

Grace and Glory

Declaring unto you the
whole counsel of GOD

Vol. 111

October 2021

Num. 10



The Lord is a God
of knowledge, and
by him actions
are weighed.
1 SAMUEL 2:3

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Grace & Glory” (USPS # 224-300 ISSN # 279-6996) is published monthly by Grace & Glory Gospel Society, 13011 Grandview Rd. P.O. Box 831, Grandview, Missouri 64030.

PERIODICALS postage is paid at Grandview, Missouri.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to “Grace & Glory” P.O. Box 831, Grandview, Missouri 64030.

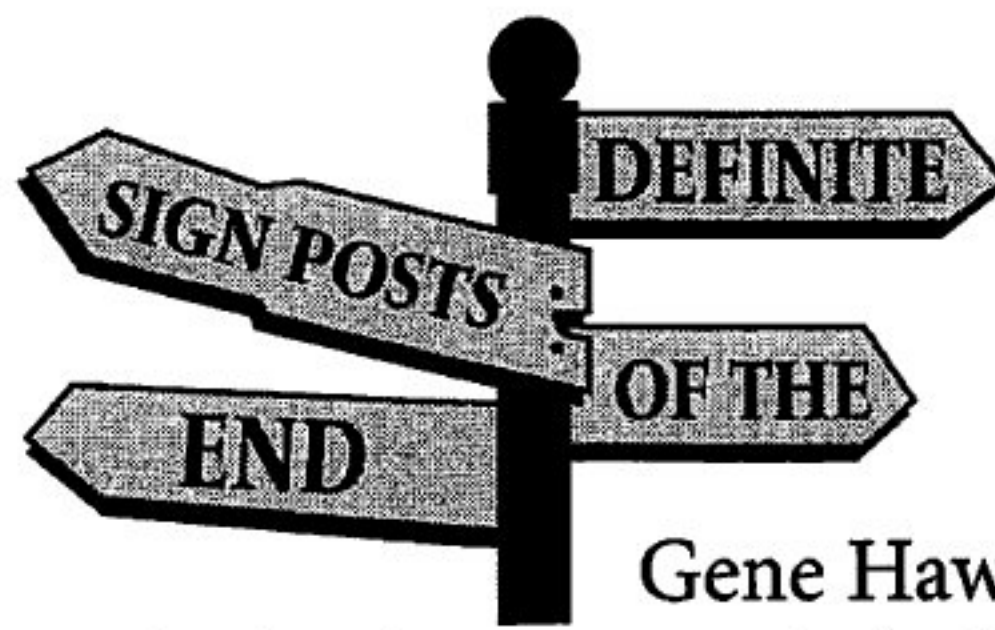
Telephone: 816-618-3306. E-mail gjhawk1@msn.com Print Shop # 816-322-2257

Web site: www.gracegod.org. Bible lessons and audio sermons are downloadable.

GRACE & GLORY is published for the purpose of proclaiming God's Holy Word. We believe that the Scriptures are inspired of God and were given to His holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. (II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:21)

GRACE & GLORY has had continuous publication without subscription price since 1910. We are able to continue this ministry by your kind financial support.

Editor: Gene Hawkins



Gene Hawkins

“I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, ...in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” Dan. 7:8

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings:...” Rev. 17:12-14

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” II Tim. 3:13

The three texts above set forth three very prominent signs that God is moving men around like chess pieces in order that they might take their respective places in end-time prophecy. These particular signs are converging simultaneously on the world stage today, and are in large part being completely ignored by the masses of humanity. This is very reminiscent of a time when Jesus reprimanded the Pharisees and Sadducees for tempting Him, desiring “...that he would shew them a sign from heaven.” Matt. 16:1 He quickly responded, declaring that they were well aware of signs forecasting the weather but were only hypocrites because “...ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” Matt. 16:3 Paul likewise prophesied that, “...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;” II Tim. 4:3 The “...sound doctrine...” here is a direct reference to the teaching of “...his appearing and his kingdom;” II Tim. 4:1

The above prophecy from Daniel describing an end-time ten nation coalition of the end time, wherein three “...horns...” or nations will be eliminated will absolutely come to pass. Many have tried unsuccessfully to identify those ten nations, but one must wonder if perhaps that might be too much of a pin-point

sign announcing Jesus' second coming and may not be completed until AFTER the tribulation begins. However, some have indicated at various times that America would be one of the "... horns plucked up by the roots:..." She has been a very prominent "horn" or superpower for a great number of years, but sadly this once "Christian Country" has followed the same path as Israel in forsaking her God and denying His Word. But God's Grace prevails even here. Be it ever remembered that the seven remaining nations of that ungodly seven nation coalition, which will be led by the "...little horn..." or the antichrist, will be obliterated as "goat nations" when Jesus curses them "...into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:" Matt. 25:41 These three nations, whoever they are, are actually the recipients of Divine Grace and would undoubtedly be designated as "sheep nations," who would be invited to "....Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" Matt. 25:34

4 The recent fiasco in Afghanistan seems to clearly confirm the foregoing opinion that America may indeed be one of the three "...horns plucked up by the roots:..." Many Christian Americans are ever hopeful that such a thing will not be fully implemented until they have been safely transported to glory before the tribulation even begins, but the response of other nations to the manner of U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan clearly reveals the "handwriting on the wall" that she has lost major prestige and credibility around the globe. Her allies, including Israel, simply cannot, and do not, trust her. Her enemies, primarily Russia and China, cannot wait to fill the void she has left in that country. Thus, these early signs emphatically describe a nation well on its way to being "...plucked up by the roots:..."

Daniel is very clear that the "...little horn,..." the antichrist himself will be responsible for removing these three nations. However, scripture is also very plain in revealing that this man of sin will not be officially recognized as the antichrist until he is raised from the dead shortly before the middle of the week when he begins his 1260 day reign of terror. Thus, this ungodly "little horn" must of necessity work in secret, behind the scenes, when he establishes the infamous covenant of death with Israel recorded in Daniel 9:27. Not only so, but according to Rev. 13:1 John saw only a 7 nation coalition, meaning that

the three removed in Daniel 7 must occur before the tribulation begins. If indeed America is one of those “three horns,” current events may be easily seen as evidence that Daniel’s prophecy is already coming to pass.

Many are proclaiming that if another political party were in power all would be well, but Daniel plainly emphasizes the fact that there will be no ultimate “come back” for any of these three horns, for their final demise is described as being “...plucked up by the roots:...” There could very well be a short time of respite, as scripture also prophesies a time of “peace and safety,” but there will be no lasting “return to normal.”

