have sought. Surely Saudi Arabia would be a great influence on many other Arab nations in that endeavor. It is also thought that the Palestinians, who are currently opposed to the Abraham Accords just as they were the Camp David Accords, may be forced to negotiate with Israel because a number of these Arab nations who support them financially could threaten to withdraw that aid. It is difficult to understand why there would be such Palestinian 7 resistance to this treaty since Israel was literally forced to make concessions in their behalf regarding annexation of the West Bank. The only answer to that dilemma probably lies in the intense hatred which has existed from the days of Ishmael and Isaac.

President Carter referred to the treaty which emerged from Camp David as just "...the first step of peace." Now, some 40 years later, God continues His purposes concerning His Own People, but there is no doubt that a great many on this little earth ball simply do not believe that God has anything to do with the affairs of this world. Peter described the attitudes of men during these last days as follows. "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you;... That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets,... Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth

standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:" II Pet. 3:1-6 Consider what the apostle is saying here in response to those "...scoffers..." (derider, false teacher, mocker) who asked the question "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." He then accuses them of being "...willingly...ignorant..." of God's Word and soundly refutes their claim by declaring that the flood of Noah's day is emphatic and undeniable proof that all things did NOT "...continue as they were from the beginning." This is just one example of how God's Word will contradict the claims of scoffers today who seem to willingly ignore Its precepts regarding the signs of Jesus' return in these last days. Jesus also proclaimed this exhortation to every Church in Rev. 2-3. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

8 God has most assuredly ordered peace for both Israel and the entire world, but even if all the Arab nations of the Middle East take advantage of these Abraham Accords, it will come nowhere close to the genuine peace which The Prince of Peace will bring when Israel as nation finally accepts their Messiah. The psalmist exhorted all men to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:..." but God's order reveals that there must first come a time of "...great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." This is a reference to that time when "...the holy city (Jerusalem) shall they tread under foot forty and two months." Rev. 11:2 Jeremiah likewise describes this same period in his prophecy. "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jer. 30:7 It is no coincidence that the same forty-two month period is also allotted to the antichrist. "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." Rev. 13:5 The arch enemy of both Christ and Israel shall use every power available to him in an effort to destroy God's Chosen People and thwart the very purposes of God. However, those efforts will fail, for "...when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman (Israel) which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings

of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” Rev. 12:13-14 The time period of “...time, times, and half a time...” also translates to 1260 days or 42 months. Jeremiah plainly prophesies “...the time of Jacob’s trouble,...” but he also insists that “...he shall be saved out of it.” Israel will go through unprecedented suffering during this siege by the antichrist, but during that time Israel as a “new creation nation” shall be born in one day, and when that comes to pass, Israel and the world will enjoy the thousand year utopia and reign of peace which only Jesus can produce. It must be understood that the catching away of the 144,000 means that the whole Church is now in heaven, and that will occur about 250 days before the middle of the week. By the time the millennium begins, every believer will be in heaven for, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Rev. 20:6

Paul insists that “...that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also,...groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Rom. 8:22-23 Such redemption is coming, but we are presently still in this time known as the beginning of sorrows, waiting for God’s order and purposes to be fulfilled. Therefore it is imperative that we do not succumb to the mockers and false doctrines of our day, but rather cling to Jesus’ glorious promise which is, “...behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Rev. 22:12

9

God forbids you to look toward Jerusalem, mighty men;
You are warned with a curse, O Moslem.
Behold gloominess, sorrow, distress and anguish;
When it is light it shall be darkness.
Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.
Nations forget not! The Reaper will reap.

Alberta Boling

"BE STILL...AND KNOW"

Paul N. Smith

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" - Psalm 46:10.

This 46th Psalm may be divided into three divisions. First, God's Omnipotence - verses 1-3. Second, God's Omnipresence - verses 4-7. Third, God's Omniscience - verses 8-11.

In the first portion, God's might and power are contrasted with all other forces. The greatest trouble means nothing to God! Though the earth be moved away, the mountains cast into the sea, the waters roar, the mountains shake; yet, He is greater than all. His Voice of power can put everything back into its proper place. He is a very present help; that is, He is always here. Whatever trouble crosses our threshold, we can say, "God is here." Now, He is present! We think sometimes, "Perhaps He will come in for us tomorrow." He is here, now!

Each division of this Psalm ends with "Selah." This word signifies to weigh, to put a value upon. Thus, we are to pause and meditate on the truth that has been presented. Perhaps we are in a battle. Pause, and consider the great power of God which is unleashed in His Word. Faith is the ignition which sets this might in motion. The Word of God means very little unless we meditate upon each portion we read. As we let the truth infuse our being, it brings to us the reality of its substance. At last it awakens us to the fact that, This is mine; it belongs to me!"

The second division gives us assurance that God's Presence can be felt at all times. The river of God's Spirit flows thru the avenues of our souls, refreshing the weary of heart. Though trouble may rage within and without, we know that "God is in the midst (heart) of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." He is never too far away, to miss a cry for help. David exclaims in the 139th Psalm, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?" The answer is obvious.

The third division arrested our attention. Here most wonderfully portrayed is God's wisdom in all His ways with us. It takes a long time for us to realize the immeasurable wisdom which God displays toward us. At the outset, the Psalmist says, "Come, behold the works of The Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth," We are the works of the Lord today. Come,

look at what God is doing. We are too often concerned with what we are doing. It seems much more important than the silent, steady work which is going on within us. We mortals must see something. We are occupied with our own endeavors. We think God is pleased with our great display of energy.

