

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole counsel of GOD

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Rehold, happy is
the man whom
God correcteth:
therefore despise
not thou the
chastening of
the Almighty.

JOB FIVE SEVENTEEN.

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GOD'S WAYS ARE HIGHER THAN MAN'S



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Editor: Gene Hawkins

Definite Sign Posts Of The End

Gene Hawkins

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.” Matt. 24:7-10

It seems that all these “signs” are coming to pass, even simultaneously, during the day described here as “...the beginning of sorrows,” but verses 9,10 are fraught with truth relating directly to Israel. Jesus asserted plainly that during these end times “...ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.” Newscasts abound at this hour with reports of Hamas launching rockets into Israel from Gaza and Israel’s “iron dome defense system” subsequently shooting many of them down. Israel is especially blamed for this confrontation, but the record in the above text reveals that hatred against Israel is the real culprit and source of the problem. 3

It is, however, most important that men consider Jesus’ latter declaration in regard to all nations hating Israel, for it is said to be specifically “...for my name’s sake.” This does not mean that such hatred is leveled against this choice nation because she has accepted her Messiah and is now publishing His message of truth around the world, for she most assuredly has not. It rather means that in spite of her unbelief and rebellion at this time, Israel is still the chosen people of God, and the palpable hatred and rejection of the nations is actually against Him because of it. The voices heard in our world today against Israel are clear evidence that men totally and completely reject the premise of God’s Word, which is direct and blatant rejection of God Himself, “...for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.” Psa. 138:2

Some might argue that Israel has no claim on defense from God due to their wholesale rejection of Christ at this time, but Paul is very adamant as he both asks and answers the question,

“...Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.... God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew....” Rom. 11:1-2 He then proceeds to inform us that God has used the very rejection of Israel to open the door of salvation to us Gentiles. “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles,...” Rom. 11:11 God will never cast off His people and these verses indicate that every Gentile does owe a debt of gratitude to the Jew for his own salvation!

Israel has always been at the center of God’s dealings with the entire world, and as has been said a great many times over the years, “as goes Israel, so goes the world.” That is surely true today and it will become even more apparent as this world speeds toward tribulation.

4 Sometimes it seems a bit difficult to reconcile Jesus’ assertion that “...ye shall be hated of ALL nations...” with the fact that those identified as “sheep nations,” are so designated due directly to their positive treatment of Israel. “And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom ...For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:... Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?... And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, (Israel) ye have done it unto me.” Matt. 25:32-40

The only way to resolve this apparent discrepancy is to recognize the facts clearly on display at this very time of crisis for Israel, and realize that there are most emphatically “factions” in every nation across the entire globe who harbor a deep hatred for this nation whom God calls “...the apple of his eye.” “For the LORD’S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land,... he led him about,... he kept him

as the apple of his eye.” Deut. 32:9-10 God’s attitude and purpose in defending “...his inheritance...” has not changed despite the abominable behavior of this chosen people and men had better realize that He will take vengeance on all who oppose them, as is seen in his treatment of the goat nations judged by the same criteria as those defined for sheep. “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,...And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” Matt. 25:41&46

The hatred directed against Israel by such groups as the Palestinians, Hamas, & Iran has been clearly evident for decades. Even now, most observers are firmly persuaded that the multitude of rockets launched by Hamas from Gaza into Israel came from Iran, the world’s number one sponsor of terror. Sadly, many also affirm that a great deal of the money used for these weapons came from the U.S. Reports are that Palestinian children are taught such hatred from their youth, and therefore such animosity toward Israel is expected. However, the following statements which emanated from the American Capital of Washington are so very disheartening because this nation has long been considered an ally and friend of God’s chosen people. “...President Biden's defense of Israel's use of force to protect itself against Hamas was "siding with the occupation." Another declared that “...Israel is "promoting racism and dehumanization" under a discriminatory "apartheid system." Still another “...accused Israel of "terrorism" amid the fatal clashes with Hamas.... "Israeli air strikes killing civilians in Gaza is an act of terrorism. Palestinians deserve protection. Unlike Israel, missile defense programs, such as Iron Dome, don't exist to protect Palestinian civilians. It's unconscionable to not condemn these attacks on the week of Eid." (A Muslim Religious Feast)

It should be no mystery that Israel has these very sophisticated weapons of defense. They simply present one more bit of evidence that GOD IS FOR THEM! However, since they are being attacked directly “...for my name’s sake...” as stated above, it should come as no surprise that God’s intervention is completely ignored by these human machines of hatred.

Jesus’ words went even further than accusing other nations of displaying hatred against them, stating that “...then shall

many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.” This simply means some in Israel would betray and hate their own countrymen. There have been tremendous accusations from inside Israel against their current regime for some time, many of them critical of Israel’s association with the U.S. However, Jesus’ words really come to fruition with the report at this writing that Sen. Bernie Sanders will introduce legislation to block 735 million dollars of U.S. arms sales to Israel. Add to that this accusation by Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz, a Jew, against fellow Jew Bernie Sanders as reported by Newsweek.com. “Controversial lawyer Alan Dershowitz called Senator Bernie Sanders an "anti-Semite" and a "self-hating Jew" while speaking on Newsmax TV on Friday. Dershowitz made these comments while appearing on the Friday evening installment of The Chris Salcedo Show on Newsmax TV, during a segment labeled "The left attacking America's Judeo-Christian ethics."

6 That last statement is simply more evidence for the reason that men hate Israel “...for my sake.” The trend across the entire globe today is to completely rid itself of any semblance regarding acceptance of God’s Word. Rebellious men today are absolutely obsessed with denying the truth of God’s Word, but this in itself is just one more sign of these end times. “And then shall that Wicked be revealed,...with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth,... And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:” II Thess. 2:8-11 Make no mistake....when men refuse to believe truth, they will automatically embrace that which is a complete lie, and the evidence regarding Israel at this very moment is proof of it. Stated another way: anytime men believe a lie, they do it at the expense of knowing truth and that principle must be applied all the Truth of God’s Word!