The American debacle in Afghanistan also opens the door for the above citation from Revelation 17, where “...ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet;...” This is an apt description of many global terrorist groups who are waging “jihad” or “holy war” around the entire world. Their primary objective is to “...make war with the Lamb,...” They are also directly allied with the antichrist in this endeavor, even as terror groups world-wide are engaged in war against anything and anyone associated with The Lamb, Christ Jesus. It is also rather intriguing that these same kings “...shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” Rev. 17:16 That whore is none other than The Catholic Church which greatly boasts in being Christ’s voice, authority, and representative over the entire globe. Since these kings are pitted directly against The Lamb, why would they NOT wage war specifically against her? Note further that these same kings “...*have received no kingdom as yet;...*” but the inference is that they desperately want one, and John also emphatically prophesies that they shall “...receive power as kings one hour (a very short period of time) with the beast.” This simply means that they will be officially recognized after the antichrist comes to power. Palestinian terrorists would surely be identified as a part of these kings because they have tormented Israel, God’s Own Chosen People, for years, insisting that they be given their own “state” in Israel with Jerusalem as the capital. They would like to have the entire city, but would undoubtedly “settle” for half of it. This is simply another gross denial of God’s Word as they “...make war with the Lamb,...” for Scripture is very plain that Jerusalem belongs only to God. That choice city

is repeatedly called “the city of David” and God promised “...that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me *to put my name there.*” I Kings 11:36 There are also many other citations wherein God claimed Jerusalem as His Own. Thus, those who battle for supremacy over this Chosen piece of real estate are fighting directly against God and His Christ.

The Taliban, also bears the same characteristics as these “...kings, which have received no kingdom as yet;...” Many high ranking officials are, even now, persuaded that this ungodly band will use the American and Afghan hostages “left behind,” as leverage for America to exert any power or influence she may have in order to persuade the world, chiefly the United Nations, to recognize the new Taliban Afghan Terrorists as a legitimate government. It is unknown at this time whether or not those tactics will work, but it seems at this point in time that such “kings” do have all the advantage.

6 The third sign so prevalent at this present time is that of deception. Many scholars have repeatedly observed that this was Jesus’ first response when the disciples asked Him, “...what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (age) Matt. 24:3 Scripture is also very clear that Satan, the antichrist, and false prophet are the masters of this tactic, but that same spirit is also greatly manifest among the nations which are grasping for any advantage of power they can achieve. Paul clearly prophesied that “...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” II Tim. 3:13 The word “deceive” literally means “to roam from safety, truth, or virtue.” God plainly declares that, “...because they received not the love of the truth,for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:” II Thess. 2:10-11 Deception may thus be defined as simply withholding or “covering up truth.”

Jesus also very plainly declared that “...there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.” Lk. 12:2 Scripture, however, does not promise that all such deception will be immediately made manifest and that is where men seize the advantage. The deception may be needed for only a short period of time in order to achieve specific goals, and then it no longer matters. Some very prominent American politicians tried desperately to broadcast how news agencies in

this country deliberately and repeatedly failed to report certain stories because they would be damaging to some candidates before the election. It is also quite clear that China knew much more about the origins of the coronavirus than was published to the rest of the world. Many nations continue to wonder if this ungodly malady was released on purpose in order that China might achieve her ultimate goal of full global political dominion. There is still great speculation that some doctors in America continue to be a part of “covering up” for China by not declaring the truth about where and how this virus originated. The fact is that deception simply does not create a spirit of satisfaction and peace in the hearts of those victimized by it, and the resulting unrest around this world is palpable. Truth makes men free, and will eventually be revealed, but by that time it often means very little in regard to the outcome that such deception was intended to gain.

The Taliban terrorists are also masters of deceit, promising protection for those “left behind” in that country, but numerous accounts of atrocious and heinous acts of murder and torture are now being reported, thus exposing the truth they have hidden. Scripture plainly declares that those who deceive will be primary candidates for “...being deceived.” The American hierarchy has boldly and repeatedly testified that the “Taliban can be trusted” and their actions have proved that they apparently did have confidence in this very wicked regime. One recently emerged report, after the U.S. drone strike which killed an American aid worker and his family, asserts that the intelligence which prompted that strike came from the Taliban. There is absolutely no doubt that all nations around the entire globe will fall victim to this exact same pattern of deception and thus the antichrist will easily “make his move” into complete and world-wide dominance.

The citation from II Timothy cited earlier in this article further defines the deception of this present time. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; (truth) but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;” II Tim. 4:3 Men may often assume that this verse applies only to “religious doctrine” or teaching and this prophecy surely has come to pass in that realm down through the ages. It is, however, a reference to the fact that if men deny truth, there will be “...teachers...” who will replace it with their own ideas. Let it be noted that wicked men have replaced “...sound doctrine...” with

their own political agenda today, and this most assuredly follows the same pattern as the deception of “covering up truth” defined above. Moral issues such as abortion, gay relationships, transgender issues, along with failure to punish those guilty of violent crimes across the land, are just a few “points of doctrine” directly condemned by God’s Word, yet political “...teachers having itching ears;...” wanting to “hear something new” are doing everything in their power to publish “new doctrines” and declare these things righteous. Isaiah condemns such deception, crying out, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness;...” Isa. 5:20

8 One of their favorite “doctrines” is that of “climate change,” which some have even defined as a religion among them. That should not be surprising, since the Pope, man’s perceived leader of the Global Church, along with other Church leaders, has openly endorsed “this religion.” The following is a recent headline from Newsweek. “Pope Francis Pleads for World to 'Listen to the Cry of the Earth' in Climate Change Fight” Then follows this declaration: “Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians issued a joint statement on Tuesday, pleading for delegates at the upcoming climate summit to “listen to the cry of the Earth” and take strides against climate change.....The joint statement is the first of its kind, issued by the top Christian leaders in the world, and pleaded for the attendees at the November summit and the world as a whole to make choices for the good of the planet. “As leaders of our Churches, we call on everyone, whatever their belief or worldview, to endeavor to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor, examining their behavior and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us,” The leaders also noted that emphasis has been put on short-term gains over long-term sustainability, and urged people to focus on building a stronger foundation for future generations.”