God does not need our help. He may instruct and guide us to do something; but our responsibility is to listen to His instructions. We are important to Him, just so long as we are able to take criticism and instruction. We may even realize that the Lord is working in us, but we feel He must hurry. We fret, we stew, we fume, we fuss; but God takes His own time, and we learn to follow Him. Have you ever tried to tell God what He must do, and also when? I hear many people echo, "Yes." God cannot use us when we are full of anxiety or restlessness. Thus, we understand the words, "What desolations He hath made in the earth!"

He tears down all our well meaning endeavors. He makes desolations of our plans. Our works, which seemed so beautifully constructed, crumble at the first wind of adversity. Our resolutions so sturdily erected, bend to the ground when temptation's tempest is unleashed. There comes a time when we ask, "Isn't there something I can do right?" We become desolate --- barren; and our trembling cry reaches to God's understanding and wise heart. It is then that we begin to learn about His working. Ours is not important. Our childish traits begin to disappear. We learn that we do not have the wisdom or strength to do what our Father does. But, oh, how we tried! Father's shoes do not fit our feet. Saul's armor impedes our effectiveness.

Before we learn all this, there is a terrible struggle within us. We find that we are not only battling ourselves, but we fight even God! We resist His ways with us. But, "He maketh wars to cease." Peace always follows conflict. James shouts, "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" The Spirit and the flesh engage in a conflict until one is overcome. We rise to the defense of our pride and ambitions. We endeavor to build up the things which God tears down. We hold to our own goodness and human righteousness; not knowing that it stinks, and God wants to throw it on the dung pile. We hold to the filth we have become accustomed to; our strongholds of false ideas and unrighteous ideals must remain erect. By our attitude and action, we say, "No,

Lord, You have no right to destroy what is mine." "He maketh wars to cease."

"He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder." Oh, yes, our weapons are even made useless. We cannot shoot our arrows at God; He breaketh the bow. We are unable to shoot our darts of criticism at others. When God takes over in our lives, He brings us to utter desolation ruins all around. We cease to protest to Him any longer. We have no more strength to resist. The spear we used so effectively on others is split. The sharpness is gone. We realize then that the sword which the Lord uses is sufficient for every situation. "Come, behold the works of the Lord." This is His responsibility. Leave hands off. If God is not able to take care of His own affairs, who is?

12 He is able to make overcomers out of others without our help. Our rules are not always His. We cannot demand perfection from the other fellow, until we are perfect ourselves. And even then, it is God's business. We do not need our bows and arrows, or our spears. God takes away our fighting spirit --- our natural energy and fleshly ambition. We have to go down to nothing before God can use us. We cannot direct others through force; that comes by example. The struggle is always there at first. Wars will come until Jesus brings peace to our restless and troubled spirits. We learn to commit all things to the Lord first. He will always work things out for the best, and our eternal good. The cross must precede the crown; suffering before glory. In creation we read, "The evening and the morning were the first day," etc. It is always that way with God. The night comes first; then the dawn. The devil's day begins in the morning and ends in the evening.

What does God say to all this? "Be still, and know that I am God." Yes, be still, restless spirit. Be still, troubled soul. These words, "Be still," mean "cause to fall, let go, cease." In Psalm 37:8 we read, "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." In the preceding verses, we are instructed to disregard the workers of iniquity. Their actions are not to trouble us in any way. God will take care of them. Perhaps they are prospering, yet wicked; while we are in want. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him. Delight thyself also in the Lord." Be still.

In Exodus 5:2,8,17 the children of Israel were forced to busy themselves with making more bricks for Pharaoh. It did not matter to this ungodly man that they wanted to worship God.

His reaction was: If they had time for that, then they were too idle. "They be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God." Doesn't that refrain sound familiar? Others would force us to keep busy, and neglect to worship God. The old man fancies that he can worship God by the works of his own hands. God says, "Be still!" Be idle awhile. Forget your work for God. Is all your activity really worthwhile? How much worship does God receive?

This word is used in Job 27:6. Bildad tried to make Job believe that his sickness was because of sin. Job knew he was righteous, and he declared, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live." He knew that God was working something in his life, and he did not sin foolishly by taking things out of God's hands. He became still before God. If we know that we are in God's will, do not let anyone tell us we are not. If Job had agreed with Bildad, he would have sinned. A most precious and instructive use of these words is found in Ezek. 1:24,25. "And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings. And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings." There are times when we are to let down our wings. The living ones followed the spirit. When the Spirit moved, they were active. When the Spirit stopped, they let down their wings and were quiet. When they heard God's voice from heaven, they became quiet, restive, and listened to what He had to say. Our wings of activity may hide God's voice. We cannot hear His tender words because of the noise of our wings. If we continue to move contrary to the Spirit's leading, He may clip our wings. We will be unable to fly for awhile. "Be still." We learn why He wants us to be still --- "Know that I am God." We might be shocked at the realization that we have been our own god! When we take things into our own hands, we become our own gods. He says, "Be still, and know that I AM God." Oh, yes, we learn that eventually; but it takes some battles, and failures, and weakness, before we really know it. The Lord continues, "I will be exalted." He has the right to sit on the thrones of our hearts, because He bought us with His suffering and blood. We sometimes refuse Him that place; but He is neither happy nor satisfied until truly exalted within us; and neither are we.

