

GRACE & TRUTH **MAGAZINE**

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NEXT MONTH: SOLD OUT FOR CHRIST

GRACE & TRUTH

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Fully Committed?

In the world of Christianity today there are numerous programs to lead believers of every age to dedicate their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ, or at least to live in certain ways that are according to Scripture. Such things can be a blessing. It is interesting to realize that the “need” for these programs indicates just how little believers today are truly willing to surrender their lives to the Lord.

In the topical indexes of hymnbooks on my desk, there are dozens of titles listed under headings such as “Aspiration,” “Commitment,” “Consecration,” “Dedication,” “Leading,” “Revival,” “Stewardship” and “Service.” Certainly the desire to sing what are typically very stirring hymns is present in those counted among the Christian world. But, is the desire to be truly surrendered to the Lord really there? And if the desire is there, does it follow in practice?

What does it mean to truly live for Christ? I think we can find many examples in Scripture of those who lived in this way – some will be found in the articles that follow.

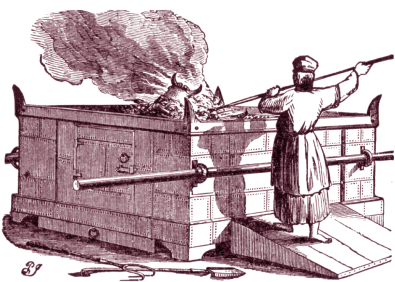
In our lives we may be able to

deceive the people around us by presenting an image of a dedicated Christian. But, can God tell the difference? Of course He can! And He may reveal it to those He chooses, as in the case of Peter’s encounters with Ananias and Sapphira. You can read the whole story in Acts 5, but to jump to the ending: Ananias and Sapphira both died for lying to God.

True commitment can only be made in the power of the Holy Spirit. That tells us that an individual must first put his or her trust in Jesus Christ, having come to Him as a poor, lost sinner, realizing the need of a Savior. Then, we must be willing to let God have control of our lives – every part! If we are going to sing those wonderful songs of dedication and commitment, we really need to mean what we express!

God has placed this challenge before us. He wants us to be entirely for Himself – and what could be better than that? As you read the articles in this month’s magazine, prayerfully consider where you stand in truly surrendering control of your life to Him.

Paul



The Burnt Offering

by Clarence E. Stuart
(adapted excerpt from
The Christian's Friend, 1880)

So precious was the burnt offering to God that it never was to be out of His sight. All night long it burned on the altar – ever in God's remembrance. He could always, as it were, be looking on it – the witness to Him of that self-surrender to death of His Son, then future, but now past; then a secret known only to Him, but now shared through grace by us who believe on Him.

Precious was this offering. At all of Israel's feasts, stated occasions provided by the law as well as on special occasions that arose in later years, this offering was always in season. Each morning and each evening it was offered up on the altar – the first sacrifice and the last. This was a standing ordinance in Israel, ever to be remembered and observed. At the close of each week, on the Sabbath, a special burnt sacrifice was appointed. At the commencement of each month a burnt offering of the flock and of the herd was enjoined. At each of the feasts, and on each day of the feasts, special burnt offerings were commanded, as well as on the Day of Atonement. At Aaron's consecration this sacrifice

had its place, and again at the setting apart of the Levites.

No mother in Israel would rejoice over the birth of her child, whether male or female, without bringing for her purification the appointed sacrifice for a burnt offering. Each leper, too, that was cleansed was reminded of his need of it before he could re-enter his tent in the camp and be at home there again; and every one, whether man or woman, made unclean by an issue was taught the importance of bringing a burnt offering to God. On special occasions Samuel at Mizpeh (1 Sam. 7), David on Mount Moriah (2 Sam. 24) and Elijah at Carmel (1 Ki. 18) offered burnt offerings to the LORD. And on that day when the LORD, under the symbol of the ark, first took up His abode in Jerusalem, David sacrificed burnt offerings (2 Sam. 6).

The offering spoke to God, and it speaks to us too, of that self-surrender of His Son to death, even the death of the cross. It is to Him that, in a marked way, the Father's love flows out (Jn. 10), and He it is whom God has highly exalted and given a name which is above every name (Phil. 2). **GT**

SOLD OUT FOR CHRIST

What Does It Take?

by Timothy P. Hadley

In his book called “Absolute Surrender” Andrew Murray gives a wonderful illustration from 1 Kings 20:2-4. Ben-hadad ruled over Syria, located to the north of Israel. The wicked King Ahab was reigning over the Northern Kingdom from the capital city of Samaria. Ben-hadad gathered together his armies, which he described as more numerous than all of the dust of Samaria. He, along with thirty-two other kings, attacked and devastated the countryside of Israel. They surrounded the capital and brought the rebellious King Ahab to complete submission. All hope was gone and everything lost. The message came: “Thus says Ben-hadad: Your silver and your gold are mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine” (NKJV). He demanded and got absolute, unconditional surrender. Later, things worked out quite differently in this very interesting story, but at first Ahab offered the Syrian king everything he possessed.

Let’s focus on that one sentence: “My lord, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have are yours.”

This sentence very aptly describes what ought to be our attitude toward God – what every child of God ought to say to Him. If our hearts are willing there is no limit to what God will do for and through us, but this necessitates our unconditional surrender to Him. This holy life has two sides: doing what God wants you to do and letting God do what He wants to do. In this we will be wonderfully pleased at the result.

Life Service, Not Lip Service

Abraham was called the father of faith because of his willingness to surrender everything to God – ultimately demonstrated when God told him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Abraham didn’t argue with God. Rather, he laid his son on the altar of sacrifice! God saw this act of surrender and said to Abraham, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God,

since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (Gen. 22:12). This proved his allegiance to God.

It seems that we are usually ready to do almost anything except surrender to God. I recently read a story about British Navy commander Lord Nelson. The British were victorious over their enemy and the defeated admiral came on board Lord Nelson’s ship to surrender. The admiral walked up in all of his regalia [finest uniform] with a sword swinging by his side. When he put out his hand to the British commander, Lord Nelson impassively said, “Your sword first, sir.” Similarly, we come to offer God the flattery of our lips, the praise of our hymns; but God is saying to us, “Your sword first.”

Start Well And Finish Well

Another example of one who lived his life totally surrendered to Christ is the apostle Paul. From the very first moment he met the Lord on the road to Damascus to his very last breath, Paul lived a life sold out to Christ. Before his conversion Paul (then known as Saul) was a very religious man who thought he was serving God by persecuting Christians. But when the bright light from heaven stopped him in his tracks, Paul found himself face down crying out, “Who are You, Lord?” Once

he found out it was Jesus Christ speaking to him from heaven, Paul immediately surrendered his life by saying, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” For the rest of his life Paul relinquished control, abandoning his own desires and passions, and submitting everything to the lordship of Christ (Acts 9:1-19)!

In Paul we see a very important principle: It does not matter how we begin, but how we finish. Many start out strong in the Christian life, but they give out along the way because of difficulties that arise or they are distracted by the cares of this world – something else becomes more important than Christ (Mt. 13:19-22). But Paul could say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day; and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8). What does this mean for believers today?

- **“I fought the good fight.”**

When we trusted Christ as our Savior we entered a battleground. Satan lost our souls but he’s not about to give up. He’ll do anything to ruin our testimony. We are no match for the Devil – it’s impossible

for any of us to win in our own strength. But Christ has given each of us His armor and the sword of His Word so we can stand firm (Eph. 6:10-17).