The “patriotic sacrifices” designed “...for the good of the planet...” petitioned above are none other than a reference to the tremendous shortages and hardships already incurred by the mandatory restrictions on fossil fuels, and such efforts have done absolutely nothing for climate change. What a contrast to God’s doctrine, when men fall on their faces and believe HIM, which promises: “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over...” Lk. 6:38

Man's doctrine of "global warming" is most assuredly deceptive, hiding the truth that only God controls the temperature of this world, and one day foolish men will be forced to acknowledge that fact. "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory." Rev. 16:9

Paul's remedy for those who know and abide by truth is found in his instruction to Timothy. We can almost hear him shout; "Timothy!" "...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned... knowing of whom thou hast learned them;...thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." II Tim. 3:13-17

God's people can do nothing to change the evil and deceptive practices of the modern world, but we can study His Word for ourselves and reap all these benefits. When believers cling exclusively to Truth, God will reveal any deceptive error to the honest heart, for "...ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Jn. 8:32 God's people must learn to "measure" all the reports of this world according to the truth of Scripture. For example, when men speak of the earth lasting indefinitely unless man destroys it with his carelessness, hearts must look up and rejoice in the absolute truth that, "...when ye see these things (signs of His coming) come to pass, know ye that the **kingdom of God** is nigh at hand." Lk. 21:31 Another avenue is to vehemently claim the promise Jesus also gave, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev. 3:11 The emphasis here is to look up for Jesus to come rather than try in any manner to "fix" all the evils of this world and restore it. Take heart! Truth will eventually prevail and those who appropriate only truth in their own lives will benefit beyond measure from it!

SOON AND VERY SOON
"...THE TRUMP OF GOD:..." SHALL SOUND!

I Thess. 4:16

God's Timing and Purposes

Dr. Vicky Moots

“**T**o everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” Eccl. 3:1

God has a time clock and a plan which will be fulfilled in His time, according to His purpose. He started time on this earth in Gen. 1:5 where it is stated, “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

God also created seasons, or specific time periods, for everything. These were first mentioned after the flood in Gen. 8:22 as He spoke to Noah: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” He has a purpose for the cold and the heat, for the seeming death of winter and the resurrection of spring.

This is true in our lives spiritually, also. We go through hard trials where there seems to be no hope, but then God brings something new and living out of it. We would certainly not appreciate the springtime as much if we had never experienced the cold of winter or the heat of summer. Nor would we appreciate our blessings if God always gave us everything we wanted.

Seasons are also appointed for times of remembrance or celebration. One example is found in Num. 9:1-3. “And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come up out of the land of Egypt, saying, Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day..., at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season.” This was an important season to commemorate their deliverance out of the bondage of Egypt and their protection by the blood of the Passover lamb.

We also set aside a season to celebrate the birth of the Lamb of God who was born in a stable, and a season to celebrate the death and resurrection of that same Lamb whose blood delivered us out of the bondage of sin.

But God does not count time the same as we do when it comes to fulfilling His purposes. Peter informs us of this in II Peter 3:8 where he is speaking concerning the Lord's return: “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one

day.” We must be patient and wait on God’s timing, based on His time clock, not ours.

He does, however, give us signs, much like the changing of leaves on a tree that signal a change in seasons, warning us that His coming is soon, as Paul tells us in I Thess. 5:1-2. “But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” Then note V. 4. “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” We are to be awake and aware and watching for His coming as we see the night approaching and observe prophecy being fulfilled before our eyes.

Now is the season to be ready, for the time is short. Paul instructs us in Eph. 5:16 that we are to be “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Redeeming the time means to buy up every opportunity, making use of our time wisely each day to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord by studying His Word and yielding to its transforming power.

Paul warns us in II Tim. 3:1 regarding the last days, stating, “This know that in the last days perilous [fierce] times shall come.” He then lists many prevailing conditions in Vs. 2-5, which are all happening today, confirming that we are, indeed, in the perilous times of the last days.

Because of this, Paul admonishes us in Rom. 13:11-12 “... that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation [deliverance] nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day [of deliverance] is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” Oh, how we need to let our light shine in these dark times!

It is the season to resist the devil and to stand on the Word of God, having on the whole armor of God, allowing Him to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives so that we may draw others to Christ. David states in Psa. 1:3 that the man who delights in God’s Word “...shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither...” That season is now!

I would like to add one more Scripture concerning the present time in which we live, with all its unrest and uncertainty. We read in Dan. 2:21 that God “...changeth the times and the

seasons: he removeth Kings and setteth up Kings.” America has been through a season of prosperity in recent years but now times have changed. God has allowed the seasons to change and the leaves to wither and fall from the trees in our nation, but it is according to His time clock. He is bringing down and setting up kings or leaders, according to His plan to fulfill His purpose in these end-times. But we need not fear if we are planted by the rivers of living waters, for our leaves will not wither. Let us trust God as our source of supply and peace until we hear that trumpet sound!

“A time to be born and a time to die...” Ecc. 3:2a

The emphasis is once again on God’s timing. All animals have specific gestational times, the length of time it takes for the embryo to become fully developed and to be born or the egg to be hatched. Human babies take 40 weeks, or 9 months, from the time of conception.

There was a set time in history that God planned for Jesus to be born, according to God’s time table as Paul declares in Gal. 4:4-5: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them
12 that were under the law...”

He had to plan the date of the angel Gabriel’s appearance to the virgin, Mary, in order to accomplish this and announce to her that she was a chosen vessel to give birth to the Son of God. The Holy Spirit had to overshadow Mary and conceive the life of Jesus in her at the specific time of the month that she ovulated. Not only was the time of Jesus’ conception planned but so also was the time and place of His birth. God caused Caesar Augustus to decree taxation requiring Joseph and Mary’s journey to Bethlehem based on their genealogy, at the exact time Mary was due to deliver the baby Jesus. That also meant that the time of Caesar’s birth was planned by God, as well as that of Mary and Joseph’s.

Luke 2:5-6 explains that Joseph went “To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.” That timing was not by accident. Jesus was born at the exact time and place God had planned in order to fulfill the prophecy demanding that Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem.

Psalm 22 is a prophetic Messianic Psalm referring to

Jesus and graphically describes death by crucifixion. Verse 16 especially states: "...they pierced my hands and my feet." Crucifixion did not even exist at the time that this Psalm was written.