Scripture is very clear that God will defend Israel, even in their hour of unbelief, but news accounts today also indicate that she will, more often than not, be blamed for any conflict. Various news reports indicate that Israel must be held accountable for striking a large building in Gaza housing the Assoc. Press News Agency. Israel insists that Hamas also occupied that same space

and that all occupants were warned the strike was coming before it was launched. Some accounts indicate that the A.P. declared Hamas was not in that building while still others affirm that this organization has long known of their existence and has “covered” for them to ensure their own interests. The whole incident is the subject of great controversy and that, in itself, is just one more sign of the confusion and deception prophesied for these last days. Amidst all the conflicting reports in our world, God’s people must be able to ascertain truth, but just how is that done? The first thing to consider is what we do know, beginning with the Truth of God’s Word. Another is the history of the news media over the past few years, for it has been quite apparent that the bulk of those agencies are extremely biased towards the current popular avenue of “progressivism or liberalism” which is directly opposite God’s direction. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and **many there be** which go in thereat:” Matt. 7:13 Many news organizations of our day spend their time and space in defense of those things which are diametrically opposed to the righteous 7 principles of God.

The truth in the case before us is that Hamas and other terrorist organizations are, as scripture has proclaimed, driven by hatred for Israel. They also have a long history of using human shields, even young children, to ensure their own protection. Thus, it is not hard to accept Israel’s claim that Hamas is doing their damage from hospitals, schools and other civilian sites which they deem would protect them. History also affirms the blame attached to Israel for the 6 day war in 1967 when they launched a pre-emptive strike against Egypt. However, the following quote from the July issue of Grace and Glory that year clearly depicts the attitudes and actions of Israel’s enemies **just prior** to the beginning of that historic conflict, which many news reports in that day likened unto the narrative of David (Israel) and Goliath. (Egypt) “(Israeli) Prime Minister Eshkol further declared over the state radio: ‘Throughout the years since he assumed power, the ruler of Egypt has been announcing his plans and his preparation to attack Israel in order to destroy her. In the last three weeks he has

not concealed from the world the fact that the time has come to carry out his scheme.'

'Arrogantly and braggingly Nasser (Then Pres. Of Egypt) has made a mockery of international law, has scrapped the charter of the United Nations, and brought to naught mankind's aspirations to peace.'

'Our forces are strong enough to frustrate the scheme of the aggressor.'"

The author, Paul Smith, then concluded that, "NASSER'S BIG BOASTS AND PLANS HAVE BEEN SWEEP AWAY WITH DEFEAT. It was only four days prior to June eighth, that Egypt's president was riding high. Today, his dream of ruling a United Arab world has been blasted by Israel's guns. His boastful attitude, for the three weeks before the outbreak of war, gave strength to his undisputed claim of ruler of the Arabs. He seemed to have forged a new unity among the Arab nations. He was the exalted monarch, and the Egyptian people were whipped into a fanatical patriotism behind their leader. Their hatred of the Jews was apparent, and they wanted the total destruction of Israel."

8 Hatred for Israel is still the driving force behind news narratives today, and despite the fact that this chosen nation is still steeped in unbelief and rebellion, God is still for them. Even though He miraculously delivered Egypt and other enemies who joined her into the hand of Israel in that 6 day war, Bro. Smith recorded this account of their spiritual condition. "We must admire Israel's bravery, determination, and warring prowess; but they did not go in the strength of the Lord. Many of the Jews who rushed into the old city of Jerusalem were atheists. Some were teenagers, who know very little of God's promises to Israel. There were some Orthodox Jews, who are looking for their Messiah to appear. It was a mixed group. There is a spirit of national pride among these people, rather than a religious zeal."

Surely the same can be said of Israel today, but Paul is very clear in declaring "...*all Israel shall be saved:....!*" Rom. 11:26 That statement is, however, clarified with these words. "And they also, if they **abide not still in unbelief**, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again." Rom. 11:23 Scripture is very clear that they shall indeed be grafted in again directly because of God's promise and provision for them as recorded in the latter part of V. 26. "...as it is written, There shall come out of

Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:"

One part of Paul's instruction for us Gentiles even in this time of Israel's rebellion and unbelief is plainly found in this statement: "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." Rom. 11:28 This is without doubt a reference to God's love for "...the apple of his eye..." but should it not also apply to us? Psalm 122:6 most assuredly presents an outline for the occupation of every believer today. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee." Scripture is absolutely clear that there will be no lasting and universal peace in this world until such peace comes to Israel, because as noted previously, all of God's purposes for the entire planet center around Israel. It is imperative, however, that all believers understand; a plea for the peace of Jerusalem is in reality a cry for God to preserve this nation through some very dark and dire times, times which will wax much worse than what she is presently experiencing. There will come the day when Israel will be totally forsaken by all nations and will in her unbelief make that infamous covenant of Dan. 9:27 with the antichrist. "And he (...the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; V. 26) 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, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (Israel)." Isaiah calls that same covenant "...your covenant with death..." Isa. 28:18 The good news for them, recorded in this same text, is that this covenant "... shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." The fact is that Israel must undergo all this abuse at the hands of the antichrist before she is driven to her knees in repentance in order that she might accept her Messiah. Then, and only then, will peace come to Jerusalem.

Thus, our responsibility lies not only in diligent prayer for this chosen people, but the promise of Psa. 122 is that, "...they

shall prosper that love thee.” (Jerusalem) Love must at all costs replace the hatred with which this world has been consumed. Such love will most assuredly produce great prosperity to all possess it. Paul described those benefits in this manner, praying “That he would grant you,... to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Eph 3:16-19

10 We are to love as God loves, and that does include this special affection for Israel. Not only so, but in praying for the peace of Jerusalem, those of faith must understand that great difficulty is also guaranteed. Our hope, however, lies in the fact that Jesus will appear for His Bride well before Israel comes to repentance and thus this special company must constantly look into the heavens, not only loving His Chosen People, but also loving HIS appearing. Surely it will not be long! All signs point to it. “...Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” Rev 22:20

Perhaps Today

Man's discontent would search the stellar spaces
Urgent he wants, midst other worlds to roam.
Perchance forgetting nothing good replaces
The world to which God to man gave as his home.

Yet e'en while man explores the outer spaces,
Seeking his burning thirst to gratify
We who are Christ's with eager upturned faces
Wait the glad sight our hearts will satisfy.

J. Dannon Smith

THE BIBLE GOD'S WORD

E.J. Witte

“Be ready always to give and answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” I Peter 3:15.

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” Psalm 12:6.

“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.” Psa. 119:89

“...The scripture cannot be broken.” Jo.10:35 R.V.

“The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life.” Jo. 6:63 R.V.