- **“I finished the race.”** Paul often referred to the Christian life as a race, not a short sprint but a marathon. God has designed a specific path for each of us, giving gifts and abilities to enable us to fulfill His purposes and finish the course. This race is long and filled with obstacles, but Christ hasn’t left us to struggle on our own. The Holy Spirit guides and strengthens us along the way.

- **“I have kept the faith.”** After revealing Himself to Paul on the road to Damascus, Jesus entrusted him with a priceless treasure: the gospel. “Keep” means “to guard;” and that’s what Paul did as he preached and defended the faith, whether to Gentile skeptics or religious Jews.

The apostle Paul was not some type of “super Christian.” He was simply a Christian who yielded to the *Word* of God, submitted to the *will* of God and surrendered to the *work* of God in his life. Paul had a fresh realization that God was at work in him and through him (Phil. 1:6, 2:13). We are inadequate to fulfill God’s purposes, but the Lord Jesus provides everything we need.

A Positive Challenge

Much is given to us in Matthew, Mark and Luke’s gospels about denying oneself and taking up our cross. But in the gospel of John the Lord Jesus describes a disciple of His as one who continues in His Word (8:31). We can be sold out to Christ only if we’re seeking His direction, following His Word!

In John 13:34-35 the Lord Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” We cannot say we have allegiance to Christ if we hold something against another believer. My lack of love says that I’m selfish rather than surrendered.

Jesus used the analogy of a vine and branches to describe our relationship with Him. Then He declared, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples” (Jn. 15:8). A branch can only bear fruit by abiding in the vine. In the same way, if we are going to be sold out for Christ we must maintain a connection with the Lord Jesus in order to become and do what He desires. The Lord Jesus said, “Without Me you can do nothing” (v.5).

Each of us is now faced with a decision: Are we going to be sold

out for Christ? Are we going to give our lives over to the One who loved us and gave Himself for us? How do we move into a life of absolute surrender? How do we live a sold-out life? I think the old hymn by Judson W. Van De Venter, "All To Jesus I Surrender," puts it well. As you read excerpts of it, let it challenge your heart: "All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give; I will ever love

and trust Him, In His presence daily live. All to Jesus I surrender, Humbly at His feet I bow, Worldly pleasures all forsaken ... All to Jesus I surrender; Make me, Savior, wholly Thine ... All to Jesus I surrender; Lord, I give myself to Thee; Fill me with Thy love and power ... All to Jesus I surrender; Now, I feel the sacred flame. Oh, the joy of full salvation! Glory, glory, to His Name!" **GT**

A RELEVANT COMMENT BY

—*Charles H. Mackintosh*

BE IT OBSERVED that the cross is viewed as the consummation [fulfillment] of a life of obedience – the completion of a work of self-surrender. It is what we may call, to use a Levitical term, the burnt-offering aspect of the death of Christ rather than the sin offering. True, it is the same act which consummated a life of obedience that put away sin. But considering verses in Philippians 2, sin-bearing is not so much the thought presented there as self-surrender. Jesus gave up all. He laid aside His glory and came down into this poor world. When He came, He shunned all human pomp and grandeur and became a poor man. His parents were poor – they were only able to acquire the lowest grade of sacri-

fice which the law allowed: not a bullock, not a lamb, but a pair of turtle doves (compare Leviticus 15:29 and Luke 2:24). He Himself worked and was known as a carpenter. Do not miss the moral force of this fact by saying that every Jew was brought up in some trade. Our Lord Jesus Christ really took a low place. The very town where He was brought up was a proverb of reproach. He was called a "Nazarene;" and it was asked with a sneer of contempt, "Is this not the carpenter?" (Mt. 2:23, Mk. 6:3). He was a root out of a dry ground. He had no form nor comeliness, no beauty in man's eye. He was the despised, neglected, self-emptied, meek and lowly Man from first to last. He gave up all, even life itself. His self-surrender was complete. **GT**

The Committed Servant

by Alan H. Crosby

The Lord Jesus illustrated the commitment of servants by two parables: the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 and the parable of the minas (“pounds” KJV) in Luke 19:11-27. They differ in one most important respect. The talents were given to “each according to his ability” but the minas were just given one to each. They were all expected to put to work what they had received, and their reward was based on the profitability of their service. We differ in our abilities and therefore will differ in the talents – the spiritual gifts we are given. But we all have one mina, our life, to put to work for the Lord.

How Shall We Serve?

We are not to do as the young man did who left home and “squandered his wealth in wild living” (Lk. 15:11-31 NIV). But if we have, we should do as he did: repent and come back. His father received him as though he had never transgressed. This shows that it is never too late, as long as we have breath, to come to God and be fully accepted.

Scripture says that the way to serve the Lord is to “pursue righteousness and love” (Prov. 21:21).

Young Christians Need Help

Young people are practically all characterized by one trait – they want to be doing things with their friends, who are chosen from among those by whom they are surrounded. If their friends are worldly, they will be worldly; if their friends are believers actively serving the Lord, they will tend to be doing things profitable for Him. Parents and the church (assembly) have a responsibility to help young Christians have Christian friends, have clean fun and do profitable service for the Lord.

However, there are always those like the young man in our Lord’s story who want to go to a place where they can “have a good time” and “do their own thing.” They may then have to find out for themselves that “living it up” is an unwise, profitless choice.

Choosing A Vocation

A question commonly asked of a

child is: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Their decision as they mature is most important because it will structure his or her life. The crucial question then is not “What do I want to do?” but, as asked by Saul (Paul) at his conversion, “What shall I do, Lord?” (Acts 22:10). When we do what the Lord wants us to do, we will be doing the Lord’s work!

Timothy was told, “If a man cleanses himself ... he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work” (2 Tim. 2:21). May the vocation that is chosen be the one that allows us, as Scripture says, to “do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers” (Gal. 6:10).

Service Profitable For The Lord

Going into “full-time service” is only one way to serve profitably. But it will be profitable for the Lord only if that is the place He wants that Christian to serve. He may want the person to have a career and witness in it to his or her associates. In Scripture, one man eager to serve the Lord was told to go back home and tell how much the Lord had done for Him (See Mark 5:19-20).

People asked the prophet John

(the Baptist) about their vocation and producing good fruit for the Lord (See Luke 3:8-18). Those who asked he instructed to keep their jobs – jobs that were commonly available at that time – but with the qualification that they should avoid misusing them. John did not forbid any job, including serving as soldiers. However, Scripture says, “Whatever you do ... do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col. 3:17). Each person is to determine the Lord’s will for him or her regarding a vocation and then do it.

Discovering The Lord’s Will

Only indirect answers are provided by Scripture to the question, “How do I determine the Lord’s will?” A wise plan would be to follow the example of Paul and his companions in Acts 16:6-10. They knew that in general it was His will that they “go and make disciples” (Mt. 28:19). So they arbitrarily decided to go into Phrygia and Galatia, but “they were kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia” (where these regions were located). Then they “tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.” Finally, Paul was given a vision from which he concluded

that they were being called to preach the gospel in Macedonia. The result was that the gospel did not remain in Asia, but it was taken into Europe. In short, like Paul and his companions we need to follow what is generally His will and then trust Him to show us the particulars. Furthermore “each ... should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Pet. 4:10).