Jesus had to be born at a time in history when it became the primary mode of execution in order that He would be crucified and "hanged on a tree," signifying that He was cursed and became sin for us. Paul affirms in Gal. 3:13 that, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The time of His birth was planned. What about His death? Jesus came into this world for the purpose of dying for our sins. The amount of time that He spent on this earth was planned by God, up to and including the day and time of His death.

John asserts that the Jews were trying to kill Him before God's ordained time. "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." Jn. 7:1 We read also that His brethren tried persuade Him in going up to the Feast of Tabernacles, but Jesus told them in V. 8, "Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come," He knew full well that it was not yet His time to die.

It had been planned by God that Jesus would die at the time of Passover and become the final Passover Lamb. He told His disciples as they ate the Passover supper that He was going to be betrayed and die, and that the wine and bread represented His own blood and body.

He then took them to Gethsemane to pray. When He awakened the sleeping disciples, in Mark 14:41, after praying, He told them, "...it is enough, the hour is come..." He knew it was now His time. Immediately after that, Judas came and betrayed Him with a kiss. They subsequently arrested Him and then crucified Him according to God's time table.

He died on the cross at the time appointed by God, before evening, so that the soldiers would not have to break His legs. The Passover lamb was not allowed to have any of its bones broken, and so the Scripture was fulfilled regarding Jesus, Who was the Lamb of God. John records it thus: "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was

dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side...For these things were done, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.” Joh 19:32-37

Now I will discuss things from a medical standpoint. The cause of death from crucifixion is from asphyxiation, lack of oxygen, not from blood loss. So that means that Jesus did not shed His blood simply from the act of crucifixion. A person being crucified eventually becomes so weak that he cannot hold himself up long enough with his legs to take a breath, and so he dies from lack of oxygen. The soldiers would sometimes have to break the legs of the criminals to cause them to die sooner so that their bodies could be taken down off of the cross in a timely manner.

How, then, did Jesus shed His blood if He died by suffocation? Jesus needed to be able to shed His blood in order to atone for our sins, as we read in Heb. 9:22: “and without shedding of blood is no remission [of sin].”

14 When a person dies, the heart stops beating, and the blood vessels collapse, causing the blood to back up into the heart and pool there. As a coroner I have had to obtain blood samples for postmortem toxicology, but since people don't bleed after they die, how was it possible for me to do that? I would do it by inserting a long needle through the bottom part of the chest up into the main cavity of the heart, the left ventricle, and drawing out some of the blood that was there. So, God planned for the soldier to pierce Jesus' heart with a spear, allowing all of His pooled blood to flow out. All of this was possible and happened because He died at the exact time that He did, according to God's time clock, and did not need to have His legs broken. Thus, redemption was accomplished according to God's purpose and according to His time.

* No candle on the altar of a church will ever substitute for a flame in the heart of the preacher in the pulpit.

* If Jesus bore the Cross and died on it for me, ought I not be willing to take up my cross for Him? (Moody)

THE GOD WHO IS MORE THAN ENOUGH

Ronnie J. Reed

(Exposition Teacher)

“**A**nd when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.”
Gen. 17:1

That would have been quite a request for someone who was young, let alone someone who was ninety-nine years old. The word "perfect" means "upright and sincere," and God was actually asking Abraham to walk before Him in this manner. When we think about such a request from our viewpoint, it seems to be a difficult one. To find out a little about the request, we need to find out about the One who made it. The statement "Almighty God" is the Hebrew word "El Shaddai," "the all-sufficient One," or "the God who is more than enough."

If you will notice, I said, "The God Who IS more than enough." It is not the God who WAS more than enough, because Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob found Him to be more than enough. Many others found Him to be the same sufficient One: David, Elijah, the Apostle Paul; and we, today, find Him to be the sufficient One. 15

Hebrews 13:8, proclaims, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." His sufficiency is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Even though we draw daily from God's "barrel" of grace, it is just like the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil of the widow of Elijah's time. The supply never diminished.

God dealt with Israel under several different covenant names. El Shaddai is just one of them. The name here is different. David knew the Lord as God Almighty, El Shaddai, the One who was more than enough. He said, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want" - Psalm 23:1 - "I have no need." This was David's experience before he became king. He was a man who had many needs. At one time, he sent to Nabal, requesting supplies for himself and his men. He also requested supplies from Abimelech. He had many needs, but he also knew that the Lord was the sufficient One. He learned that lesson first as a young lad, tending

the flocks of his father. A lion and a bear came to destroy the flock, but he learned that the Lord was El Shaddai, more than enough.

I am sure that he learned this truth in a deeper way when he walked across that brook, trying to pick out the five stones which were just right. We think of David as being filled with boldness, but I am sure that his heart fluttered a bit when he saw the size of that man. Then he remembered that the God he served was the God that was more than enough!

Paul also knew this same God, though he lived in a different time. He shouts, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" - Romans 8:37. Paul knew in an intimate way, the God who was the all-sufficient One. The Lord wants us to partake of His sufficiency. In Romans 5:17 we read, "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ." I have been impressed with that statement all year. God wants us to reign as kings over the affairs in our lives. He would have us partake of

16 His sufficiency. We can reign over all these things in our lives, when we realize that the God we serve is more than enough.

Some of you will say, "Now, Brother Reed, you don't know my circumstances. You don't know about my family situations. You don't know my background. You don't know how I have been through the mill. You don't know how people have done me dirty." There will be none of us who will have a valid excuse before God if we have a life of defeat, because He is the sufficient One. He is greater than your problem. He is greater than your sorrow. He is greater than your sickness. He is greater than all the hurts that man has ever done to you, because He is El Shaddai, the God who is more than enough!

Turn with me to II Kings 2:16,17 -"And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found

him not." I was amused at this incident of Elijah's translation --- the sons of the prophets desired to go and search for him. These were the sons of the prophets; they were Bible students. They were those who sat at Elijah's feet and had learned of the Lord through him. They apparently thought that God was only half enough, because they said, "Perhaps God dropped him somewhere on a mountaintop, or in a valley somewhere." They did not think that God was able to get Elijah all the way to heaven. They said, "We had better go out and hunt for him." And they hunted for three days.

That is the way that much of Christendom is today. They think that God is only half enough. "He might drop us off somewhere along the way." Aren't you glad that you know that God is more than enough? To bring this down to a more personal level concerning the Gospel of God's grace and God's glory, there are some people who hear the message of that select company that will make up the Bride of Christ and they say, "Oh, that cannot be me. He is not able for me. That must be for someone else, because of my life. There is too much to be done in my life, and I don't think He can complete it." Listen, if you put your faith and confidence in God Almighty, El Shaddai, the all-sufficient One, the God that is more than enough, He is able to keep that which you commit to Him.