Herein I produce seven reasonable reasons for believing that the Bible is God's Word. Many are brought up to believe the Bible, who never question it from beginning to end. Of course, there is no reason whatever for not believing it. The Bible is not a riddle, but a divine revelation. It is a history of man, and not of the world. My reason for believing the Bible to be God's Word is:

IT IS DIVINELY INSPIRED. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” II Tim. 3:16. The term "Scripture" is found fifty-one times in the New Testament as “the Word of God.” It does not mean “writer,” but “writings breathed out from God.” Many accept Christ's authority, but not the Bible as a whole. If we accept His authority, we must accept also the divine origin of the Bible; and we also must accept His life, works, and influence as divine, and that His resurrection is divinely attested. All stand or fall. His testimony concerning the divine authority of the entire Bible, cannot be questioned. He quotes from twenty-two of the Old Testament books. Christ put His stamp of authority upon it, teaching its absolute accuracy. In Matthew 5:18 He says, “Till Heaven and earth pass, one jot (that is, the smallest Hebrew character or letter) or one tittle (that is, the smallest point in law) shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” The word “inspiration” is derived from two Latin words – “in” and “spiro” - meaning “breathed in or into.” God breathed into men the Scriptures which they wrote. Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” Jo. 6:63 “Holy men of 11

God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” II Pet. 1:21
The statements, “Thus saith the Lord,” or “God said,” occur 3808 times. Thus, the Bible claims verbal inspiration for itself. Without the Divine Breath, there can be no Divine Syllable. If no Divine Syllable, there can be no Divine Word. If no Divine Word, there can be no Divine Bible. If no Divine Bible, there can be no Divine Christ. If no Divine Christ, there can be no Divine salvation; and, hence, no salvation for spirit, soul, or body at all.

There is overwhelming proof that the Bible not only contains God's Word, but it IS God's Word. Two facts speak for its inspiration --- the noble character of those who accept it, and the ignoble character of those who reject it.

ITS MINUTE FULFILLMENTS prove it to be the Word of God. “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.” Lk. 24:44 The predictions were not written after their fulfillment, but before. All the prophecies concerning
12 the Jews are being fulfilled. A king asked his chaplain to give him one statement as a proof that the Bible is God's Word. His answer was, “The Jew, your Majesty.” The prediction concerning Babylon's destruction (Isa. 13:19-22) has been fulfilled long ago. All the prophecies concerning Christ the Messiah are coming to pass in the minutest detail of manner, place, and time. How do we account for it? Man could not have foreseen these improbable events a thousand years ahead, but God saw them and spoke through men. Twenty-five Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ's betrayal, trial, death, and burial were all fulfilled in one day-- the day of His crucifixion. Everything in the Old Testament history, institutions, ceremonies, priesthood, and tabernacle, is prophetic and typical. The only way to appreciate these things is to study them in the Bible until we see New Testament truths shining out from the Old Testament.

THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE proves there is only one Author. “...he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;” Jo. 10:35 The Bible was written by forty men, extending over a period

of fifteen hundred years, and in three different languages --- Hebrew (Aramaic), Greek, and Latin. The writers were from different countries and of different social standing --- herdsmen, fishermen, and reigning kings. It was written under all kinds of circumstances; nevertheless, we find in it perfect unity of thought, plan, purpose, and accomplishment. Wonderful! There are no real contradictions. The sixty six books of the Bible are complete as one volume. The Book is one harmonious whole. There is no other book like it, and never will be.

ITS SUPERIORITY over all other books shows it to be divine. The books of Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, and other heathen authors cannot compare with it. The Bible contains all the Truth. Others may have some truth. There is no moral or spiritual truth found elsewhere, but is found in the Scriptures. Men steal jewels from the very Book which they ridicule. Again, the Bible contains nothing but the Truth. **IT IS TRUTH!** Other books are mixed with error. The Bible is the only absolutely safe volume to read. Lastly, it contains more truth than all other books combined. There is only one way to account for it. As someone has said, “God is its Author, salvation is its aim, and Truth without mixture of error is its matter.”

13

ITS VICTORY OVER ATTACKS proves that the Word is eternal. “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.” Isa. 40:8 Also, read Jer. 36:32 & Rom. 3:1-3 Suppose that all the books on navigation were destroyed, would that change the ocean or the facts connected with it? Suppose that all the books on geology were destroyed, would that change the rocks or the crust of the earth? Just so, destroying the Bible does not change the Truth; and God has seen to it that wicked hands could not utterly destroy it. The Truth cannot be changed by man's unbelief. Infidels have tried to stamp it out; but it has now a stronger hold than ever. All the opposition against it, is part of its marvelous fulfillment.

ITS UNFATHOMABLE DEPTHS prove that it was written by Divine Wisdom. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out!” Rom. 11:33 R. V. We

cannot add to it nor exhaust it, by a lifetime study. We may dig, but never strike the bottom. What man produces may be exhausted. God and His Book are infinite. Men's books change; but God's Word is forever settled in Heaven, and knows no alteration. Psa. 119:89 Out of one thousand publications, six hundred never pay the cost of printing. Six hundred and fifty out of one thousand are forgotten. In one year, most libraries become cemeteries of dead books, because men's writings are fiction, fancy, and are fallible. God's Word lives on forever. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but God's Word shall not pass until every jot and tittle is fulfilled. Hallelujah!

14 THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE proves it to be God's Word. It is the only volume that has power to save, purify, and gladden mankind. If there are any saving and edifying influences in other writings, they are borrowed from the Bible. It has power to lift man up to God. No one cares to live in a community where there is no Bible. Two infidels stopped for lodging at a farmhouse one night. They felt afraid until the man of the house took down his Bible before retiring, and read from it and prayed. Its influence on nations, business, and homes cannot be measured. All national laws have been derived from God's Word. Whole communities have been radically changed by hearing the Word proclaimed in the power of the Spirit. Though all were not saved, yet all were powerfully moved and their manners changed.

Therefore, let us receive the Scriptures as indeed God's Word. Let us hide them within our hearts until they become a part of us. Let us search into them and be cleansed by them. Let us go into their depths; for the deeper down we go, the richer will be our find and our wealth untold. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." I Cor. 2:9,10

(Reprint 1967)

"I The Lord Do... These..."

Eva Laura Bond

"I form the light, and create evil, I, the Lord do all these things."

It is interesting to understand this scripture as it is meant to be. God is love; therefore, evil in the sense many interpret it could not come from pure, holy love, so we must see further into the record that we can understand. This word evil is in no way whatsoever connected with sin, but this word translated from the Hebrew is sorrow, wretchedness, adversity, afflictions and calamities. These are brought on humanity because of neglect, disobedience and oftentimes the believer has a touch of this on their lives to test and try their faith that they may be overcomers. I Pet. 1:7.