Ambition

In whatever field a job is taken, “serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord” (Eph. 6:7). Those who do this will generally be considered to be good workers, suitable for promotion. Top people are always looking for workers to whom they can delegate responsibility. The worker who is a Christian should be energetic and trustworthy. However, if our ambition is to obtain power and prestige for ourselves rather than to produce for the Lord, it is misdirected.

The Devil’s Trap

Our employment will generally be in jobs that help people to meet their needs. However, there are occupations in which we can make “good money” by helping others to fulfill their sinful

desires. These occupations can be Satan’s trap for us. He would have us “sell out” to him and serve his purposes.

Another trap is to yield to an employer’s demand that one do wrong things to “get ahead.” The trap often lies in doing something that is just “a little bit wrong,” but it will lead to activities that will be very destructive to one’s walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Satan has lures other than advancement. He stimulates us “to find out for ourselves” the satisfying way of life instead of simply obeying Scripture. Solomon is a typical example. He tried everything and recorded his experience in the Book of Ecclesiastes. He tried pleasure, alcohol, great projects, acquiring property and having a harem of many women (2:1-10). His conclusion from his experience was that “everything was meaningless, a chasing after wind: [and] nothing was gained” (2:11). His advice is: “Fear God and keep His commandments” (12:13). This means submitting your life to the Lord and seeking to make it please Him rather than yourself.

The Way Of The Committed Servant

The Psalmist advises us to commit our lives to the Lord. He says, “Taste and see that the LORD is good ... Fear the LORD you His saints for

those who fear Him lack nothing ... Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days [will] keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it" (Ps. 34:8-14).

Isaiah describes how the committed servant thinks. He says

that he has a "sure foundation for [his] times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure" (Isa. 33:6). The committed servant will use this key to unlock eternal treasure for himself and thus be "rich toward God" (Lk. 12:21)! **GT**

Living For Jesus

Living for Jesus a life that is true,
Striving to please Him in all that I do;
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,
This is the pathway of blessing for me.

Living for Jesus who died in my place,
Bearing on Calvary my sin and disgrace;
Such love constrains me to answer His call,
Follow His leading and give Him my all.

Living for Jesus wherever I am,
Doing each duty in His holy name;
Willing to suffer affliction and loss,
Deeming each trial a part of my cross.

Living for Jesus through earth's little while,
My dearest treasure, the light of His smile;
Seeking the lost ones He died to redeem,
Bringing the weary to find rest in Him.

—Thomas Obediah Chisholm (1866-1960)

"Give Me This Mountain"

by Warren Henderson

The entertainment industry capitalizes on our desire to see common people accomplish the impossible. Superheroes are thus created to excite our imaginations about being more than what we are. Biblically speaking, we understand that there are only two authority structures with supernatural power – God’s and Satan’s, but the influence of the latter is limited by the first. Rather than wasting our time fanatisizing about imaginary heroes, we should be exploring how real people in their frailty can accomplish incredible feats in the tangible world. Caleb is a good biblical example of someone God empowered to be a true superhero. But why did God choose to use Caleb in a miraculous way to display His glory and not someone else? Let us study Joshua 14-15 to answer this question.

Historical Setting

Seven years of invasion and conquest in Canaan had concluded; the military garrisons, fortifications and the main armies of the enemies were destroyed. Joshua was then given the task of dividing the inheritance among the tribes of Israel. Having allotted the land east of the Jordan to the two and a half tribes (Josh. 13), Joshua turned his attention to dividing and apportioning the land within Canaan to the remaining tribes. This would be determined by the drawing of lots (14:1-2).

Caleb Requested His Inheritance

Before any allotments were made in Canaan, the veteran Caleb

stepped forward to assert his claim. Until now he had been quietly waiting because Joshua had been attending to the distribution of the land east of the Jordan. Caleb’s interruption was warranted and he reminded his life-long friend, Joshua, of what Moses had promised forty-five years earlier: “Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it [the Promised Land], and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the LORD” (Dt. 1:36). The fortification of Hebron was to be the city of his possession, still requiring the expulsion of the powerful Anakim (giants, see Deuteronomy 9:2) who resided there.

Caleb,¹ a Kenizzite, would not

have received a land allotment with the tribes of Israel; thus he presented a short autobiography as a prelude to his appeal (Josh. 14:6-12). Moses had promised him Hebron as an inheritance when the years of wandering concluded and the nation entered into Canaan and conquered it. Moses rewarded Caleb, 40 years old then, for being a faithful scout in Canaan and for withstanding the rebel spies at Kadesh Barnea. What was Caleb's motivation for standing with Moses at that turbulent junction? Caleb declared, "I wholly followed the LORD my God" (v.8). Forty-five years later, Caleb was still devoted to the LORD. He was faithful among a faithless nation and one of the few who refused to establish an alliance with the Canaanites. He stood faithfully with Joshua as a spy of the land and now he stood faithfully among his people in the land.

Caleb Was Strong In The Lord

The 38 years of wandering and the seven years of warring in Canaan had passed since that tragic day of disbelief at Kadesh Barnea. Despite years of blistering desert heat and numerous military engagements, the LORD had wonderfully preserved Caleb. He was now 85 years of age (14:9-10). Despite his age, he remained

strong in the LORD: "Yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said" (vv.11-12).

The King James Version of the Bible translates verse 12 as: "If so be the LORD will be with me." There was no question of Caleb's mistrusting the LORD. Rather, he mistrusted himself. Caleb is a great example to us in our present day of weakness and complacency. *His character upholds the finest virtues to be found in soldiers of the cross today: one who is sold out for the Lord and yet mistrusts oneself.* He exhibited unabated [sustained] divine strength because he lacked self-confidence. His humility and continued dependence on God was unrelenting, and thus inspire every true believer to rise above the doldrums of earthly existence to experience real spiritual vitality.

Caleb understood that his dependence on the LORD infused him with divine power; thus, it

did not matter to him that his possession was a fortification occupied by giants. Hebron, which the Anakim called Kirjath-arba, was his inheritance, and he wanted to bravely claim it for God (14:15). This city had special significance for the Jewish nation as Abraham and Sarah were buried there (Gen. 23:19, 25:10). Even though he was 85 years of age, he knew the LORD was with him and therefore he had confidence that he would drive the Anakim from his inheritance.

Caleb Receives His Inheritance

Joshua was moved by his friend's address and responded by blessing him and granting his request. Hebron was Caleb's possession (Josh. 14:13-14), and in the power of the LORD he subdued the giants and restored to the city its proper name (15:13-14). Caleb's fortitude demonstrates how God's people in any dispensation are able to overcome their adversaries and adversities: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of Hosts" (Zech. 4:6). May we, like Caleb, experience ongoing personal revival by wholly following and depending on the Lord GOD. Then, we too will be strong in the Lord and live in the enjoyment of heavenly things as we patiently engage in earthly

conflict. Certainly, the abundant blessing of our True Joshua, Jesus Christ, resides on every Caleb-like Christian.

Caleb Claims His Inheritance

Hebron was located within Judah's portion and Caleb not only took the city from the Anakim, but with the help of his courageous nephew Othniel, he also captured Debir (Josh. 15:14-15). Caleb had promised that whoever was victorious at Debir would have his daughter Achsah's hand in marriage, so Othniel (who would later become a judge in Israel; see Judges 3:8-11) became Caleb's son-in-law (Josh. 15:16-17). Caleb bestowed Achsah and Othniel with land south of Hebron for their own inheritance. But after their marriage, Achsah asked her father Caleb for the springs near this land also, which Caleb granted her (15:18-19).