17

(Reprint: Taken from a Tape 1976)

The Ministry Of Suffering

"This sickness is...for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Jo. 11:4

The child of God is often called to suffering, because there is nothing that will convince onlookers of the reality and power of true religion, as suffering will do when it is borne with Christian fortitude. Everyone cannot be trusted with trial. All cannot stand the fiery ordeal. Some, who are Christians would speak rashly and complainingly. So the Master has to select with careful scrutiny the branches which can stand the knife, and the jewels which can stand the wheel. It is given to some to preach, to others to work, but to others, to suffer.

Selected

REFLECTIONS

...From the Editor

“Then on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank the LORD...Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually. Remember his marvellous works...his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;” I Chron. 16:7-12

18

This chapter records the history of Psalm 105. “Then on that day...” gives reference to the day in which Israel brought the ark to Jerusalem after a previously unsuccessful attempt when they tried to transport it on a cart after the pattern of the Philistines. When the oxen “...shook it...” Uzzah apparently tried to steady it, “And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.” II Sam 6:6-7 The record then asserts that “...David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?” II Sam. 6:9 It was clearly written that the ark of God should be carried on the shoulders of the priests and evidently someone searched that out for “...when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.” II Sam. 6:13 It was at this time when this Psalm, describing depths of worship was born.

God created man to worship Him, but there are indeed varying degrees of it expressed, reflecting the knowledge and experience of the worshipper. The first exhortation is to “Give thanks...” and then to “...call upon His name...” Note the order here. Many would give thanks only AFTER calling upon His Name and receiving their requests. Thanks before that cry would be a statement of faith, confident that He would answer. Note also that there are untold provisions for asking in “Jesus’ Name.” Next is the exhortation to “...make known his deeds among the people.” This surely includes more than just verbal testimony, but rather speaks of a life lived before men displaying what God

has worked in a life submitted to "...his deeds..." IN them. "Sing unto him..." follows, for when God works in the lives of His own, songs of victory arise in their hearts directed specifically for HIM. Furthermore, it is not just for His actions in their behalf but rather "...sing psalms unto him..." This does not simply mean putting music to certain Psalms in scripture. Such psalms are rather a reference to God's Word, psalms sung due to a deep personal revelation of Truth, which are invaluable to Him.

Note also that those psalms are to reflect "...all his wondrous works." They are not designed to put men on a pedestal touting their own experiences, even though they be of God.

Some may try to build their lives around emotional singing but worship must go much deeper, for David's instruction is "Glory ye in his holy name..." and once again "Glory," even beyond thanksgiving, must be rendered toward HIM. Not only so, but "...let the heart of them rejoice,..." means that this kind of glory must go beyond "mental assent" to reflect the deep innermost desires of the heart, from those whose primary purpose is to "...seek the LORD. Seek the LORD and his strength,..."

The word "seek" means "to search out (by any method,) to strive, make inquisition," meaning that one must put great effort into seeking HIM. Paul describes his effort as follows. "...I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:..." Phil. 3:8 The object is to seek the LORD for Himself along with "...his strength..." rather than our own, and that is surely practical worship even beyond lip service. Furthermore, it is not a sporadic experience but rather "...seek his face (fellowship) continually.

Finally, men must "Remember his marvellous works... his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;" There is often a tendency to forget God's works and wonders even as Israel apparently forgot many of them, including the Red Sea Victory. However, the ultimate remembrance must be "...the judgments of his mouth;" which is a reference to the many decisions He would make in our lives today in accordance with the Word of God. It is imperative for all men to Glory in Him today, for the majesty of His matchless Word.

WORKS OR GRACE?

Paul N. Smith

“**A**nd if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”
Rom. 11:6

The Apostle Paul settled the question of grace versus works, once for all. There was no middle ground with him. Since his revelation came from Heaven, we can conclude that with God there is no doubt either. Our salvation is by grace with works excluded. If we were able to add one-tenth of an ounce of effort to our salvation, it would not be grace.

20 Abraham was used as an example of salvation by grace. In Romans 4:2-4 we read, “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” God was certainly not in debt to Abraham, in any sense of the word. This man had not done one thing that could have been commended by God. He had nothing on his side of the ledger; it contained all minuses.

It seems that God looked for a man who had nothing in which to boast, before He displayed His great plan. He searched for a certain type of individual and found it in Abram who, at the time, was living in Ur of the Chaldees. God chose an idolater. He could have found a man who had been taught to offer sacrifices to the God of Heaven. God wanted a man who was absolutely helpless as far as righteousness was concerned. When He found such a one, He said, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee” - Gen. 12:1

What did this poor spiritually bank rupt fellow do? “By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went” - Hebrews 11:8. He was so dependent on God’s grace that he did not try to chart his own course. He had no knowledge of what was expected of him, but he

obeyed God because he believed Him. This was an expression of grace on God's part, because Abraham came from a background that was spiritually dark. He could not boast in what he had been. He could not reason that surely there was something in him which caused God to look favorably upon him.

There is a man in the New Testament who was chosen by God, and he had an entirely different background. Saul of Tarsus had a pedigree that any Jew would have envied. He was an up-and-coming Pharisee, who was by no means an idol worshiper! He was blameless as to his outward conduct before men. The law could not condemn him concerning his outward religious actions. However, this Saul was made to realize, just as did Abraham, that it was by pure grace that he was saved and called into the ministry - I Timothy 1:12-14. He found out that his salvation was a result of Abraham's faith - "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all" - Romans 4:16. The apostle later renounced everything that might have caused him to boast and put it all on the refuse pile in order that Christ would be all in all. 21

The Lord also saw to it that Abraham was unable physically to beget seed before He gave him the promised child. Abraham was given the promise at the age of seventy-five, but it was twenty-five years later that Isaac was born.

The Lord looked for a man who had a barren wife, too. What power would there have been in the promise, if Sarah and Abraham had already given birth to a dozen children - or even one! No, they were both shut up to God's grace and power. There was no other way for it to happen - "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform" - Romans 4:19-21.

Abraham could never have demanded a thing from God.