This same word is used when the Israelites miserably failed God after bringing them out of Egypt, even to the point of making an image as God — thus breaking the law given them. "And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." Ex. 32:14 This word "...repented..." means the Lord felt sorry for the people as he had compassion on them when he thought to send more sorrow into their lives. Do you know why He felt this compassion? Because Moses besought the Lord and reminded Him of His covenant and His promise to the people. Moses interceded for them even as Jesus intercedes for the believer today and that plea for mercy was extended. I John 1:9 and I John 2: 1, 2 promise that, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

15

Wherever we read the phrase, "repented him of the evil," we always find another thing --- sin --- which was prevalent in the lives of the people. Another case is found in I Chron. 21:1. The Lord had already sent pestilence upon the people and 70,000 men died. Then, just as the angel stretched forth his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord had compassion on the people, even so far as to feel sorry for the further sorrow and adversity that He could

have brought upon them.

Again we have the same answer as to why the Lord had sorrowful compassion on the people, enough so to say, "It is enough."

Before God felt this way toward him, David confessed and said, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done." A messenger of the Lord gave David a choice of three punishments but by that time, he had fully surrendered and given himself to the Lord. Why? Because he knew that God's mercies were great and thus David pled that he be not left into the hand of man.

Accounts of disobedience among the people abound in scripture, and we wonder at God's mercy to feel sorry for them and stay the hand of evil which is sorrow, afflictions, etc. We may also seem to forget how many times "...the LORD repented of the evil..." may have been written in the personal individual's record of present day living believers.

(Reprint Bonds Of Peace 1952)

To Everything a Season
(from Ecc. 3:1-8)

16

To everything there is a season,
A time, a purpose and a reason.
A time to be born and a time to die,
A time to laugh and a time to cry,
A time to till and plant the ground,
Another time to mow it down,
A time to heal, a time to kill,
A time to speak, a time to be still,
A time to tear down, a time to build,
A time to cast the stones away,
A time to gather another day,
A time to embrace and be held tight,
A time when embracing isn't right,
A time to rend, a time to sew,
A time to keep, a time to let go,
A time to get, a time to lose,
A time to let go and let God choose,
A time of peace, a time of war,
A time when hate will be no more.

Dr. Vicky Moots

ISRAEL'S GOD IS OUR GOD

D. L. Cooper in Biblical Research

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Psa. 110:1

"The first thing to be noted in this wonderful passage is that it is Jehovah's oracle to David's Lord. The speaker is none other than the One Who in the New Testament is known as God the Father. But who is meant by the expression, 'My Lord?' David, who occupied the high position in the kingdom of Israel, recognized this One as his superior — his Lord. That this One is not an ordinary being is evident from the fact that the Eternal God invites David's Lord to sit at His right hand. According to oriental custom, a king who sat upon a throne would never invite anyone to sit with him at his right hand unless he were another king, or a person of royalty. Since God used this language with which all in David's time were familiar, He intended to convey the idea that David's Lord was equal to God, Who makes the revelation.

We can, therefore, say that the Eternal Father speaks to another Who is His equal and acknowledges Him as such. Two persons of the Holy Trinity therefore appear in this passage. These facts are in keeping with Israel's great confession: 'Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our Gods is the Eternal Unity.' (literal translation) All the writers of the Old Testament were trinitarians. The Jews held the same position until the second century of the present era. Rather than accept Jesus as their Messiah, they rejected the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. 17

Beloved Reader, do you realize how blasphemous is the New Issue, or One God teaching? It intimates and broadcasts the apostasy of the Christ-rejecting Jews, The word Elohim, meaning three Gods, occurs 7,000 times in the Old Testament. Praise His Name for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — Three in One — “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:” Deut. 6:4

— Ed.

(Reprint 1941)

REFLECTIONS

... From the Editor

“Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father;....” Jo. 20:17

This stupendous verse is easily recognized as proclaiming the glorious resurrection of Jesus. However, the glory of it lies also in the fact that Jesus opened wide the door for His people to experience the same relationship with the God of the universe as He, Himself, enjoyed. Entire sermons could be preached on that union, but consider just a few of the tremendous benefits which the Father bestowed upon His Son for we, too, can lay claim to those same blessings.

18 “I and my Father are one.” Jo. 10:30 Such unity has also been extended to all believers if they desire to accept it. Jesus specifically prayed in that great intercessory prayer of John 17 “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:.. that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” V. 21-23. The controlling element for such unity is based on the fact that the same magnitude of love poured out upon Jesus by His Father has now been bestowed upon us. That love of The Father produces great advantage for all those today who choose to appropriate it, for,...

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” Jo. 3:35 James likewise agrees. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,...” Jas. 1:17 The loving gifts of this Father are immeasurable, yet not all believers choose to embrace them.

Further result of the Father’s love for Jesus, which is emblematic for the sons of God, is that “...the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth:...” Jo. 5:20 Oh! What a joy to know that we, too, are privileged to know the

deep secrets of God and His glorious purposes both for ourselves and this entire world. Note also another experience along this same line that Jesus had with His Father. "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." Jo. 8:28 This same Father will also teach us His Truth and His Ways by experience in order that we too may "...speak these things," unto those around us. That beautiful pattern is also described by Isaiah. "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." Isa. 50:4-5 The key here is for a son to listen intently to the voice of his Father, and all of them must follow the example set by their Elder Brother.

Finally, the glory with which the Son will be enshrouded emanates from His Father even as Jesus specifically prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Jo.17:5 He likewise rendered that same petition unto the Father for His "...brethren..." "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 lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Jo. 17:24

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ANNOUNCEMENT:

Services Streamed: We are glad to report that the P.M. services from Gospel Fellowship have been resumed along with the A.M. Services on Sunday and the Wed. Eve. Prayer Meeting and Bible Study. Just go to our web site gracegod.com and click on the center button. All times are CST and we do rejoice to have heard from a number who have tuned in. This session of the Bible College will close at the end of May so there will be no more streaming at that time. CDs of all classes, however, are available for those who desire them. Just write us at P.O. Box 831, Grandview, Mo. 64030 or e-mail us at gjhawk1@msn.com. Would love to hear from you.

EVERY EMERGENCY MET

W.J. Franklin

“And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.” Luke 7:16.

This chapter presents seven interesting characters. Each had a need, though each one was different, but the Lord proved Himself faithful in meeting each one. Let us notice them in the order they are given here.