The Psalm closes with this wonderful statement, "The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Think. Why did the Holy Spirit write, "God of Jacob"? Oh, we must go back into Jacob's experiences to find that answer. For most of his life, Jacob was the supplanter. He was always "taking hold of the heel."

In Genesis 32 we see that he, too, was beginning to learn to "be still." Our experiences parallel his. God had sheltered him up to this time. Everything he laid his hand to, it became his; but now was the time for him to realize that he must begin to walk by faith. He was soon to meet Esau, and he had made elaborate plans to appease him. There were fear, anxiety, and dread in his heart. "Would God be with him in this?" he may have wondered.

So, he goes alone over the ford Jabbok. This means, "pouring out." He no doubt "poured out" all that was in his heart. Meanwhile, God was pouring out all the refuse that would hinder his future progress. It is not defeat to be "poured out"; that only makes room for the spirit and power of Christ to be made manifest. Immediately, Jacob begins to cling to the heavenly Visitor. "Oh, don't leave me," he pleaded. "I'm so weak, I can't go on by myself." **14** The life of faith is strenuous, and it takes supernatural strength to walk by faith. Jacob clung to the security and sanctuary of his past experiences. "I will not let Thee go," he cries. But, he must. The Lord had to use force, and Jacob ever after was lame. We come to the end of our strength, and never regain it. God cripples us and never heals that lameness. We carry around with us forever, the knowledge of our own weakness, He does not always heal; but He never forgets to bless.

The Lord asked him, "What is thy name?" Jacob's answer proved that he did not yet realize his weakness. "I'm still the supplanter." The Lord said, "From now on, your name will be Israel Prince with God." It was still some time before Jacob realized God had named him Israel. We, too, try to hang on to our own ability and strength. Even after we are weakened, we do not always learn the source of our real strength. We continue to hobble around carrying the burden of the whole world. But, we learn to "let go," and let God have His own way with us. It is His choice to use cripples for His glory; and if that is His way, we may as well say, "Amen," right at first, and save ourselves a lot of struggling. So, "Be still, and know that I am God."

(Reprint: Orig. 1963)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

A Pattern Prayer (Part 2)

Dr. Vicky Moots

“**A**fter this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” Matt. 6:9-13.

“Which art in heaven:...” This phrase separates Him from our earthly father. He is our Heavenly Father. A father is a protector and a provider. Earthly fathers are not always capable of doing that. They may lack the strength or the resources, but our Heavenly Father is more than able to meet our needs physically and spiritually. He even knows our needs ahead of time. “...your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.” Matt. 6:8. But He wants us to come into His Presence and ask.

How does He supply our needs? Paul tells us how in Phil. 4:19: “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Not only can He but He shall. It is His obligation as our Father. (Not all our wants, but our needs.) And He will do it according to His riches in glory. Do you think that is sufficient? Will His supply ever run out? He has abundant riches in glory! They are inexhaustible! And how does He do this? It is by Christ Jesus. In Jesus we find everything that we need. Our Heavenly Father supplies everything that we need through His Son. When we accept Jesus as Savior, we have access to all our Father’s riches. If we reject His Son, then we cannot call Him our Father, and He has no obligation to take care of us.

“...Hallowed be thy name.” His Name is Holy and not to be cursed or used lightly. Many people say, “Oh, my God!” when they are upset or use the initials “OMG” on social media. It is irreverent to use God’s Name in this manner. They are obviously not considering God’s Name to be Holy, for they are using it as a byword. When we come before His Presence in prayer, we must acknowledge His holiness and give honor to His Name. But this

should also be true in our daily conversation with others. If we are taught to honor our earthly mother and father, how much more honor should we give to our Heavenly Father? We read in Mal. 1:6, "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour?" We give Him honor by recognizing His holiness and the authority and power in His name. Then we will be willing to obey Him and live a life that will bring glory and honor to His Name instead of disgrace.

Verse 10: "Thy kingdom come...." Jesus likely prayed this, too. "Thy kingdom come..." meant to Him that He would have to go to the cross to die to fulfill God's plan. He was in full agreement with God's plan and we must be also and be willing to submit to it, even as Jesus did when He prayed, "Not my will but thine be done." We certainly do not agree with the things that are happening in today's world, but we know that they are in fulfillment of prophecy, so we pray in agreement with God's plan, "Thy kingdom come...." and are looking for Jesus' soon return. We also acknowledge that God is not only our Heavenly Father but a King Who

16 has a Kingdom. He is ruler of the universe but wants to be King of our lives and set up His kingdom in our hearts. We submit to His authority as Father, God and King and let Him reign over us now. Instead of looking to an earthly ruler or president to bring peace, we need to look to the Lord to give us peace in our hearts. Matt. 6:33 instructs us: "...seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness..." Letting Him reign as King in our lives now prepares us to reign as kings one day in Heaven with Him.

Verse 10 "...Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Jesus was our example when He prayed to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane before His crucifixion in Lk. 22:42. "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." This was spoken by Jesus personally two years after He had given us the pattern prayer in Matt. 6. Jesus submitted to God's will in Heaven to be done in earth, and so He went to the cross. Are we also willing to bear our cross that is given to us in this life in order that God's will be done in us? Could God have set up His kingdom on this earth without Jesus going to the cross? He could have, but He had a greater plan. He wanted

us to be His sons. God had to sacrifice His Son in order that we could have our sins forgiven and be born again to become sons of God. God could have created us to serve Him automatically even as the angels do, but he wanted a family. He wanted us to serve Him out of love. If we love Him, we will trust Him in all things and submit to His will in our lives.