He could never truthfully say, "God, You owe me a blessing." If the Lord had made Abraham work for the blessing, there would have been reason to question whether Abraham had worked enough or if God had been fair. If we expect to earn our blessings from the Lord, then we had better not expect very much. We are not able to do anything that would bring blessings down from Heaven. God chooses to bless through grace, and no other way. Abraham learned this, and he appreciated what the Lord had done for him; and thus he became His obedient friend and disciple. When the Lord told him to take Isaac upon whom the promise depended and slay him, Abraham obeyed. He knew that it had been God's power that brought about Isaac's birth, so he knew that the Lord would raise Isaac from death. This is faith in God's grace.

The Apostle Paul tells us just how and why we can claim salvation - "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" - Ephesians 2:8,9.

22 It is unmistakably plain that salvation comes no other way. It is definitely not of works, so that we cannot boast. If there was the slightest chance, we would boast. We would point either to our background, or to our moral character, or to our good and kind deeds, or even to our nationality and color. God chose a way that man would have no part in his salvation except faith, and even his faith does not originate within himself. Our faith springs forth by the hearing of the Word of God. No one has ever heard the verse, Romans 5 :1, quoted --- "Therefore being justified by WORKS, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Works are out! Grace is in!

As saints of God we are told to do some works - "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" -Philippians 2:12,13. In these verses, our attention is drawn back to the beginning of the chapter. The word "wherefore" demands an explanation.

In verse five, we are told to - "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Then we learn of the wonderful grace and obedience of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He was willing to become flesh - take upon Himself our frail tenement. He also chose the role of a servant; but the greatest act of obedience was when He was willing to become sin for us and die on the Cross.

Can you grasp the extent of His sacrifice? God did; and, because of it, highly exalted Him. Thus, His glory did not come, until He became obediently humbled. Humiliation always comes before honor. Wherefore, Paul says, "Work out your own salvation." Then, in the following stroke of his pen, he wrote, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Notice, we WORK OUT, as God WORKS IN us. We can never manifest any Divine trait, until God has worked in us. The power must come from Him.

We may think that we are doing quite well all by ourselves. We are overcoming just wonderfully, because we have been yielding our lives. But, do not forget, that it is Christ in us who is overcoming. It is God's power that gives us the strength to resist temptation. It is Christ's holy nature which gives us desires that are far stronger than the flesh. We are dependent upon Him day by day. As we yield to His Word and obey from the heart, we will be working out or manifesting the life of Christ. We will be as sensitive of our Father's wishes, even as Christ was. It will mean humiliation to our proud old flesh. It will mean counting all good things of the flesh as refuse. It will mean living a life that is hard on the flesh, but pleasing to God. Then will come the glory.

The Bride of Christ will be arrayed in garments of Divine working - "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His Wife hath made herself ready" - Rev. 19:7. These clothes are being prepared now. By our righteous acts, we are sewing our wedding garment. It will be the yielded life that will manifest righteous acts. It will be the ones who depend on Christ for everything, who will have a wedding garment.

The Apostle Paul tells of a crown of righteousness that

was given to him, and will be to all who love His appearing - II Timothy 4:8. This stands for the same truth as the garment of the Bride. The crown stands for the right to reign with the Sovereign. The garment stands for the privilege of sitting with the King as His Queen. Will the Bride point to her garment with pride, and boast in all her wonderful overcoming? Surely not. We find that the overcomers will cast their crowns before Christ and cry, "Thou art worthy." They realize that it has been by grace only - apart from works. They will know that they have not earned these crowns by their own efforts and strength. God has planned it all because of His grace, and then freely offered the ability to reach this goal. Where is there any room for boasting?

Let us remember this: Every time we take some credit to ourselves, we rob Christ of the honor due Him. Every act which comes from self-righteousness tells God His grace is not necessary. The Apostle Paul yearned with all his inner feelings to be found in Christ completely, separated from his own self-works. It is either grace or works. What will it be with you?

(Reprint 1980)

*Without love, we love
With His Divine Love.
Without joy, we are joyous
With His supernatural joy.
Without fruit, we become fruitful
With His fruit of the Spirit.
Without hope, we hope
With the hope of His calling.
Without reality, we become real
Through the reality in Christ.
We, who are temporal, become eternal
Through eternal life that is Christ Jesus.*

Dann Clock

"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM"

Myra G. Connell

“**Y**ea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” Phil. 3:8-10

Paul here speaks from his innermost being. How we love his sayings, and we always derive benefit from them. He tells us of his great desire to know Christ. What an inspiration for us to study this portion; for, indeed, his writings are the Word of God. He counted all that pertained to the old natural life - his reputation and gains -but utter loss that he might "win Christ, and be found in Him" and really know Him.

Paul was a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," "a Pharisee," and 25 eligible to the Sanhedrin; but those things had not satisfied him. He seemed to have all that anyone could possess in the natural - noble birth, honorable position in life, higher learning, and an unsurpassed religious experience as under the law; but still he lacked something. That great lack was revealed to him on that momentous day on the road to Damascus. Then the power of God brought him down to earth and changed the big man Saul into the little one Paul. The Lord humbled him until he felt so small in his own sight that he called himself "the least." Later, he became filled with a holy desire to know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

Paul did not obtain that desire at first, when he learned Jesus suddenly as Savior. To know Christ as expressed by Paul above means vastly more than to know Him as Savior and as the Healer of the body. It means much more than to know Him as He who baptizes, or anoints with the Holy Spirit and power. Did he regret that he had not known Christ in the flesh? No. Doubtless, he regretted that he had let slip a golden opportunity when he saw

Him in the flesh and had not then and there left all and followed Him.

Oh, yes, we too may have missed opportunities of knowing the Christ of God. There is a trite old saying, "Opportunity knocks but once." But that is not found in the precious Word, praise God. If you have let every opportunity to come to Him go by, turn not away in despair. Come to Him now. "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" - Matthew 7:7.

Dear friend, do you feel that your cross is too heavy to bear? Do you feel like giving up? Do you shrink from crosses and pain? These are the path to a knowledge of Christ and of the power of His resurrection. Remember that Paul suffered much for Christ; but he called his sufferings only "light affliction," when compared with the glory that is to be found in Christ.

26 There is a song which says, "The cross is not greater than His grace." The apostle knew this when he prayed that he might know Christ and "the fellowship of His sufferings." Someone has defined fellowship as "two fellows in the same ship." Shall we think it strange that Paul desired to be in the same boat with his Lord in His sufferings? In Philippians 3:11 he thus expresses himself, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead," or out from among the dead. Such an attainment is reached by the way of pain in mind and body. Paul hoped to be resurrected with a special company of saints some time before the great majority of saints. This is the meaning of the out-resurrection.