20 THE CENTURION. 7:1-10. Observe several interesting points about this man. He was a Gentile, one who had not had much teaching concerning God. He was a soldier; hence, we would scarcely expect him to have much faith. But, quite the contrary, he had a faith that made even Jesus marvel. No such faith had been found in Israel even though they were the chosen people and had every opportunity to learn about God and the wonderful miracles He had performed in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and other places. He was a man under authority. He knew what it was to have people obey him; hence, he believed that if there was power in his word to cause people to go and come at his bidding, there must be power in the Word of Jesus to command the sickness to depart. He drew power from Christ, by his faith, to bring great blessing to another. We can do the same today. Christ is still healing the sick, making the lame walk, forgiving sinners, and meeting the needs of frail humanity.

THE MAN WHO WAS HEALED. This man had no active part in the drama. He was the recipient of the blessing that flowed freely because of the faith of the centurion. He is a picture of a sinner who cannot help himself, but must rely on Christ. This man was so weak that he was past doing anything for himself. Not a word is recorded that he said, but I feel sure that he became a fervent believer and follower of Christ. He is an example of what may be done for others by us. We do not have the power in ourselves to heal sick people, but we can go to the great Healer for them. Some people say they do not have any faith; hence, they have to depend on others. This gives us the opportunity to bring blessing to them.

THE WIDOW OF NAIN. 7:11-18. This narrative is one of the most touching scenes in the Bible. From all outward appearance,

it seems that the Lord was there by mere chance; but we know that He did nothing by chance. Every step was ordered by His Father. This case is striking in many ways. Notice that the Lord was not asked to raise the widow's son from the dead. It says, "He had compassion on her." He looked on and at a glance saw the whole thing. He saw that the lad was the woman's only son. He also saw that she would have no one to care for her. Then notice His compassionate word, "Weep not." Sometimes we tell people not to weep and we try to lend comfort and a helping hand; but we can never remove the cause of weeping. There was a real reason for weeping; but the Lord said, "Weep not." No doubt, the people thought, "Who are you, to try to butt into a funeral?" Or perhaps they thought He did not have the right to tell the pallbearers to stand still. But, oh, what a message He had for them! Just one word, "Arise." There was more power in that one word than in all the words and efforts of men from the creation until now. There was power in it to give life to the dead. This case proves that the Lord sympathizes with our weaknesses and sorrows. Thank God!

THE MAN WHO WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

We have no word recorded that this man said, but I believe he had much to say. The Lord has not given us the testimony of anyone who was raised from the dead except His Son. He wants us just to believe His Word about what is on the other side of death. If God would let them testify, they could only say what has been revealed in His Word. Notice that every time the Lord came in contact with death the pale horse, so to speak, went galloping off. Every time He attended a funeral, He broke it up by raising the dead. Death could not remain in the Presence of Him who is "the Resurrection, and the Life." John 11:25.

JOHN THE BAPTIST. 7:19-28. Is it possible that John, who was so courageous and undaunted, who could stand up to the Pharisees and tell them the truth concerning themselves, and who did not hesitate to tell a king he was wrong - could he be discouraged? Yes, even after he had seen the Spirit descend from Heaven in the form of a dove and heard the Voice from Heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," the devil put a doubt in his heart. But how precious the Lord condescended to meet the need of His servant. He meets us on our own level. He met Thomas who had doubted, and said, "Reach

hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side." Thomas was no longer a doubter.

We notice that Jesus did not merely send word back to John, but just went on about His business of healing, saving, and preaching. Then, after the men whom John sent had seen the works of Christ, He called them to Him and told them to go tell John what they had seen. The Lord not only gives us His Word, but He supplies abundant proof that it is real. Christ named six items to bolster John's faith. Observe the last one: "To the poor the Gospel is preached." That is the way with the true followers of Christ. Only the true Christians are interested in the poor. So many of the so-called religions of today seek the aristocrat who will give them sums of money; but Christ did most of His work among the poor classes. More than once, beggars received the healing touch. The Lord was here to meet the need of humanity. We believe that the report the men took to John removed every doubt. Then notice the eulogistic language Christ used of John -7:24-29. Think of Christ speaking so very highly of a man. This shows that He deeply appreciates His servants.

22

THE PHARISEE. 7:36-50. This man had a need, but did not feel it. It is doubtful if his need was ever met. He was religious, self-righteous, and moral, but did not feel his need of Christ. His object in bringing Christ to his house was to find fault with Him. We can scarcely understand the man if we do not consider him with the following:

THE FALLEN WOMAN. These two were exact antipodes. The man was moral and religious. He had a social standing and was in a financial position to invite the Lord to a feast. The woman was fallen in morals, an open sinner, and everyone knew it. She was not religious. Neither the law nor religion of any kind could help her. She felt the need of a living Saviour. How deeply she felt her sin and need! She was willing actually to kiss the feet of the Lord - a very humble act in the light of the fact that so few realized He was the Lord. No doubt, people looked upon it as a low act, for they saw in Him nothing but a man. Simon thought he had enough evidence to convince him that Jesus was not even a prophet, much less the Son of God. He began to murmur in his heart; but the Lord knew all about it. What an interesting scene this is - Simon murmuring, while the

woman was crying and washing the feet of the Lord with her tears and wiping them with her hair. She must have shed many tears, and have had very long hair. I say that anyone who would wipe the feet of the Lord with her hair must have had an inexpressible love for Him. No words would have shown such deep affection.

The Lord then talked to Simon about his thoughts. I imagine Simon felt very small after the Lord was through lecturing him. Simon had not shown even the common courtesy of giving water for His feet. He gave the Lord no kiss. This showed in what low esteem he held Christ. The woman was just the opposite. She anointed His feet, washed them, and dried them. Her sins were forgiven her. Let us not suppose that Simon was saved just because of the parable the Lord used. Man must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved. He thought the Lord could not see as deep as he could. He could see that the woman was a sinner, but thought the Lord could not. Another interesting point is the way the Lord sent the woman away. The two truths of justification, by faith as Paul taught and by works as James taught, though not contradicting each other, are brought out here. When Christ wanted to justify the woman before Simon, He pointed to her works. Simon saw the works, but could not see the faith in back of the works. Then, when the Lord wanted to send the woman away in peace, He said, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Our works can never be the ground for our peace, but we must have an unshakable faith. We have examined those seven characters. I believe that some of you are in the same position as those needy ones. Perhaps you have a loved one in need as did the centurion. Or perhaps you will read this and feel like the sick servant, that you are so far gone there is no hope for you. Christ is the hope of the hopeless. You may need spiritual life even as the young man needed natural life. Maybe you are a widow without the needed things of life; or a child of God in discouragement as was John. It might be that you have fallen into a spirit of criticism as Simon had. This is the only man of the seven who received a rebuke and no blessing. The Lord can even remedy this destructive condition if people are willing to take His cure and judge themselves. Then there is the last need - the poor outcast woman whom no one wanted. She had no plea of righteousness, no moral character, no background, nor anything to get help from humanity; but she had

the one thing that gave her a right to Christ. That was her sin. He said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." She truly felt her need. She owed much, but had naught to pay. Glory to God, there was Another to pay her debt.