It is worthy to note that because Caleb trusted His God and engaged the enemy in His strength he was victorious and, as a result, increased his inheritance. The land allotments were to pass down from generation to generation within the same tribe. In other words, an individual or clan could not increase their inheritance by buying or stealing from their brethren, but only by engaging and defeating the enemy. The prayer of Jabez illus-

trates this truth: “And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, ‘Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!’ So God granted him what he requested” (1 Chr. 4:10).

While the Law prohibited Jabez from gaining land through financial acquisition, he could enlarge his territory through legal conquest (that is, by seizing land from those whom God said should be removed from the Promised Land). To further advance the kingdom of God today, believers must do more than entertain each other in conquered territories (their homes and church buildings). They must be willing to venture out beyond these safe havens with the gospel message of Jesus Christ. The Lord is building His Church through the earnest efforts of His people to evangelize the lost. Let us never be satisfied with status quo – may the Lord enlarge our capacity to serve Him as He enlarges His Church.

Caleb Shares His Inheritance

Because Caleb conquered in the name of *Jehovah*, he obtained more, which enabled him to bless others more. Besides blessing his daughter and son-in-law with a gift of land which included

springs of water, Hebron, the city he captured from the Anakim, became one of the forty-eight priestly cities and one of the six cities of refuge. Caleb did not object to sharing with others that which God had empowered him to possess. He was glad to bless others with what he had acquired in the LORD; this is a great example to follow.

Accordingly, Paul reminded the believers at Corinth that they should not be puffed up in themselves over their possessions: “For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:7). Whatever we have comes from God; there is no room for pride. Paul further exhorted the Ephesians that, rather than stealing from others as they may have done before they were saved, they ought to work hard to supply their own necessities and then to assist those in need (Eph. 4:28). With this in mind, may we, like Caleb, not think so highly of ourselves and our possessions that we are unwilling to assist others with what God has graciously placed in our stewardship.

Caleb’s example shows us that the more we trust in the Lord for what we need, the more we will have to share with others and the greater our own blessing will be.

This is a true hero of the faith. Caleb was sold out for the LORD and accomplished the impossible. May we also with humble hearts rise above our own deficiencies [faults] through resurrection

power and achieve the spectacular for God. An imaginary superhero will never lead a lost person to Christ, but a real hero of the faith experiencing supernatural power can! **GT**

¹Caleb, a Kenizzite (Num. 13:6, 32:12; Josh. 14:6-15), likely had origins in Canaan (Gen. 15:19) and may have been from the line of Esau, thus excluded from Israel (Gen. 36:11,15,42). But by faith he was adopted into the tribe of Judah in the same way Heber the Kenite, Rahab the Canaanite, Ruth the Moabite and Uriah the Hittite were brought into the commonwealth of Israel by their faith.

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King.

Take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect, and use every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine; it shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart, it is Thine own; it shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store.

Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for Thee.

—Francis R. Havergal (1836-1879)



"I Surrender All"

by Martin Girard

Judson W. Van De Venter was born into a Christian home in 1855 and at the age of 17 he accepted Christ as his Savior. After graduating from university with a degree in art, he became an art teacher in a high school. He was also an accomplished musician and could play some 13 different instruments as well as sing and compose music.

In his thirties Judson found himself facing a dilemma, and for almost five years he struggled over what to do. Should he abandon his teaching career and concentrate on evangelistic work? While involved in a church event in 1896 the Lord challenged him, and this young man yielded to the Lord's will and gave up his secular employment. The experience caused him to write a devotional hymn that has found its way into many hymnbooks: "All To Jesus I Surrender." The beautiful tune to which the hymn is sung was composed by Winfield S. Weedon. He loved the words of the hymn so much that after his death the

three words "I surrender all" were engraved on his tombstone.

The experience of Judson W. Van De Venter is one that many others have had. A question has confronted the individual about what he or she should do. Something inescapable has had to be faced squarely – and it has not been easy. This is not unique to a select group. Rather, it is something that every true Christian should come to terms with. "Lord" is not a word to use glibly [thoughtlessly]; using it implies owning the authority of the one who is so addressed. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Lk. 6:46 KJV). Similarly, it is easy to sing the moving words of Judson Van De Venter's expressive hymn, when emotions are stirred, and not genuinely mean them.

Of course this does not mean that the hymn is unsuitable and ought not to be used. The New Testament makes it plain that every child of God should be able

to say, “I surrender all,” in truth and from the heart. Three examples and three exhortations make this fact self-evident.

Three Examples

The finest and yet the most humbling example must be that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As He reached the climax of His earthly ministry, He entered into the darkness of Gethsemane one unforgettable night. Under the shadow of the olive trees and away from His beloved disciples, the Son of God knelt in prayer before His Father. Agony lay before Him: He, the Sinless One, was soon to be “made sin” in those three hours of impenetrable darkness on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21). Now, before that time, His holy soul was “exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death,” as He “fell on His face” in prayer (Mt. 26:38-39). Yet, the request that the bitter cup might pass from Him was regulated by the words that followed, “Not My will, but Thine, be done” (Lk. 22:42). He fully submitted to the Father’s will.

How amazing this is! His love for us is beyond compare, yet it was also love and devotion to His Father that caused Him to pray like this. There was no other way in which guilty sinners could be saved, so He arose from prayer to

face the enemies who had come to apprehend Him. His Father’s will was paramount. If His followers are to be like Him, the words “Not my will, but Thine, be done,” must be uttered by them too.

For the second example we can consider one of the most devoted followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul. While being a hateful persecutor of Christ on a diabolical [devilish] mission to destroy the followers of the Lord, Saul of Tarsus (as he was then called) was blinded by a light brighter than the sun, which caused him to fall to the dust. Confronted by the Lord in all His glory on the road to Damascus, and realizing how wicked and helpless he was, Saul uttered those memorable words, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). It was truly a moment of crisis. For too long Saul had gone his own way and done what *he* thought was right. Challenged by the risen Christ, he had been humbled and stopped in his tracks. He was now a man who was genuinely ready to submit to the Lord himself.

A third example comes from the last book in the Bible. This time we are not looking at someone young and enthusiastic, but at one who was an aged follower of Christ. The apostle John had



**All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.**



**I surrender all, I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.**

— *Judson W. Van de Venter*
(1855-1939)

been banished by the Roman authorities to the island of Patmos for his loyalty to the cause of Christ. But although banished, John was not left alone. Having seen a vision of the Son of Man in all His glory – Jesus, whom he had known so well during His earthly ministry – John “fell at His feet as dead” (Rev. 1:17). What else could he do? Like Saul, he yielded to the heavenly Master and surrendered everything as he lay prostrate at His feet.

Both of these men, along with the Lord Jesus, teach us something important by example. Like the two apostles we must humble ourselves before the Lord of Glory, placing ourselves at His disposal and at His feet. By their attitude each of them was saying, in effect, “Not my will, but Thine, be done.” Not only do we find

examples in Scripture; there are also exhortations encouraging us to surrender our lives to the Lord.

Three Exhortations

Our first exhortation must come from the Lord Jesus Christ. He who demonstrated such submission to the purposes of God throughout His earthly life, and especially in Gethsemane, called men and women to surrender everything to Him. Jesus said, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Lk. 9:23). Following Christ is not an “easy-going” option that can occupy some secondary place in our lives. If we would follow Him, we must renounce all personal interests and actually deny ourselves. Our own desires must count for nothing! Taking up the

cross daily implies a recognition that self is, in effect, dead. Following Christ means that *He* must lead the way and that we follow *Him* – going where He leads and not where we might choose to go.