Jesus was the Son of God in Heaven but came to earth in a body of clay. He was then part of the earth as well as Heaven. He wanted God's Will to be done in His earthly body, on earth, as it was in Heaven. Are we willing to do the same in our earthly body, to submit to God's will no matter the cost? Can we sincerely pray with Jesus, "not my will but thine be done"? Think about that the next time you pray this prayer.

Time and Eternity

It seems that hurry rules this life,
Man's time is swiftly spent.
We see folks hardly stop for Him
From Whom all days are sent.

We work for fame and work for wealth
And work for name, we know----
While often, long neglected
Is the Father's work below.

And yet, He gives the breath of life
He keeps us thru the days.
How can we fail by word or deed
to offer Him our praise?

Unfailing mercy we can draw
From heaven's open store
When wearied with the ways of man
We turn to God once more.

We saints can hope for that glad day
Which God has willed to be---
We'll be no longer slaves of time
In God's eternity---

Dorothy Tucker

REFLECTIONS

...From the Editor

“Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.” Ezra 8:21

18 Ezra is here confronted with much the same dilemma as that faced by many in our day, for he, too, finds himself in rather uncharted waters. The Babylonish captivity has ended and this man of God has been charged by King Artaxerxes of Persia, to lead his people back to Jerusalem and “...set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people... all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.” Ezra 7:25 Thus, Ezra gathers this congregation at the river Ahava before they embark on this extremely perilous journey because he “...was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him;...” Ezra 8:22 His situation is very much like unto that of Joshua as he led this same people into their promised land. “Yet there shall be a space between you and it, (the ark)... come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.” Josh. 3:4 That ark is symbolic of Christ and only He knows this way which has not been travelled heretofore.

Ezra began his journey as he “...proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava...” This was undoubtedly a literal abstinence from food, but it simply indicates a cessation from all our own ingenuity and efforts. Ahava, meaning “I will exist,” also carries much instruction, for it speaks directly of our existence in Christ Jesus. Our security and access to God are guaranteed by virtue of the fact that “...ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Col. 3:3 He indeed must become our very existence.

Next Ezra declares that “...we might afflict ourselves before our God...” The word means to “browbeat, or submit” and speaks mightily of the attitude of total submission to the will and purposes of

God, rather than insisting on that which we might feel to be the better path for such a journey.

Finally the purpose is to "...seek of him a right way for us,..." We have not traveled this way heretofore, and only God knows the end from the beginning. Note also that this way is intensely personal, for such a way is "...for us, and for our little ones..."

The current pandemic has surely become greatly personal for everyone, but this is a time to follow the same pattern as Ezra did. It is imperative that all men everywhere actively seek God for this "...right way..." before Him. Fear, rather than faith, must not be allowed to rule the hearts of God's people.

There are many verses of scripture which attest to the absolute fact that God does indeed protect His People, but Paul's statement to the Romans is all inclusive: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors **through him that loved us.**" Rom. 8:37 "...all these things..." is a reference to the list of potential obstacles found in V. 35. "...shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" The answer once again is a loud "Nay..." and the reason for such assurance is found in this question which begins the aforementioned list. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Paul's final persuasion and conclusion, is "...that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the **love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**" Rom. 8:38-39 We, too, must appropriate all of this, as we claim our existence in Christ at the river Ahava!

19

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ANNOUNCEMENT:

Streaming expanded! Sunday School 10 A.M. Worship Services 11 A.M. Wed. Eve. Prayer Meeting 7 P.M. (All CST)

The Bible School Classes are also being streamed. They may be found at both gracegod.com and gracegod.org. Order of these classes is as follows:

Mon. 7 P.M. Doctrine

Tue. 7 P.M. Exposition

Thurs. 7 P.M. Synthesis

Fri. 7 P.M. Prophecy

We rejoice greatly that another path has been provided to "sow the seed" in these closing days of The Church Age!

“BUT GOD...”

Roy Clark

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.”

Rom. 5:8.

The two three-letter one-syllable words that begin this sentence are as full of meaning as any in Scripture. This portion of the Word describes the wonderful place of justification by faith which is ours, with no works or effort on our part, all according to God’s Own plan provided through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are told that our salvation from God’s wrath was provided freely for us, even while we were His enemies. God saw us in our helpless, hopeless, sinful condition and because of His great love provided redemption for us through the Cross of Christ. “But God!!!!...”

20 “But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved:). Eph. 2:4-5. Again we find these words “...but God...” The previous verses of this chapter declare that we ourselves are “....dead in trespasses and sins;” We see ourselves walking “...according to the course of this world...fulling the desires of the flesh...” and being “...by nature the children of wrath...” Then we read, “...but God!!!!...” Before God intervened, we were “...children of disobedience...” and walking “...according to the prince of the power of the air...” (old Satan). “But God!!!!...” Man had no way of helping himself. He could do nothing for his own benefit. Only God’s great love and mercy could bring salvation to a lost humanity.

As we continue to examine these verses in Ephesians, we see that God has “...quickened us together with Christ...” and “...hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Verses 5-7

Acts 13:16-29 is a record of Paul preaching at Antioch in Pisidia, wherein he describes God’s promise of a deliverer through

the seed of David. He tells them that Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise and that though men had taken Jesus and crucified Him, God's plan was not defeated. "But God raised Him from the dead," is Paul's glorious declaration in verse 30.