Why not bring your need to the same place? Notice, she went to the feet of Jesus. Come to Him now as you read. Bow at His feet. I assure you that He will say the same to you that He said to that sinner. You can have your need met today. Do not wait until tomorrow. When Moses went to Pharaoh, and asked him when he (Moses) should intreat the Lord to take away the plague, Pharaoh said "Tomorrow." He might have had the plague moved that day. So may you. Not tomorrow, but now, let Jesus save you and make you fit for Heaven.

(Reprint 1978)

Jesus Is Always There

24 Sometimes our skies are cloudy and dreary
Sometimes our hearts are burdened with care;
But we may know, whatsoe'er may befall us -
Jesus is always there.

When in the midst of life with its problems,
Bent with our toil and burdens we bear;
Wonderful thought and deep consolation -
Jesus is always there.

"Lo, am with you always, is written,
God will not fail to answer our prayer;
Trusting His Word we rest in His promise -
Jesus is always there.

Never a burden that He doth not carry
Never a sorrow that He doth not share.
Whether the days may be sunny or dreary -
Jesus is always there.

Anon

THE WORDS OF JESUS

"Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Matt. 6:32. Remember these words of the Lord Jesus. This comforting assurance, though spoken by Jesus regarding temporal things, may be appropriated by the child of God amid all the vicissitudes of life. How it should lull all misgivings; silence all murmurings; lead to lowly, unquestioning submissiveness. Where can a child be safer than in a father's hands? Where can a believer be better than in the Hands of his Heavenly Father? We are poor judges of what is best. We are under safe guidance with His infallible wisdom. If we are tempted in a moment of rash presumption to say, "All these things are against me," let this word rebuke the hasty and unworthy surmise. Unerring wisdom and Fatherly love have pronounced all things to be needful.

My soul, is there aught that is disturbing thy peace? Are providences dark, or crosses heavy? Are spiritual props removed, creature comforts curtailed, gourds smitten and withered like grass? Write on each — "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." It was He who increased thy burden. Why? It was needed. It was supplanting Him; He had to remove it! It was He who crossed thy worldly schemes, marred thy cherished hopes. Why? It was needed. There was a lurking thorn in the coveted path. There was some higher spiritual blessing in reversion. He prevented thee with the blessings of His goodness.

Seek to cherish a spirit of more childlike confidence in thy heavenly 25
Father's will. Thou art not left unbefriended and alone to buffet the storms of the wilderness. The Marah's as well as the Elim's are appointed by Him. A gracious pillar-cloud is before thee. Follow it through sunshine and storm. He may lead thee about, but He will not lead thee wrong. Unutterable tenderness is the characteristic of all His dealings. "Blessed be His name," says a tried believer, "He maketh my feet like hind's feet, (lit. "equalled," them), "He equalleth them for every precipice, every ascent, every leap."

And who is it that speaks this quieting word? It is He who Himself felt the preciousness of the assurance during His own awful sufferings, that all were needed, and all appointed; that from Bethlehem's cradle to Calvary's Cross there was not the redundant thorn in the chaplet of sorrow which He, the Man of sorrows bore. Every drop in His bitter cup was mingled by His Father. "This cup which Thou givest me to drink, shall I not drink it?" Oh, if He could extract comfort in this hour of inconceivable agony, in the thought that His Father's Hand lighted the fearful furnace fires, what strong consolation is there in the same truth to all His suffering people!

What? One superfluous drop? One redundant pang? One unneeded cross? Hush the secret atheism! He gave His Son for thee! He calls Himself "thy Father." Whatever the trial under which thou art smarting, let the word of a Gracious Savior be "like oil thrown on the fretful sea;" let it dry every rebellious tear-drop. He, thine unerring Parent, knoweth that thou hast need of this as well as all these things.

(First Published 1861)

Psalm 23 Concluded

Dr. Vicky Moots

“...thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.” Psa. 23:5b

One use of olive oil in Bible times was as an agent for healing wounds and dry skin, and in a modified manner, oil is still being used today for healing. The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-35 shows forth a good example in regards to this use of oil. According to V.34, the Samaritan went to the wounded man and “...bound up his wounds pouring in oil and wine...”. Shepherds would also apply oil to the wounds of their sheep and pour oil on their heads to keep the insects away from their eyes and ears.

Oil in Scripture is a type of the Holy Spirit. We are instructed by James in his epistle, which is applicable to us today, to use the anointing of oil in praying for the sick. The oil itself does not heal, even though it has some healing properties, but it is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. James 5:14-15: “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them
26 pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up...” Our Shepherd is aware of our need for healing, both physically and spiritually, and will faithfully and freely anoint us with His oil when we call upon His name.

He will also come to us where we are, just like the Good Samaritan did, if we are too weak emotionally or too depressed to come to Him. He will pour out His oil and wine upon us and bind up our broken, wounded hearts and bring healing to our souls. David experienced this himself and tells us in Ps. 147:3 that our Shepherd will do this for any of His sheep when the need arises: “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Why not stop what you are doing right now and call upon your Shepherd today for His healing anointing if you currently have a special need.

We also need the Holy Spirit’s anointing to protect our minds from the attacks of Satan and to keep our minds stayed on the Lord. Isa. 26:3 says, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee...”. Have you ever noticed how easily you become distracted when you are praying, reading the Bible, or listening to a sermon? That is because Satan is attacking

your mind to take your mind off of the Lord and His Word.

Paul warns us in II Cor. 10:4-5 concerning this type of spiritual warfare and tells us that we need to be “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exhalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought [take it as a prisoner of war] to the obedience of Christ”. This is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit, as our Shepherd anoints our heads with oil.