“That is rather demanding,” someone might object. Yes, it is! In fact, it demands everything! If we think too much is being asked of us, it only shows how far we have moved from the terms and character of New Testament Christianity. We ought not to question these things. Jesus Christ must not be considered simply as Savior; He is to be *Lord* of our lives. Later in Luke 9 we read of some individuals who expressed an interest in following Jesus but said, “Lord, I will follow Thee ... but let me first ...” (vv.57-61). If Christ is Lord of our lives we dare not say “me first.” The rich young ruler wanted to follow Christ but turned away with a sad expression because he loved his possessions more than he loved the Lord Jesus (Mk. 10:17-22). Yes, a disciple is called to surrender all to Christ.

The apostle Paul, who had been dramatically humbled to the dust on the Damascus road, never forgot that life-changing experience. A study of his life as recorded for us in Holy Scripture reveals one who was entirely sold out to Christ. He knew what the Lord

expected of him. In his letter to the Romans Paul explained the amazing truth of the gospel and the impact that it should have upon our lives in practical terms. As our second exhortation, he wrote: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1).

God has shown tremendous mercy in saving us from the eternal punishment that we deserved. In view of what He has done for us through Christ, who gave Himself willingly to suffer on the cross, it is only “reasonable” that we should respond by yielding ourselves to Him. Those lives that have been redeemed are no longer ours! They belong to Him and ought to be presented willingly for Him to use. In fact, as we have already seen, He wants us to die to self *and* to present our bodies as “living” sacrifices to Him. He has a work for each one of us to do.

A third exhortation, among many more that could be considered, comes from the writings of Peter. Like John, Peter at one time had forsaken all to follow Jesus (Mk. 1:16-20). Many years later, as a much older man, Peter wrote of the need for younger people to “submit” and for all of

God's children to be "clothed with humility" (1 Pet. 5:5). He then wrote these challenging words: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (v.6). The hand of God is a loving hand that has been extended in mercy towards us. But let us not forget that it is also a mighty hand. How weak and insignificant we are before the Almighty! Like John on Patmos, we must humble ourselves at the feet of the Lord to whom we belong.

A Great Challenge

In the late 1800's Charles T. Studd gave up a professional athletic career and became a mis-

sionary to China. At the age of 25 he also gave away a family fortune to support the evangelistic work of Hudson Taylor,¹ George Mueller² and others. These words that he wrote have inspired many to surrender their lives to Christ: *"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him."*

Really, nothing more needs to be said. If we know anything about the mercy and love of God we should gladly surrender our lives to Him. To do anything less is to be dishonest. **GT**

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Editor's Notes:

¹James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) was a British missionary. He spent 51 years in China, establishing China Inland Mission (now OMF International). He was noted for a zeal for evangelism while being sensitive to the local culture. Thousands of individuals were saved through the work he began.

²George Mueller (1805-1898) was an evangelist who established the Ashley Down orphanage in Bristol, England. He and those serving with him cared for over 10,000 orphans, established nearly 120 schools and educated over 120,000 children. The entire work was one of faith, asking only God for the needed provisions.



God's Remedy For Our Problems – Reflections On 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:1

by Jacob Redekop

Introduction

We are well aware that there are many problems facing the Lord's people today. New difficulties arise before old ones are cleared away. Being firmly persuaded that the Word of God furnishes the answers to help in every situation, I asked myself these questions: How is it that God's people can be so divided on so many issues? Would not obedience to God's Word and dependence upon the Lord unite us together? I found the answer in Paul's epistles to the Corinthians. The Corinthian saints were divided because they were occupied with the wrong man (1 Cor. 1:11-12). They were powerless to cope with the problems until they had learned what Isaiah 2:22 (KJV) states: "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for what account is to be made of him?" In 2 Corinthians we are given God's answer – the solution.

Reflections

The two epistles of Paul to the Corinthians are "wilderness" epistles. The saints are viewed as having been set apart from this world

by a divine call (1 Cor. 1:2). This world, which to the eye of faith has become a wilderness, furnishes nothing to sustain that faith. The Christian passing through this world has the responsibility to live in complete dependence and obedience to the Lord. Failure to do so is the root cause of all the break-ups and break-downs in the family as well as in the assembly (church) testimony.

God allows this time of testing in the wilderness in order that we might learn what is in our hearts. But what is of much greater value is to learn what is in the heart of God, and that is Christ. Then, as we learn this, we turn away from ourselves to find in Christ the answer to every need.

The Root Cause Of Problems

In reflecting on this portion of Scripture in Corinthians we must bear in mind the great object the apostle had before him. He longed to see the Corinthian saints lifted out of their low spiritual condition as he had described it in 1 Corinthians 3:1, "And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto

carnal.” Their carnal [self-centered] condition had led to worldliness and moral laxity, which further opened the door to assembly disorder and doctrinal error. It left them with little spiritual discernment and no spiritual strength to cope with their problems. This is much of what we are facing today.

This condition, exposed in the first epistle, is addressed in the second epistle to show God’s way of transforming us into the moral likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are two aspects of this truth. Objectively, or in an absolute sense, God has purposed this transformation for us in Christ. Subjectively, or in a personal way that applies to each believer, this change is accomplished in us by the Spirit, who works out God’s purposes for us. As that transformation is accomplished, problems are solved in a God-honoring way. Self is set aside, in all its varied forms. In its place Christ is seen in all His moral beauty.

It is not the intent of this article to be occupied with difficulties and problems, but to see God’s remedy for them. That does not mean that we try to avoid or escape the problems, for we cannot run away from them. Rather, we see God’s provision to meet every need – and that provision is in Christ.

Change Is Possible

The apostle Paul himself had been in extremely stressful situations as expressed in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 and 4:8-9, “Pressed out of measure, above strength ... despaired even of life ... troubled on every side ... persecuted ... cast down.” In spite of these outward dangers, Paul did not faint nor become discouraged. Instead, he saw himself identified in testimony with a victorious Christ (2:14-15). By his conduct and preaching, a sweet fragrance of Christ rose up to God. Paul, who called himself the chief of sinners, was now the greatest vessel God had raised up for the shining forth of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (4:6). Only God could bring about such a change in the life of any person. What God did in Paul He is also doing in each one of us who have believed. God, by His Spirit, is writing Christ upon our hearts (3:3). The law could not do that. It could only tell man what he ought to do – what was expected of him, but it could not change him (Rom. 8:3-4).

The Christian has received new life (Christ) and a new nature that delights in what is of God. The Holy Spirit now dwells in the believer and occupies us with Christ, where He is in the very presence of God. As I am occupied with the Man Christ Jesus

where He is now, a transformation will take place in me, a moral change, making me more and more like Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).

One Great Hindrance

The greatest hindrance to the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer is self. Good self or bad self is still self. Self-esteem, self-worth, self-image and self-love are at best an occupation with the wrong man – the very man whom God has set aside and condemned in the death of Christ. God is not attempting to improve man in the flesh: “Old things have passed away; behold all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

The question might now be asked, “How does this teaching help solve problems?” First of all, we have to admit that “in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18). The problems which cause us so much trouble in our individual lives, in our families and in the assemblies find their source in our flesh. If we do not learn from God’s Word that the flesh profits nothing, then God teaches us by our own failures. How sad it is if we have to learn it that way. Yet, what is even sadder is that we have grieved the Holy Spirit; every failure or sin necessitated those unfathomable sufferings of Christ on the cross. But as I learn how

wretched the flesh is in me, I turn the eye of faith away from self and find in Christ an Object of supreme delight – that One in whom God finds eternal joy and satisfaction!