"But God..." is the message we preach today. Because of this great salvation He has provided by Himself alone, through His love, grace, and mercy, we stand before Him freely justified with eternal hope looking for Jesus to return and call us away to ever be with Him. Today we walk before Him trusting Him for our every need and enjoying sweet communion as we lean upon Him and learn daily of His deep love and grace. Our hearts cry "Come soon Lord Jesus."

INFINITE JOURNEY

I'm going on a journey
And I won't be coming back;
I'll have no need of luggage
So I do not need to pack.

I have a straight through ticket;
There will be no delay
When my Captain calls for me;
I'm waiting for that day.

I do not know the route I'll take,
Nor do I know the hour.
But this I know, it will be soon,
And He'll come with mighty power.

The dead and living shall arise;
We'll all go up together
To meet our Bridegroom in the air,
And be with Him forever.

When I reach my destination
There'll be many to welcome me,
But the thing that is most exciting:
My loving Savior I'll finally see.

--Beula Clark

CHRIST OUR LIFE

T. Austin-Sparks

"When Christ who is our life shall be manifested..."
Col. 3:4 R.V.

One of the main objects of the Holy Spirit is to get believers really identified with Christ as the risen and exalted Lord and to make His risen life real in their experience. As the age moves toward its consummation - the manifestation of Christ - two features will become increasingly evident. On the one hand, things, men, movements, institutions, and organizations will predominate and draw multitudes after them and will attach the crowds to themselves. On the other hand, with a growing disappointment and disillusionment over these, a minority will turn to the Lord Himself to find Him alone as their life.

22 Three elements will inhere in all this: One is the unmistakable development of the principle of anti-Christ ---that which will definitely supplant Christ, or intend to do so. The second is the alternative to the "whole Christ" in man-made Christianity --- an imitation life, born and carried on by its own momentum. The third is a deep and genuine quest for reality, truth, and inward knowledge of the Lord Himself. In the first case it will be the naked worship of man in human power: a tremendous overflow of humanism, the wonder and glory of man. The third will be Christ altogether as the life.

If the Christian is attached to some "thing," such as a teaching, a tradition, an institution, a movement, or person, the end will certainly be a limitation of life and eventually confusion and disappointment --- perhaps worse. The New Testament makes it unmistakably clear and emphatic that the destiny of all is to be "Christ all and in all." We must learn that a true work of the Spirit of God is to attach everything to Christ Himself. He, Christ, must be the life of our spirit --- the "inner man;" so that we are strong in the Lord --- not in ourselves, nor in others, nor in things. We shall have to survive adversity by His strength within alone.

Christ will have to be the life of our mind. Perplexity will find us without the power to explain and understand, but the Spirit will teach and lead.

Christ will need to be life for our bodies. There is such a thing as Divine life for the physical body. Not always does the Lord choose to heal the body; but He does always want to be its life, even in suffering, to fulfill His purpose.

It is the Lord Himself; and, for this to be so, it often has to be against a background of natural inability. The power of His resurrection is the law of union with Christ from beginning to end. Days of terrific pressure are upon the Lord's people. Their enemy is taking very little off-time. The only sufficiency is in the Lord Himself as our life.

Barnabas exhorted the believers at the beginning that "... with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord." Acts 11:23. There is a completeness about this that will be pressed upon us until the time "...when Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested."

Call Back

“Call back and tell me that He went with you into the storm;
Call back and say He kept you when the forest’s roots were torn;
That, when the heavens thundered and the earthquake
shook the hill,
He bore you up and held you where the very air was still.

But if you’ll say He heard you when your prayer was but a cry,
And if you’ll say He saw you thru the night’s sin-darkened sky;
If you have gone a little way ahead, O friend, call back;
‘Twill cheer my heart and help my feet along the stony track.’”
“Life is like a steep climb, and it does the heart good to have
somebody ‘call back’ and cheerily beckon us on.”

LOVE'S MIRACLE

Eva Laura Bond

A book we possess contains a picture of a painting by Morris Shaw's mother with hands stretched toward Jesus. Only a few feet away the Baby Jesus is walking with his little arms outstretched toward His mother. The shadow of His tiny figure made a cross as the light fell upon him.

Always, wherever He was, from His birth, the power of Satan was constantly wielded toward Him for His life. His very existence was the greatest miracle that could happen to mankind; yet He was despised and hated in His infancy, being yet in perfect innocence. We so wonder how hatred can be so intensified as to want the blood of a Baby, and yet Love's Miracle Gift for all humanity, even to the end of the earth, has been least understood of all happenings recorded.

24 The Christmas story is always fresh and beautiful. It is thus, just because it comes to us in perfect love and even more so as we realize its pure, perfect virgin birth. Nothing in the whole wide world is sweeter than a baby, in the natural we say, ah! perfect, yet here was One given us in perfection completely. Jesus! Our gift! My gift! Jesus is a gift to the world in that whosoever believes shall have Eternal Life; but until the individual sees his need for a Redeemer as Savior it means nothing.

This Jesus, Who left perfection and came to earth to give His life that we may become perfect is left completely out of the hands of the majority.

His life here was constantly hunted, despised and looked down upon by many, and always there was the reminder of the cross. Many men died on a cross in those days, but it was for a crime that they went. Jesus Who was from His birth overshadowed by a cross, was finally one day hanged and without a single cause, for everything He did was good and perfect.