No human being can really stand prosperity. That is why we have so much adversity. Even gold must be refined before it is pure. In my school days, I learned this little quotation: "A diamond in the rough is a diamond sure enough; for before it ever shines, it is made of diamond stuff." But it takes polishing to bring out its beauty and to enhance its value. Even Paul had to be polished before he could shine for the Lord. There was given him a thorn in the flesh, lest he be lifted up through the abundant revelations made to him. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are

exercised thereby" - Hebrews 12:11. Thus, we are made "meet for the Master's use" - II Timothy 2:21. As we are going through the polishing process, which we call tribulation, our Lord is with us. "In all their affliction He was afflicted" - Isaiah 63:9. In the zero hours, we really come to know Christ.

Beloved, do you know Christ? Are you truly acquainted with the Anointed of God? "Oh, yes," you may say, "I found Him as my Savior years ago. Yes, thank God, I know Him." But do you? Let us see. Do you know Jesus in all His fullness? Do you know Him in the power of His resurrection? Has He ever raised you up from the dead, as it were? And do you live by His abundant resurrection life in your body? Do you think that you know all that we have in His death, burial, and resurrection? Have you learned "the fellowship of His sufferings"? I feel that we have only caught a glimpse of Christ and His fullness. Let us go on to know Him, that we may be ready to be caught up to meet Him in the air when the trumpet shall blow.

(Reprint 1979)

27

KNOWLEDGE THROUGH SUFFERING

I knew Thee not,
Thou wounded Son of God
Till I with Thee
The path of suffering trod;
Till in the valley
Through the gloom of night,
I walked with Thee,
And turned to Thee for light.
I did not know The meaning of the Cross;
I counted it but bitterness and loss
Till in Thy gracious discipline of pain
I found the loss I dreaded purest gain.

Anon

ARE YOU A GASHMU?

H.L. Burnside

Are you a Gashmu? Never heard of it? Wouldn't recognize one if you met it on the street? Well, let me tell you the Gashmu Gang is a large company. The original Grandpappy Gashmu lived circa 450 B.C. His gift to posterity is recorded in Nehemiah 6:6. "It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel."

Wise Nehemiah recognized Gashmu and his cronies, Sanballat and Tobiah, for what they were: a trio of mischief makers. Gashmu's chief stock in trade was gossip. Since 450 B.C. his tribe has spread to every city and hamlet.

Many modern Gashmus are respected church members, both men and women. Of the gadabout Gashmu gals of his day, The Apostle Paul said, "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." I Tim. 5:13.

28 Gashmus are never constructive They are always ill informed - the more so the better. Their only art is the art of story telling. They are never interested in healing. They love to stir up old wounds, or else slash away at someone's character until a new gash is opened up.

Have you ever been gashed by a Gashmu? A Gashmu gash is slow to heal for the simple reason that others of the Gashmu Gang persist in pouring in salt (or acid) into the wound. "It is reported ... and Gashmu saith it." How many of the innocent have been injured by these or similar words? And instantly the old Gashmu mill starts grinding out its grimy grist.

"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" -Proverbs 17:9.

There you have it. God or Gashmu: That is your choice. God's way is love's way. And that is to cover the transgression. If someone is trying to live down a blunder, keep your mouth shut. Don't be a Gashmu!

(Reprint 1976)

"THE SECRET OF THY PRESENCE"

Walter S. Anderson

“Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.” Psa. 31:19-20

Within its recesses, the human heart has a longing for escape, to find a haven of safety and love. In this state of hope and serene consolation, the believer is rewarded with the “secret of Thy presence” Faith generated by the Holy Spirit transcends all obstacles and achieves the highest goals of attainment. The Psalmist longed for such an experience, as he expressed in Psalm 55:6. "And I said, Oh, that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest."

The expression, “wings like a dove,” reveals a type of the Holy Spirit. The “wings of the morning” are flights into resurrection life and glory. All of this spiritual activity is provoked by heart-rending throbs of the bitterness and loneliness of the soul. David said once, "My heart is sore pained within me: And the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me" Psa. 55:4-5 In an age of lawlessness, of rampant crime and injury, the human soul is greatly affected; but God offers His pavilion of retreat.

The Bride of Christ hears the beckoning of her Beloved, as love has its irresistible urge to escape. "Come with Me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards" S.O.S 4:8. This picturesque language expresses in natural symbols, the rise and release of faith, the heights which are separated by valleys below. Oh, supreme is the rapture which the free spirit of the Bride attains, even to heavenly places!

This is one pavilion of love which overwhelms my heart. The Bride expresses her elation with her Bridegroom, even as others reveled in the forested slopes of Hermon. She exclaims, "His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold. His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars" S.O.S. 5:15 The heavenly life of the Bride of Christ reflects the glory

of His grace! Human efforts never rise to these heights. Our own works simply stagnate the power of faith. The Apostle Paul prays in our behalf that we will accept the power and authority over the forces of darkness. "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" Eph. 3:16 The source of this power is mighty, with absolute means of its fulfillment; for it is "according to the riches of His glory." The Bride is endowed with a lavish abundance of Christ's exalted heavenly life. In order for us to lay hold of this flow of richest treasures, we must be granted strength in the inner man. The inner life is the essential part of our being, constituting our life in Christ. The Holy Spirit is the means of this inward strengthening. He furnishes all the energy for spiritual comprehension.

In poetic expression, the lovely Shulamite gave vent to her inward need: "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." S.O.S. 2:5-6

30 When grace and spiritual understanding is given to these Old Testament truths, they are transformed from the sensual to the spiritual; from the earthly to the heavenly; from the visible to the invisible!

The Apostle Paul wrote: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" Rom. 15:4 Only the Gospel of Grace can impart such unspeakable faith and hope to our hearts. It transforms the entire Old Testament from being just "Letter" to "Spirit." Paul continues, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." II Cor. 3:6

Paul continually contrasted the two Testaments, or Covenants. In their time, they were both given glory; but oh, the contrast! "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious" II Cor. 3:8,11 The ministry of condemnation faded away; it could not remain. It was only "written and engraven in stone," and

never reached the heart. The demands of the Law condemned the flesh. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ accepts the judgment of the holy commandments upon his fallen human nature. The ten commandments only deal with the flesh, and hold the doer in a state of bondage.