It Begins In Me

After experiencing how wretched the flesh is in me (not in my brother or sister), I must accept the teaching God has given in many portions of Scripture. He is teaching us to look away from self to Christ and, in so doing, we take on His moral features. These include obedience and dependence upon God, and patience, meekness, self-control as well as many other qualities as seen in Galatians 5:22-23. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit working out practically in the life of each believer. In 2 Corinthians 4:7 Paul explains that our bodies, which he calls “earthen vessels,” contain this treasure – which is Christ dwelling in the believer. As the vessel is broken up, the light that is within shines out.

In 2 Corinthians 5:10 the apostle Paul reminds us that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Then everything we have done in our lifetime will be manifested in the light of His holy presence. Our motives, our self-seeking, even if they were mixed in with our service for the

Lord, will all be made known.

What was done in secret or in public, at the workplace or at home, in private counseling or in public preaching, all will be laid bare. How searching this is! But remember, when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, the sinful nature in which we sinned is no longer in us. We will then be with and like Christ; and we will rejoice that our old selfish, sinful nature is once and forever done away. Only what was of Christ will remain forever. If we, like Paul, would live our lives in the light of that Day of Judgment, what a difference it would make.

Christ Really Is The Remedy

It is far easier to sing, “Nothing but Christ as on we tread,” than it is to live it. To live it means that it will govern my manner of behavior, what I wear, how I spend my money, where I take my vacation, how I speak to my wife or husband and my attitude towards my children. It will affect relationships in the home, at the workplace and in the world. You can be sure it will also introduce an atmosphere in the assembly that is Christ-honoring, showing forth indeed the mind of Christ. Having the mind of Christ equips us to face all dangers and difficulties and enables us to make the right spiritual decisions. Then the

question is never asked, “What’s wrong with this or that?” Instead, the question will be, “What is pleasing to Christ?” “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).

Paul concludes our subject in 2 Corinthians 7:1 by giving a word of encouragement: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved.” If we allow God to work in our lives to put aside self and to fix our eyes on the Lord, then we will experience the deep peace and joy of fellowship with the Father. Then all the suffering or sorrow that we pass through here will be worth it. Faith looks beyond the present and evaluates everything in the light of eternity (4:17-18). May Christ be reflected in greater measure in my life – and in yours. **GT**

**“Nothing but Christ,
as on we tread,
The Gift unpriced,
God’s living Bread;**

**With staff in hand
and feet well shod,
Nothing but Christ
– the Christ of God.”**

—*Samuel O’Malley Cluff*
(1837-1910)



The Witness Of A Little Girl

by Hank Blok

“Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman’s wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.” —2 Kings 5:1-4 KJV

We do not know how old this “little maid” was. We do not even know her name. But that’s not of any real importance! What little we do know is of greater sig-

nificance. The Scriptures tell us that:

- She was a little Israelite girl;
- This little one was a captive in a foreign land;

- Away from home she served a Gentile lady;
- Her mistress's husband had an incurable disease;
- She had a great concern for the man with his illness; and
- She did what she could to get her mistress's husband to the help he needed.

This is what 2 Kings 5:3 simply records: "And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him [Naaman] of his leprosy¹."

What a wonderful statement; one full of grace on many levels. It would suggest that the little girl was most likely brought up by her parents, grandparents or other godly guardians to know the true and living God. Children do not forget the things that are indelibly inscribed on their hearts during those formative years. Of course we know that some may not always follow the teachings introduced to them in their youth. Yet, there is no doubt that they will never lose all of the influence passed on in those early years.

Had she met the prophet Elisha? We cannot tell. She certainly must have known enough about him to suggest that he could help. While she may not have been able to give Naaman's

wife the instructions for the healing of his disease, she could at least provide a reference to someone who could help. Similarly, our children may not adequately know how to lead a person to Christ. Therefore, it would be good that each child be encouraged to refer others to a parent, stronger Christian or evangelist who is able to explain the way of salvation. In actuality, this is what a lot of children do when they bring their friends, their parents and others to a Sunday school or daily vacation Bible school! Many parents can probably testify that their kids were the greatest little evangelists as young children.

It is so special that the Lord Jesus could say, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." And it is ever so personally touching that He would take them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and bless them (Mk. 10:14-16). Just as wonderfully, He can touch their lives to make them usable for His blessed purposes of bringing others to Himself. **GT**

Endnote:

¹In the Bible, the illness of leprosy portrays sin and it's end result – death.



The purpose of this column is to help you study the Bible on your own. Look up the Bible references and think about them before writing your answers. Do not send this study to us, as this is not a correspondence course.

DISCOVER WHAT THE PREACHER HAS TO SAY IN ECCLESIASTES

CHAPTER 9 – By Alan Groth



*“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might;
for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom
in the grave where you are going.”*

–Ecclesiastes 9:10 NKJV

Many different activities done under the sun continue to be observed by the Preacher. But one thing ends these activities, and that is death. Read this chapter now to gain more insight into these activities, taking note of his concluding remarks.

Read Ecclesiastes 9

1. Verse 1 says that God has something in His hand. What is it? _____

2. What does the Preacher say about love and hatred at the end of verse 1? _____

3. Name the groups that are contrasted in verse 2. _____

4. What is found in the hearts of men (v.3)? _____

5. Where do those who have hearts like this go? _____

6. "A living _____ is better than a dead _____."

7. In verses 5-6, what is said about the living and the dead? _____

8. What counsel does the Preacher give to those who are living (vv.7-10)?

9. How many contrary things did he see (v.11)? _____

10. Snared men are looked at like _____.

11. How did the Preacher explain "this wisdom" he saw (vv.13-15)? _

12. He concluded the chapter glorifying wisdom. What are some of the things he says about wisdom? _____

Next month we'll *Discover* more of what the Preacher has to say in our study of Ecclesiastes.

Divine Titles

AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Part Four

by A. J. Pollock

We continue this month by considering several more divine titles of the Old Testament.

Jah

(Contraction Of Jehovah)

This is a contraction of *Jehovah*, occurring 43 times in the Old Testament and always translated “LORD” in most translations. With 5 exceptions, these all occur in the Psalms, the first being Psalm 77:11. The last is in Psalm 150:6, twice repeating this sacred name in the psalm’s closing verse, “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD [*Jah*]. Praise the LORD [*Jah*].”

Adon (Lord, Master)

This name as referring to God occurs first in Exodus 23:17 and is the singular of *Adonai*. It occurs 300 times in the Old Testament under the names “lord” or “master.” It refers far more often to earthly masters, kings, rulers and great men than to God. It is easily seen by the context whether the name applies to God or to an earthly master.

Eloah

(God, An Object For Worship)

This name for God is the singular of *Elohim* and means “God, the Object of worship.” Its first occurrence is found in Deuteronomy 32:15, “But Jeshurun [a poetical name for the children of Israel] grew fat and kicked; you grew fat, you grew thick, you are obese! Then he forsook God [*Eloah*] who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.”

This name occurs over 50 times in the Old Testament, 41 times in Job. Seeing that Job gives us the story of the conflict between God and Job, it is understandable that this name for God should find a large place there. Job not only learned himself in the presence of God but he was likewise blessed in the true knowledge of God, from which flows the only true happiness.