Here was Love's Miracle again. God had turned His back, on His Son as the sins of the entire world — past, present, and future lay upon this purest, sweetest, most innocent and humble One — my sins, your sins and everyone's sins covered Jesus. God Who is love, could not look upon sin, and was forced to turn

His back upon His Son. May we repeat again, this was Love's Miracle being manifested again, for God could have stayed the hands of those who nailed Him to the Cross. God could have breathed upon the scene and they would have all fallen helpless to pierce Him, scourge Him, and mock Him. Remember, this wasn't enjoyable for God the Father of His priceless Gift Jesus, but His love for you and me caused Him to turn His Back because sin must be atoned for, for every individual, none escaping, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There must be a perfect sacrifice. Jesus was that sacrifice, to make it possible for our redemption. Jesus, who came from a plain family, common laborers, no influential friends, no backing in this life that would have caused thousands of songs, books, poems and sermons to be written. This Jesus was not born with a silver spoon in His mouth, nor did He have a lauded funeral procession. Neither was all the time between anything to be taken notice of by the majority. Yet He is the One Whose Name has lived these many hundreds of years on and on. He has Life and Life Everlasting, not to keep you one day only, but forever.

25

Yes friend, this is Love's Miracle performed by the God who loved us enough. Love's Miracle from God giving to us Love's Gift Jesus. Those who believe receive all the benefits of Love's Miracle: God the Father, through Love's Gift, Jesus The Son.

(Bonds Of Peace 1951)

I could Not Speak

I could not speak in any tongue, the magic words to tell,
I could not find the consonants the love of Christ to spell.
I could not gather words to make a sentence to impart,
The peace, the perfect lasting peace, Christ gave unto my heart.
I could not pen on parchment white, the love His grace doth give,
I could not speak of joy I've known as for His name I live!
I could not write, nor speak, nor tell, of blessings sweet outpoured,
I can but point a dying world unto a saving Lord.

—Connie Colenberg

Deborah and Jael

Mary M. Bodie

“**A**nd the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD,... And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel. And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.” Judges 4:1-5.

We have in our present subject-sermon, woman; yes, in fact, two women are mentioned. Men are more prominent as used of the Lord than women. They generally have minor roles, but Deborah is an exception. She had the leading role in her day. No greater woman is found anywhere among the Worthies of faith, one who was manifestly to the front of the stage, as this woman.

26 She was right in the limelight; not because she sought the place, but because God sought it for her. He was the Manager and Stage Director assigning the parts to the several actors. We will note seven points in Deborah's history.

One. She is God's choice for the hour. "Deborah, a prophetess,... judged Israel at that time,... and the children of Israel came to her for judgment." There might have been some good and efficient men of Israel available; but none of them were chosen for that crucial day. Deborah was the choice instrument. She was in the place of responsibility and honor by the edict of God. It was not her will that she had that part. She had not sought it. God sought it for her. In fact, when the battle was to be fought, she endeavored to put a man in the lead; but he drew back. It was not the will of God for him. By so doing, he made way for another woman, Jael, to get into the picture. But we are getting ahead of the story.

We know absolutely nothing of her antecedents, or history prior to this point. How many years she had served in the capacity of judge previously, we do not know. So often the worthies of faith are brought upon the scene suddenly as in this

case, taken out of obscurity and the training camp into the full blaze of limelight. We are not informed as to the manner of her qualifying for the great office, but we know that Jehovah's principles are always the same. She had her day in His college, even as had all the others. God's warriors are all trained people. They must measure up to the standard of His government, even as the soldiers of the little kingdoms of this world. Deborah was God's choice. He put her in the office as judge; hence, we know she was able for the honor. She was acceptable to the people also. Her leadership was not questioned by the majority, though there may have been a few who sought to undermine and hinder her. But God was for her and none could be against her. The people came to her for judgment. V. 8. It is marvelous to view the Lord protecting and defending His leaders. The devil cannot hurt them, but for a moment, as it were. They eventually triumph because all things are serving them. "Believe it or not," no weapon prospers that is formed against them. Isa. 54:17. God is not mocked and neither are His worthies. He will rise up for them in every age and clime.

27

It was a time of great weakness when Deborah ruled. Jabin, king of Canaan, had made great trouble for Israel. The latter were at a low plane, spiritually. God had allowed the enemy to apparently triumph for twenty years. Sisera, the captain of his army, was a mighty general. "He had nine hundred chariots of iron," and appeared invincible and invulnerable. The number nine, 3 x 3, suggests strength that is dynamic, and that power was wielded against the people of God.

No marvel that we read, "He mightily oppressed Israel." But God was still on His throne. Man's power may appear equal to His until He comes forth; then it is manifested as inferior. The next step shows us the way out.

Two. She calls a man, as commander of the army. "She sent and called Barak, the son of Abinoam, out of Kediesh-Naphtali." God is taking a hand in the affair. The enemy has gone far enough. Sisera, "the carving tool," has demolished Israel to the limit. He has cut and chiseled, but the end has come. When the Lord calls His army out there is something effective on the way. And

Deborah's call of Barak is in the order of God. He is the suitable one to lead the army, but subject to her, as the sequel proved.

Three. She gives the orders. "She said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward Mount Tabor and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and Zebulun?"

28 There are manifold lessons in this narrative, typical and otherwise; but we must keep to our prominent subject, Deborah, as leader of that day. She is plainly manifested as such at this point. Barak is not given his orders first hand. He must take them from THE WOMAN. If he was not in the mind of God and qualified to serve in the capacity of commander in chief of the army, he might have been offended: Some of the carnal men of today would say, "I will never let a woman dominate me." Well, if Barak had been so foolish, he would have stepped out of the picture, but he too was qualified. He proved that he had been in the school from which all God's worthies are chosen because of their humility and obedience. They are always ready to heed the voice of the Lord, even though a woman gives the orders.