Even Jesus had His head anointed by God prior to beginning His earthly ministry. He was baptized by John the Baptist, and as He came up out of the river Jordan, the Holy Spirit (God’s anointing oil) was poured out from heaven upon Him bodily as a dove and sat upon Him.

Jesus was called “Christ”, which means “the anointed one.” Peter tells us in his sermon at the house of Cornelius, in Acts 10:38, that “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power...”. That anointing occurred at the time of His baptism, as a sign that He was, indeed, the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One sent from God.

Kings and priests were also anointed for service by having oil poured on their heads. The anointing of David as King by Samuel is a good example of this and is described in I Sam. 16:12-13: “...And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him [David]: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward...”.

Exodus 29:5-7 describes the anointing of Aaron the high priest is described in Ex.29. Verses 5-6 reveal that Moses was to put the priestly garments on Aaron after he had been washed in water. “Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.” V. 7

Jesus’ anointing at the time of His baptism was not only to confirm that He was the Christ, the Messiah, but also that He was to be both King and Priest. But how does that apply to us? Would you be surprised to know that God has also chosen us to serve Him as spiritual kings and priests? John reveals this to us in Rev. 1:5-6: “...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father...”

We are, therefore, anointed with the Holy Spirit, even as Jesus was anointed, for the purpose of ministering the Word of

God (in word and deed) to others and to intercede for them in prayer as spiritual priests. He has also anointed us to reign in heaven with Jesus as kings to reign in life now to be overcomers and not to serve the desires of the flesh. As faithful sheep, let us yield to our Shepherd and allow Him to not only anoint our heads with His oil but to fill us to overflowing with the Holy Spirit for the purpose of ministering as kings and priests unto God and to serve others.

Psalm 23:5c: "...my cup runneth over." A cup will run over if it is overfilled or if someone intentionally just keeps pouring into it even after it is full. A full cup will also run over if someone bumps into it. An overflowing cup would indicate an abundant, more-than-sufficient, endless supply. This cup is probably referring to a cup of wine and would therefore represent a cup of joy and blessing. David said in Psa. 16:11, "...in thy presence is fullness of joy...". Our cup of joy is full in spite of the circumstances, even in the valley of the shadow of death, even in the presence of our enemies, just because we are in His presence. In His presence is fullness of joy. If you do not feel His joy, then you need to spend time in prayer and in His Word and enter into His presence.

28

Jesus spoke words of comfort and joy to His disciples on His way to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane in John 15:11. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full". He wanted to fill their cup and our cup with His joy. The Amplified Version of the New Testament says it this way: "That your joy and gladness may be full measure and complete and overflowing". That is definitely a cup that runneth over!

That joy is a special joy because it is His joy. His joy becomes our joy. Peter calls it "...joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Pet. 1:8). The joy that He pours into us is so incredible that there are not even words in human speech to describe it or to explain it. It is truly "unspeakable".

The amazing thing is that even though Jesus and His disciples were soon to face a time of extreme sorrow, yet He was speaking to them at that time about joy, a divine joy that would overflow more than their tears could flow. The joy that He was giving them through His Word was a joy that could not be destroyed or held prisoner in a tomb any more than He could. Jesus said to them, "These things have I spoken unto you." That

means His Word. His Word is still speaking to us today and filling us with His joy to help us in times of sorrow, if we are willing to listen. We need to read His Word and let it speak to us and fill us with His joy. How powerful is His joy? As powerful as His Word! By His Word He created the heaven and the earth.

There is another scripture that speaks of the power of His joy, the joy that the Lord possessed and with which He fills our cup. Paul stated in Heb. 12:2, "...who [Jesus] for the joy that was set before him endured the cross...". This meant that Jesus was able to endure the suffering of the cross because He looked beyond it to the joy, the reward, that He would receive. Not only would His suffering and death provide salvation for us, but in return, He would experience the joy of having a bride to reign with Him for eternity.

This is somewhat similar to the way in which a woman endures the discomfort of pregnancy and the pangs of childbirth as she looks forward to the joy of being able to hold her newborn baby. The joy that the Lord gives us enables us to endure hardships and difficult circumstances that we would not otherwise be able to face.

A cup that is full will spill out even more if it is bumped. The cup of joy that we have received will spill out in times of trouble for others to see, so that even through our trials, as we are knocked around, we can become testimonies of the goodness of the Lord, as the joy spills out instead of anger. The overflowing cup of wine described by David in Ps 23:5 is also a picture of the Holy Spirit with which we are to be filled. Paul tells us in Eph. 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit". The joy of the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, is also intoxicating and will even control our actions and our speech as we are under its influence. The word "filled" in this verse, in the Greek, is a continuous action verb in present tense, so it means to be continuously filling to overflowing. Thus, our cup keeps on overflowing as the Lord continuously pours the Spirit into us, so that the Holy Spirit not only fills our cup but begins to flow out of us like rivers of Living Water. Jesus promised this in John 7:38-39: "...out of his belly [innermost being] shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the spirit which they that believe on him should receive...)". We are to be so full of the Spirit that others cannot help but be blessed as they are splashed by the overflow of our cup. 29

If you are feeling down and depressed, then perhaps you need to ask the Lord to help you empty your cup of yourself and the worries and cares of this life with which it has become filled, so that He can pour His joy into you. Even David who wrote this Psalm, went through a time of discouragement and felt no joy. But he knew the source of joy, so he cried out to the Lord in Ps. 51:12, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation...". When David turned his problems over to the Lord, he was able to empty his cup and let the Shepherd fill it to overflowing so that he could shout, with joy, "My cup runneth over"! So, let us do the same and join him in his rejoicing.

Psalm 23:6a: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...". Our good and merciful Shepherd goes before us to lead us, and goodness and mercy are following behind us (our rear-guard). We are, therefore, surrounded by His goodness and mercy and need not fear the attacks of the enemy. Blessings will follow us as we follow Christ. Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy". As we receive His mercy, we show it to others.

30 Goodness is one of the attributes of God and actually means "God-ness". The Scripture plainly tells us that apart from God, there is no goodness. Matt. 19:16-17 relates the story of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus and said, "...Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God...". Jesus was trying to tell him that in order to call Him "good", then he must believe that He is God, Emanuel, "God with us", because only God is good. Did he believe that Jesus was really God in the flesh? We know that he did not actually believe that because verse 22 tells us that he went away sorrowful.