The Lord

(Adon) Of All The Earth

This title of God, consisting of six words, sets forth His wide dominion. It only occurs three times in the Old Testament – in Joshua 3:11,13 and Zechariah 6:5. The verses in Joshua bring before us the striking scene of the ark (typical of Christ in resurrection) being carried over the Jordan River by the priests, thus preparing the way for the Israelites to pass over to take possession of the land of Canaan. How cheering to them that the Lord of All the Earth should give them a possession where they could live – prophetic of the time when the Son of Man shall take possession of the whole earth and “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14).

The portion in Zechariah brings before us the fact that the Lord of All the Earth has agencies everywhere, ready to carry out His will in relation to mankind. We read, “These are four spirits of heaven, who go out from their station before the Lord of all the earth” (Zech. 6:5).

The vision here teaches that behind all man’s apparent arranging and planning, God is directing earthly affairs for His own wise purposes and glory in the government of this world. In these four

spirits is seen prophetically the rise and fall of the four great world-empires, first indicated in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the great image made of gold, silver, brass and iron – the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman empires. We await the revival of this last empire in these closing days [which we undoubtedly are seeing being formed in the current European Union].

Elah (An Object Of Worship)

This name for God occurs 89 times and, with one exception (Jer. 11:11), is found only in Ezra and Daniel. The name means “an object of worship.” Occasionally it is applied to man-made gods, but otherwise to the only One to whom the word rightly belongs. In Ezra it occurs 43 times and always in connection with the building of the temple in the time of Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the verses that follow. While building the temple, surrounded by cruel and fanatical foes and with little strength of their own, we can understand how they turned to God again and again during their difficulties.

Elah occurs 45 times in Daniel. In that book it is strikingly connected with the expression, the God of Heaven, which occurs 5 times. How naturally Daniel and

his companions would turn to the God of Heaven when in a land of idols and captive in a strange

country. What a resource is God to His people in all similar times and circumstances! **GT**

Related thoughts shared by Walter Scott (adapted from The Bible Handbook)

God (Eloah)

Israel, as a nation, was placed in the midst of an idolatrous world as a testimony against the gross idolatry and corruption of those not believing in God. It was also a witness to the unity of *Jehovah* – to Him who is alone and one in power, wisdom and goodness; in contrast to the numerous gods and deities of the world. An integral [necessary, basic] part of all divine testimony since the days of Abram is that “our God is *one Lord*” (Mk. 12:29; 1 Tim. 2:5 KJV). Thus where the idolatry of Jew or Gentile with their many gods and lords is in question, *Eloah* is generally used as being the name and expression of the only living and true God, the object of all testimony and worship.

To the unbelieving and idolatrous people, God sent a message in their own language that their gods (*elohim*) shall certainly perish from the earth and from under heaven (Jer. 10:11). This threat

will be executed in the day of *Jehovah's* anger, as Isaiah 2:18 solemnly tells us: “The idols He shall utterly abolish.”

Lord Of All The Earth

In taking possession of “all the earth,” of which Canaan was an example of what is to come and Joshua a type of the Lord in the taking of the inheritance, God selected this easily understood and fitting title. Under it the people crossed the Jordan and undertook the conquest of the land. When, however, the highly favored people would dare to connect God's blessed name and presence with their evil and idolatry, God could but leave the earth, no longer having a home or throne in it. Thus, Ezekiel witnesses the glory (the divine majesty and divine presence) slowly moving away from Jerusalem and going toward its native home (Ezek. 1-11). To have remained in the defiled temple (Ezek. 8) or sanc-

tioned [shown approval for] the iniquity of the throne would have been to lower His character, deny Himself and tarnish His glory as God. Governmental power, therefore, passed over from Jerusalem to Babylon, and from that important moment we date “the times of the Gentiles” (Lk. 21:24; Dan. 2). God could not sanction iniquity by His presence – although governmentally He might bless the power conferred upon the Gentiles – so long as His people were held in captivity by these powers and the cities of Judah laid waste. Hence, when the cause of Israel is again taken up the title will be reasserted (Rev. 11:4, compare with Zechariah 4 and 6:5).

Nebuchadnezzar lauded the God of Heaven but not the Lord of All the Earth – that title only being taken up when Israel’s place of supremacy in the earth and amongst the nations is being made good. The central part of Revelation is God’s assertion of His right and title to the earth; the consequence being days of wrath and terror upon man – especially upon apostate Judaism and Christendom. These judgments will inspire such fear in the wicked that they will haste to give glory to the “God of heaven” (Rev. 11:13). But that is not the title expressive of the character of these awful days and times. Men will cheerfully own

God’s title to heaven, His right to dwell and govern there, for, after all, that keeps God and man at a distance. However, when He announces His settled purpose to again take up this earth, to wrest it from the power and grasp of Satan, men will sternly refuse to own the title “God of the earth.” So the storm of divine judgment will roll on: the seals broken, the trumpets blown and the vials poured out. The thick black clouds will break and burst until the guilty world is thoroughly swept by the broom of destruction. Then the song from heaven will break upon a joyous and redeemed creation: “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15).

This, then, is a title which God asserted at the conquest of Canaan and will establish by power in judgment after the day of grace is closed, introducing the setting up of His kingdom on earth.

God Of Heaven

We have about 20 instances of this interesting title in the Scriptures. It is only found twice in the New Testament (in Revelation), but it occurs eight times in the book of Ezra. The book of Ezra details the religious state of the returned remnant from Babylon.

God most graciously permitted a considerable number of His people to return to the city and land of Immanuel, but they did so under Gentile permission and protection. When returned they got *blessing* from God, but not the *presence* of God. In the five post-captivity books – Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi – the remnant is not once termed “My people,” except in distinct reference to the future. In earlier times this was the favorite expression of the prophets and was found abundantly in their books. But now after the captivity, although all the rituals may have been practiced, the *presence* of GOD – of *Jehovah* – was absent. The glory was departed from Israel. Their temple – beautiful and glorious – had no ark, no golden mercy seat, no golden cherubim and no Urim and Thummin. Where was the cloud of glory, the well-known symbol of Jehovah’s majesty and presence? It had vacated its place and retired into heaven. But it will yet return and occupy the magnificent millennial temple, filling it with glory (Ezek. 43). Those sunny days and times are not far distant.

Thus we account for the frequency of this title in the book of Ezra. God was indeed caring for and watching over the remnant of

His people, but He did so secretly and providentially. The glory had left the house, hence the appropriateness of the title “God of Heaven.” God acts *in* and *from* heaven, not *on earth*, yet He directs and controls all for the blessing of His own. When He begins to act publicly on behalf of Israel, He will do so under His Joshua-title, “Lord of All the Earth.”

The point *now* for faith to recognize is that God is acting and directing. What a comfort in the presence of evil and evil men: “Be still and *know* that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). The book of Esther, in which the name of God does not *once* occur, shows the secret acts of God, exercised through the Persian monarchy. There we see that His people are watched over and protected by God Himself.

The expression “kingdom of heaven,” which occurs only in the gospel of Matthew, about 30 times, has its root in Daniel 6. It is an important phrase in connection with the title “God of Heaven.” This divine, and to us exceedingly important title, covers all the period of time from the scattering of Judah by the first imperial power until God again takes up the cause of the Jew. **GT**

Look for the continuation of this Series next month!