Deborah tells Barak to go toward Mt. Tabor and take ten thousand warriors, children of Naphtali and Zebulun with him. The Lord declares that he will draw Sisera's army to this place. The enemy may not be aware of it; but he must obey the order of the Lord. His multitude of people with their chariots will come, even as has been planned and purposed. The "... thus saith the Lord..." governs everything. How vain for men to rebel against the will and Word of God.

Sisera and his great multitude of warriors, chariots and all that constitutes their prowess, are doomed. The Lord says He will deliver them into the hand of Israel. And the great miracle is that the army of God is led by a woman, synonym of weakness. Barak refuses to go except she goes and directs the battle, which brings us to our next step.

Four. She has the authority. "And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. " V. 8

The man, Barak, refuses the honor except she

accompanies him. He knows that she is the real leader in the place by the will of God, and he balks at the journey without her. This is surely marvelous. He acknowledges the woman, takes orders from her, rather than give them to her. Most men would say that she is usurping authority over the man; but not so with Barak. He was acknowledging her authority, because it was God-given. Barak was in the will of the Lord in the matter. He could not do otherwise than as he did; for he had no faith for the venture without Deborah.

Someone says, "He was a weak fellow." Yes, he was; but so are all the men whom God chooses. They are put through a training until they come to the place of helplessness. He cannot use strong fellows, which latter principle is a riddle to the most of folk. If you not allow the Lord to weaken you, then you need not expect Him to use you. Some strong men endeavor to use God, and in a sense succeed; but He does not use them. The latter is another matter altogether. Weakness displays His mighty strength. Barak suited the Lord. He was weak enough to obey Him absolutely. Deborah was weak also, or she would not have been given the leadership. She had been tested and proved worthy. "Honor to whom honor is due," is God's order, though men often reverse His decision. 29

Five. Deborah has the faith for the battle. "And she said, I will surely go with thee; notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman? "

Deborah accedes to Barak's request that she accompany him to the conflict; but it is to his loss, as she informs him. Another woman will share with her in the honor of completely overthrowing Sisera. Barak must lead his army against the enemy; but he will not get the honor of the victory. The spoils will be given to Deborah and Jael. Barak does not demur at the verdict. He is not offended, neither does he refuse to go. Great souls, who are humbled by the adversities of life, are not easily offended. They do not carry their feelings on their sleeves to be bruised and hurt by every passing friend or foe. They have been subdued in the furnace of affliction and are not looking for petting or preference. The least they get

is more than they deserve or expect according to their estimate of themselves. They are thankful for any little honor from God and are willing to take orders from Him. How blessed when we arrive at this lowly place; for few there be that find it.

Nevertheless, it is Deborah who has the faith for the venture. We cannot successfully cope with the enemy without faith. Barak could not go without her; for this was God's order. Men forget that God has a program for His people's lives. We dare not blame Deborah nor Barak in this arrangement; though if such a thing were done today, men would rise up against it. They would declare in no uncertain terms what they thought of such proceedings. God's plan would not be taken into consideration. We can imagine how the tongues of the gossips would wag. Maybe they talked in Deborah's time, saying all manner of evil things, criticizing them to the uttermost. "How unwomanly of her! Why did she not take her husband with her? Why did not Barak not insist on his wife going with him?" All these and many more remarks were made, at least would be made today, we are sure.

30 God and His order would not be given a place for a moment. He is set aside in His sovereignty over the lives of His people.

But Deborah and Barak went right on doing what God bade them. They did not appear to hear the gossip if there were any. God's will was the factor in the case. They had heard from Him and nothing else mattered. How little and ineffective are men's words when we have heard from a higher source. They may, and often do, criticize what is absolutely according to the edict of the Lord. We had better leave our hands off, and our words out of other folk's business, or we may be found interfering in God's matters. But to return to our story.

Six. She shares the honors of the hour. "And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet. And Deborah arose and went up with him."

The latter statement concerning the going up of Deborah is repeated twice. It is important as emphasizing her place on the program. She was the chief actor. Barak had his part; but hers was more prominent. He called the warriors of the wrestling tribe

(Naphtali) and the dwellers (Zebulun), ten thousand men, and went up against the enemy. Deborah urged him to speed to the fray. She said, "Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee?" She had no fear of the outcome of the battle. Her faith surmounted every obstacle.

The multitude against them was as nothing to her; for she viewed the Lord in command, not Barak nor herself. According to her, it was as though the conflict was over. She was so sure of the result because the Lord had gone before them. The latter is everything. To have Him in advance, is to have the victory. "The Lord discomfited Sisera and all his chariots and all his hosts." It was all over in a short time. "Sisera lighted down off his chariot and fled away on foot." Barak pursued the army with his warriors and defeated them. He did not get Sisera; for the victory over him had been promised to a woman.

The women are having their rights in this record whether according to law or not. Jael the wife of Heber, a Kenite, comes out to meet Sisera. She invites him into her tent. He accepts her hospitality and lies down to rest. She brings him milk to drink and he falls asleep, whereupon she puts a nail into the temple of the chief of Jabin's army. It finishes him and brings a great victory to Israel. Jael's action at that time has been much criticized; but she too had the mind of God in the matter. We dare not judge her. The Lord's enemies were her enemies. She is devoted to Him and like Levi and Paul, she "knows no man after the flesh." Deut. 33:8,9, and II Cor. 5:16. She was altogether on the Lord's side, even as to her slaying of Sisera proved. She had a great part with Deborah in the great victory, a woman's victory, over Israel's foe.