That young man had wanted to know what "good" thing that he could do to earn eternal life. This is a question often asked today. In Rom. 3:12, the Apostle Paul quoted David from Psa. 14:3 "...there is none that doeth good, no not one". There is therefore no "good" thing that we can do to earn eternal life because there is no "good" in the old creation. Any good that we do is through the life of Christ in us after we are born again, born of God, and become a new creation as sons of God.

Goodness is not a work of the flesh; it is a part of the

fruit of the Spirit which we find listed in Gal. 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...”. God’s goodness will be manifested in us through the fruit that we bear in our lives as we walk in the Spirit, and not through any of our self-works. It is a result of the life of Christ in us.

Goodness and mercy are closely connected to each other as attributes of God. We see this in the words that God spoke to Moses in the mountain in Ex. 34:6-7: “And the LORD passed by before him [Moses], and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...”. So, we see that the Lord is both merciful and abundant in goodness.

Goodness has already been discussed, but what is mercy? The dictionary meaning of mercy is “kindness in excess of what is expected by fairness; refraining from punishing offenders or harming enemies; the power to forgive or be kind”. All of these meanings were manifested toward us by God when He sent His Son to die in our place and to bear our punishment for sin. God did this for us because of His mercy toward fallen mankind. When we deserved death, He gave us life.

Jeremiah declares God’s mercy in Lam. 3:21-23: “This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness”. God’s mercies are new every morning because we need them to be able to start each new day.

Psalm 86 records a prayer of David. Verse 5 says, “For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee”. In vss. 15-16 we see that David does call upon God’s mercy and says, “But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me...”. David in his prayer is echoing some of the words that God spoke to Moses, and they are just as true for us today.

We are also encouraged by the writer of Hebrews to call upon God’s mercy, because we have a High Priest, Jesus, who understands our feelings and our infirmities and short comings, and He is able to intercede for us. We find these words in Heb. 4:16: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,

that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need". Because of the blood of Jesus, we can come boldly into the presence of God without fear. The judgment for our sin was poured out upon Jesus on the cross so that we could receive God's mercy instead of punishment.

God's goodness and mercy are always present and available in the person of our Shepherd who leads us, and they will also follow us as we follow Him.

How long will His goodness and mercy surround us? "All the days of my life", just as David said. Throughout this life we need His goodness and mercy. His goodness and mercy are unlimited and have a life time guarantee. That means we can call upon His mercy everyday for the rest of our lives as we pray and come boldly unto the throne of grace.

David realized that this was a sure thing and left no room for doubt when he said, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life".

32 We don't have to guess or hope that God will show mercy to us, because it is based on His merit, not our works. Since God's goodness and mercy are as eternal as He is, we can also say with the Psalmist in Ps. 89:1, "I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever". So, lift up your voice and sing!

Psalm 23:6: "...and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever". Notice that David says, "I will dwell". He does not say, "I hope to dwell", but "I will dwell".

If you were to die today, do you know without doubt that you would go to heaven to dwell in the house of the Lord? Perhaps you might say, "I think so", or "I sure hope so; I'm trying to live right and do the best I can. That's all God can expect, right"? Can we, like David, really be sure that we will dwell in the house of the Lord?

What does the word "dwell" mean? It means "to take up residence; to abide; to stay". It does not mean just to visit for a short time, but to live permanently. David desired to dwell with the Lord, to be able to stay in His presence, and so should we. He said in Ps. 27:4, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...".

How can that be possible? What would be required of us in order to be able to do that? David asked that question in Psa.

15:1: "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill"? There are qualifications for being able to dwell in the house of the Lord, and God showed David the answer in v. 2: "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart". This is only possible after we are born again and become a new creation in Christ and receive His righteousness. As a new creation we become a part of His family and have a right to dwell in His house. We cannot earn that privilege; it is all by His grace.

Jesus, Himself, assured us of a dwelling place in His house in John 14:2-3 when He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also". The word "mansions" actually means "dwelling places" or "abodes".

When Jesus stated, "I go to prepare a place for you", He meant that He was going to the cross, to prepare the way for us to have a place in heaven to abide with Him. The work was finished on the cross, and the only nails that were used to prepare that place were the ones in his hands and feet. He also promised that He would return for us to receive us unto Himself to dwell with Him. All we have to do is to believe. 33

But how long will He allow us to live with Him? Is there a limit? Not only was David sure of his dwelling place, but he knew that it would be forever, because God's love is forever. We can be assured that this is true for us also who believe, because Jesus, our Good Shepherd, promised us that it would be so. He said in John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto the eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand".

If we are His sheep, then we are safe and secure in His hand. We are His sheep forever, and He has provided an eternal dwelling place for us so that we can dwell with Him in His house forever.

Finally, I have one last thought concerning this Psalm. In vss. 5-6, David does not appear to be only talking about his relationship as a sheep to his heavenly Shepherd, as he was in verses 1-4. It is as though, instead of just sheep, we became the honored guests at the King's table enjoying our meal, which was prepared especially for us, while our enemies look on. The banquet table

is well supplied with everything we need.

The Lord does not destroy the enemy, but keeps us safe and gives us food for strength, the anointing of the Holy Spirit and an everlasting cup of joy and blessing, a cup that keeps overflowing. "Goodness" and "Mercy" are the two faithful servants who keep filling our cup and follow us, waiting on us, to meet our needs as we go through life. So, are we allowing them to serve us, or are we trying to do it all ourselves? Why not stop trying and simply lay hold of God's provisions by faith and enjoy His blessings, both now and for eternity.

Thy words unto my taste are sweet;
O Lord of Hosts, Thy truth I love.
The light it sheds before my feet,
Streams from Thy dazzling place above.

Oh, joy, within the page to find
Such wondrous treasures all my own;
To trace the mysteries of Thy mind,
And reach the splendors of Thy throne!

No human wisdom touched that height,
No creature tongue sang that high strain.
Thy breath breathed forth the holy light,
Thy finger scrolled the message plain.

Yet, mighty Word, Thou didst stoop low
To faltering lip and feeble hand.
For humble men spake long ago,
Such wisdom as Thy Spirit planned.

To profit him that hungereth,
With rich delight and doctrine pure;
To quicken love and strengthen faith
And make his heavenly calling sure.

Oh, Truth, who grandly traced the way.
Oh, Love, who trod it with delight.
Grant all Thy children grace, we pray,
To walk well pleasing in Thy sight.



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He shall feed his flock
like a shepherd:
he shall gather the
lambs with his arm,
and carry them
in his bosom.

ISAIAH 40:11.