FIRST CHRONICLES

by Leslie M. Grant

“O LORD, for Your servant’s sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all this greatness, in making known all these great things.” —1 Chronicles 17:19 NKJV

This book summarizes God’s ways of grace toward Israel in reference mainly to the reign of David, the man after God’s own heart. The two books of Chronicles are therefore similar to Deuteronomy, for they are a review from the standpoint of God’s grace. Saul’s reign is not mentioned, but only his sad end in battle. Saul is typical of man in the flesh, who can receive or exemplify nothing of the grace of God. David, however, is a type of Christ, in whom that grace is precious manifested. Also, no mention is made of David’s 7½ year reign in Hebron over Judah alone, but only of his reigning over all Israel; for the grace of God embraces all of His people, not merely a part.

The glaring moral evils that affected the house of David are silently dropped from the record here. David’s grievous sin with Bathsheba and Uriah, the sin of David’s son Amnon, and the proud rebellion of Absalom are not mentioned. On the other hand, much is said of David’s preparation and great provision of materials for Solomon to build the temple. This, too, was for the display of the glory and grace of God.

David’s history then is seen here, not as a biography of the man or even officially as king, but as typical of Christ. Thus, those events are dwelt on that show him most strikingly in this character. **GT**

This column is taken from the book “The Bible, Its 66 Books In Brief.” It is available for purchase from Believer’s Bookshelf USA (www.bbusa.org) and Believers Bookshelf Canada (www.bbcana.org).

Q&A

In Acts 21, Agabus was led of the Holy Spirit to warn Paul about the danger in Jerusalem, but Paul went anyway. Did Paul sin by not obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit?

It is important to examine God's Word carefully to see what He is saying on its sacred pages and what He is not saying. Looking back a few chapters we find in Acts 16:6 that Paul and the brothers with him "were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia" (NKJV). Verse 7 adds: "They tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them." These verses show plainly and simply that on this trip Paul and his companions followed the directions of the Holy Spirit and did not go where He forbade or did not permit them to go to preach the Word. Are we to think that they later were less subject to His leading?

In Acts 20 and 21 we find Paul toward the end of his next trip heading to Jerusalem. He and the brothers with him were carrying the love gift sent by the assemblies in Macedonia and Achaia for needy saints in Jerusalem. In various Scriptures we read of his love for his fellow Jewish countrymen and his great desire to see them saved. In fact, in Romans 9:3-4 he goes so far as to say, "I could wish that I myself were accursed from

Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites." How he desired their salvation!

Again and again on this journey the Holy Spirit warned Paul what lay before him in Jerusalem. "Now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me, but none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself," he told the Ephesian elders at Miletus (Acts 20:22-24). The Holy Spirit was not forbidding him to go, but was warning him of the consequences his going would entail. Paul went on, not deterred by that which lay before him.

At Caesarea in the house of Philip the evangelist, Paul received his final warning (Acts 21:1-14). The prophet Agabus came down from Jerusalem and "took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver

him into the hands of the Gentiles.”” Notice, this was no prohibition. But, it was a very vivid demonstration of what would happen to Paul if he persisted in going on to Jerusalem.

Both the brothers traveling with him and those at Caesarea “pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. But Paul was not to be dissuaded. Realizing what he was being warned about, he answered, “What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” The brothers then accepted his decision, saying, “The will of the Lord be done.” Notice again: There is no mention of any prohibition or of any disobedience on the part of Paul. Nor do we find any negative comments or reproaches addressed to Paul, nor is anything said in subsequent chapters that would indicate that Paul had sinned. He had made his decision and he was willing to suffer the consequences.

Plans Paul had made and shared with the Roman saints in Romans 15:22-33 to visit them and then go on to Spain after his visit in Jerusalem did not materialize as he had planned. He had asked for their prayers in view of the dangers before him and that his service in Jerusalem might be acceptable to the saints. Coming

to Rome as a prisoner on appeal to the emperor may have seemed like a far cry from coming “in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ,” as he had wished. To what extent the saints at Rome got to enjoy this we do not know. But God’s saints down through the ages have benefited greatly for several of the choicest epistles in the New Testament stem from Paul’s imprisonment in Rome. For these we thank God.

Long before these events the Lord had told Paul, “Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me ... Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles” (Acts 22:17-21). The Lord of the harvest knows where and why He assigns to every one of His servants his own particular place and work. It is always best to submit to His will when we know it. But who are we to call this honored apostle’s pressing on to Jerusalem in love for his people when warned of the consequences that would ensue from this, sin?

There are many things we do not understand, but we can agree fully with Paul who wrote that “we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

—Answered by Eugene P. Vedder, Jr.

– continued from outside back cover

She clung to this twig, crying aloud for help. Then a voice from below, which she knew to be the voice of Jesus, told her to let go of the twig and He would receive and save her. “Lord, save me!” she cried; but the voice again answered, “Let go of the twig.” She did not dare to let go of the twig, but continued crying, “Lord, save me!”

At last, the One below, whose voice she heard but whom she did not see, said in the most tender and solemn tones, “*I cannot save you, unless you let go of the twig!*” In desperation she let go and fell into the arms of Jesus; and the joy of finding herself there awoke her.

The lesson forcibly impressed on her God’s way of salvation. She saw that Jesus was worthy of all her trust and it was by holding to the twig that she kept herself away from Christ! So she let go of all her self-efforts and found Jesus all sufficient. Now she enjoyed that wonderful peace with God which is only through the Lord Jesus Christ.

What about you? Are you at peace with God? Do you know your sins are all forgiven? Are you resting in the arms of Jesus and in His finished work on Calvary’s cross? If you are not trusting and resting totally in Christ for salvation, and ceasing to cling to any

merits or efforts of your own, you will never enjoy peace with God and never reach heaven.

Listen to the heavenly voice that calls to you, “There is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; there is *none besides Me*. Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other” (Isa. 45:21-22 NKJV).

Christ is a complete Savior and the only Savior. If you want to be saved you must let go of every other hope and let yourself fall into His powerful, saving arms. If you are striving, trying and clinging, you are not trusting in His ability to save you and bring you safely to heaven.

Christ did not come to *help* save sinners. No, “Christ Jesus came into the world to *save* sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). He must do *all* the work. Therefore, dear reader – as a guilty, helpless, perishing sinner – you must surrender yourself to Christ and let Him save you!

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Ti. 3:5). “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). **GT**

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Let Go Of The Twig!

by Raymond K. Campbell



During a gospel revival in Scotland, a certain lady became concerned about her salvation. Several of her friends had been saved, and feeling some anxiety herself, she went to a preacher and told him she was unhappy. He replied that he was glad to hear it!

Astonished and somewhat offended, she told the minister what efforts she had made to obtain salvation; how she had read and prayed, but still seemed as far from peace with God as ever. He then told her that it was not by anything that she could do, but by what Christ had done long ago and finished on the cross, that she was to be saved.

This all seemed mysterious to her, so she visited her friend who had recently been converted. She asked her what she had done to obtain the wonderful peace with God of which she spoke.

“Done? I have done nothing! It is by what Christ has done that I have obtained peace with God,” her friend replied.

“That is just what the minister told me, but I cannot understand it,” the lady answered. Then she went home very distressed.

Shutting herself in her room, she fell on her knees, resolving that she would not rise till she found rest and peace. After some time in agony she fell asleep. While sleeping, she dreamed that she was falling over a frightful precipice, but caught hold of a single twig which overhung the abyss beneath. — *continued on inside back cover*

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