Seven. She has a song. "Then sang Deborah and Barak,... on that day, saying, Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel." Jud. 5.1,2

It is a marvelous song, both in its praise of Jehovah, and praise of His people who went forward to the fray; but also wonderful in its denunciation of the slackers. It was then even as today. Many in Israel refused to take part in the fight. They probably excused themselves on the ground of being too busy,

or too far away, or maybe some excused themselves as not being in sympathy with Deborah and Barak in their united stand. But whatever the cause of their absence, they were the losers. That was the Lord's battle. He was the aggressor in the matter, not Deborah or Barak. The latter with their army were simply His instruments, the means to the end. Those who refused a part in the fight were turning away from the will of God. They might excuse themselves satisfactorily to their own conscience and to other folk; but they could not camouflage the situation before the Lord, neither before Deborah and Barak, as the song shows.

32 Deborah calls upon all the kings and princes of the earth, to hear her paeon of praise to Jehovah. She declares that she will sing her song to the Lord God of Israel; for He has demonstrated His power in the defense of His people. She rehearses the ways of Jehovah with these ancient folk from their beginning as a nation. When they came up out of Egypt. He was ever faithful, even though they were faithless. He came upon the scene and delivered them, time after time, out of the trouble into which their own foolishness had led them. The present case was no exception. God was for them and who could be against them? Jabin with his nine hundred chariots of iron was as nothing compared to the mighty arm of the Lord! Deborah voices the victory of the people "who willingly offered themselves." There is a whole sermon in that phrase. These yielded folk shall have a reward when the Lord writes up His worthies. Psa.87 "They shall have dominion over the mighty," the singer chants in rhapsody. The Lord will remember every act in defense of His truth and His people, we are assured.

Deborah's song is the impassioned utterance of a soul on fire for the Lord. Some would say that she was fanatical; but it was the stirring power of the Spirit of God that enabled her to sing. She was singing high soprano. Out of Ephraim came forth some fighters. Benjamin also produced a few. Machir who was of Manasseh, sent governors to the fray. Zebulun gave writers, while princes of Issachar responded to the call of battle, even as Barak who was willing to the uttermost. He went into the valley on foot to prove his mettle, while others were taking their ease.

But now she strikes a minor chord. She tells of the slackers who refused to heed the summons to war. Reuben was under conviction; but he delayed. He stayed to hear the bleating of his own sheep instead of going out in defense of the flock of God. Gilead was too far away from the place of trouble. The Jordan lay between. He was afraid of the death route, so he decided to play safe and not get his feet wet. Dan was out on a cruiser, and therefore remained in his ship where he was enjoying himself. He could not be bothered. He did not know very much about the trouble anyway. He had been on a pleasure trip for some time and did not hear the mustering of the army. Maybe Israel were partly to blame he might say; anything to save his conscience. Asher's alibi probably was in this wise, that he was making a living for his family. The fishing was good at that season of the year; so he remained at home. He had enough to do to look after his own business. He was not looking for trouble. We can almost hear the various voices as the duet proceeds, all making excuses for their slackness in responding to the call of the Lord. But He makes no excuse for any of them. Listen to the song.

33

"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord." Meroz signifies "built of cedar" and refers to the great cities of Palestine that were not interested in the conflict. They did not take sides and were neutral, as it were; but observe this fact: the people of God cannot be neutral, as to His things. They are either "hot or cold." It is not enough to profess the faith. We must possess and practice it. Those who did not fight brought upon themselves the curse of Jehovah. Today, Meroz would speak of the so-called religious folk — Christendom in other words — who profess to be the Lord's, but in their actions deny Him. Oh what a reaping for these professors. But to the song.

Deborah and Barak's duet ends in blessing upon those who are true and faithful — those who, like Jael, "the climber." (who might have been excused as being a woman and weak) are able to wield the hammer (spiritually of course) against the enemies of the Lord. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds — casting down

imagnations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." II Cor. 10:4,5 That is the way to put a nail in Sisera — "the carver" of God's-people, commander in chief of Jabin's (reason) army. "Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent.... She put her hand to the workman's hammer and with the hammer she smote Sisera.... So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord, but let them that love the Lord be as the sun, When he goeth forth in his strength."—V. 31

Did you notice the closing verse of the song? They declare that cursing shall be upon the indifferent and unbelieving, but blessing upon the faithful saints of God. It is divinely spoken. Deborah's anthem is inspired of the Lord. Make no mistake, my friends. The Lord takes notice of our attitude toward Him and His cause in an evil day. God is a Rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. "They are as the sun in His strength," in the height of His glory and radiance, full of light and comfort for others. Men
34 may cavil and mock, but God is not mocked. He will show in His own time, "the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords," and those with Him shall be the Chosen and Called and Faithful. Rev. 19 and 17:14.

(Reprint 1951)

EAGLES' WINGS

If you would mount on eagles' wings
And reach the higher, nobler things;
Then this world's vain and glittering show,
Pride, fond ambition, all must go.

The soul must sink if it would rise
On eagles' wings, and gain heaven's Prize.
Mount up, mount up on eagles' wings
reach the higher, nobler things;

Visions of God and glory bright
Shall fill thy soul with calm delight.
No longer earth-bound, thou canst rise
On eagles' wings, and gain heaven's Prize.



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