When a believer seeks holiness, he usually goes to these commandments for his sanctification. This is of his own reasoning, however, and is not of faith. By this self effort, he is deceived, for that "which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death" Rom. 7:10 Sin is still in the fleshy nature of man, and God has no remedy for the restoration of the flesh. It was sentenced to death and executed at the Cross of Christ.

Now, God has given through His grace, the Holy Spirit for our sanctification. This is not by the works of the Law. This true sanctification comes only by faith. Paul states in Galatians 3:2: "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?" The Holy Spirit is only obtained by the "hearing of faith." There can be no faith in the commandments. Again, Paul contrasts the Spirit, secured by faith, with a Doer, who is seeking life through the Law. "And the Law is not of faith; but, the man that doeth them shall live in them" Gal. 3:12 The Doer always remains under law, and is always failing and failing! He finds no victory over sin in the flesh. What a deplorable state of mind! Instead of Life, which he expected the Law to give him, he can only contend with a guilt complex. It is only by the Grace of the New Covenant, that God gives the believer everlasting life in Christ. If we are to live before God in holiness, we must always be IN CHRIST, and not in the flesh. The flesh will always remain under law and condemnation. The Apostle Paul marvelously opens up the Old Testament for our learning. His key for understanding these things is not works, but faith; not flesh, but Spirit; not commandments, but the Life of Christ! The Bride reveals her faith in knowing that Christ is our Life. Christ did not only become a Sacrifice for our sin, but He also fulfilled the holy law of Moses in His holy, sinless life on earth. The Apostle to the Gentiles exclaims: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. 10:4

The Lord becomes the "end" or "completion" of the law. There is nothing left to do but believe. Faith and not works

becomes the "end of the law for righteousness." We cannot be delivered from sin, with a pure conscience, unless we are first delivered from the law. Thank God! We are now "dead to the law by the body of Christ" Rom. 7:4 We could never meet the law's righteous demands in the flesh, and must despair of all our efforts for victory over sin. Now under grace, we are no longer under the power of sin. Believers are "in Christ," the place of glory and freedom from all bondage. To be "in Christ" is to be also IN all of His achievements and victory over evil. It is now also "Christ in us." This is the work of faith.

32 "Christ in us" fulfills all the promises of the Old Testament. The Bride enters by faith to accept all of Christ's inheritance. Instead of the blood of bulls and goats, the precious blood of Jesus has atoned for all sin. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" Rom. 3:25 The law could never put away sin! It was only heaped up age after age. Jehovah was angry against sin and His holiness must be propitiated and appeased by better sacrifices. With great forbearance, Israel's holy God looked forward to Calvary. Here every transgression of His holy Covenant was answered and atoned for by the blood of Jesus. God put away the Old Covenant, and it now remains that faith alone can accept the work of Christ. Whatever could not be completed under the law, is now fulfilled in Christ.

The Apostle Paul makes a marvelous contrast in Galatians 4:22-31, concerning two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, by two women, Hagar and Sarah. The first was a bondwoman and the latter was free. They lived together in the house of faith with Abraham. There was no harmony or sweet fellowship there, but only discord, dissension and persecution. "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." The present state of affairs has not changed after all these centuries. The cause of all this lies in the children's births. Ishmael was born "after the flesh." Isaac was "by promise" and "after the Spirit."

In these two sons with their mothers, there lies a far deeper meaning of the mystery. They represent two different covenants, given from two separate places, with two distinct cities. The first birth represents the covenant of law given by Moses, which came

from Mount Sinai. It can only gender slavery and reveals the bondswoman, Hagar. "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children."

This is the condition of Israel who looks to Jerusalem as their capital. Besides Israel, all who look to that earthly city remain in bondage to the law too. Grace did not originate in Jerusalem; it came from Heaven! Grace has never ruled over this city of David. There can never be any liberation apart from grace, nor any relation with God and His blessed Son Jesus Christ, without grace received by faith alone!

In sharp contrast to the earthly city of Jerusalem, is the other Jerusalem. It is represented by Sarah, who is the mother of us all. "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Only grace has the right to reign, because its very cause and purpose is solely in the Godhead. Law and Grace cannot live together, for they are opposing principles. Sarah means "my princess," and is the royalty of heaven. Only those who are of "grace through faith" have the authority to reign. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" Rom. 5:21 Furthermore, the law cannot claim heirship with Abraham and Sarah, "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect" Rom. 4:14

33

The Apostle Paul confirms that in these two women and their offspring, are two principles, law and faith, works and promise, and flesh and Spirit. Paul takes Isaiah 54:1 and gives it a higher spiritual meaning under grace: "Sing, O Barren, thou that didst not bear: break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." Sarah who is grace, has not power to conceive in the flesh. She becomes fruitful when the true Seed of Abraham, Christ, appears. Hagar, who is only flesh, can produce in abundance.

Because these are two opposite covenants, every believer must choose one of the two. Nobody can remain neutral. "Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondswoman and her son: for the son of the bondswoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." Just as the two women could not remain together in Abraham's house, so these two covenants cannot exist

together in the house of faith. One must be expelled. Sarah as the true wife, asserted her authority to Abraham. He obeyed her after God confirmed her request. So Sarah ruled alone, and her son, Isaac, was heir.

From this natural incident, every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, must be true to grace and cast out the old law with its dead works. Our faith will obey the voice of grace and accept her right entirely.

The Bride of Christ will establish her true pedigree, above all others. The Bridegroom says of her, "My dove, My undefiled is but one: She is the only one of her mother. She is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, yea the queen and the concubines, and they praise her" S.O.S. 6:9 As the only one of "her Mother," she is the choice one. This reveals an election of grace, because Sarah is her spiritual mother. This gives her preference above all of the other daughters. Only grace has this power of election. "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." Prov. 31:29 Only grace begets a true virgin for Christ.

34 Her excellence is far above the stars. She is incomparable in her origination before Adam and Eve --- "According as He has chosen us in HIM before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" Eph. 1:4 The Bride receives this adulation from her Beloved: "How fair is thy love, My Sister, My Spouse! How much better is thy love than wine! And the smell of thine ointments than all spices" S.O.S. 4:10 This then, is the Secret of His Presence.

(Reprint 1980)

Seven Humble Instruments

*Shamgar had an ox-goad,
Rahab had a string,
Gideon had a trumpet,
David had a sling,
Samson had a jaw bone,
Moses had a rod,
Dorcas had a needle
All were used for God.*



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