

*Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps, set thine heart  
Toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest (Jer 31:21)*

# THE CHRISTADELPHIAN WAYMARK

**Volume 7**

**Issue 11**

**Devoted to the Defence and Proclamation of the Way of Life  
in Opposition to the Dogmas of Papal and Protestant Christendom**

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*“I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that  
sat upon him had a bow; and a crown was  
given unto him: and he went forth conquering,  
and to conquer” (Rev 6:2)*

*“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable ...” (Jas 3:17)  
“Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)*

## **GENERATIONS**

Who do you know? How far back does your family history go? How much have previous generations passed down to you about people and family events? More importantly what do you know about your parents, your grandparents and a maybe great grandparent who lives in the Truth? Our lives are indeed short compared to the early patriarchs.

Consider Adam for example who lived for 930 years (Gen 5:3-4), meaning that he was contemporary with:

Seth (compensation) for 800 years  
Enos (man) for 695 years  
Canaan (possession) for 605 years  
Mahalaleel (praise of God) for 535 years  
Jared (descent) for 470 years  
Enoch (dedicated) for 308 years  
Methuselah (man of the dart) for 243 years  
Lamech (powerful) for 56 years

Methuselah is of particular interest because he not only lived the longest (969 years Gen. 5:27) of all Adams descendents, but was also contemporary with all the pre flood generations from Adam through to Noah (rest).

Methuselah was contemporary with Adam for 243 years. Thus we can imagine him learning directly from Adam about the time of creation and life in Eden. We can imagine the sorrow with which the disobedience of Adam and Eve and the subsequent condemnation that fell upon Adams race was related directly to him by Adam himself. What an impact that would have had upon Methuselah, who was given a direct eyewitness account of those tragic events.

Methuselah outlived his son Lamech and was also contemporary with his grandson Noah for about 600 years. He then knew his great grandson Shem for around 97 years. Thus although dying prior to the flood, Methuselah was probably able to support and encourage Noah and Shem through some of the period during which the Ark was being built.

Noah is of equal interest, being 84 years old when Enos died. Noah may have been contemporary with Adam for about 16 years, but in all probability certainly had been able to see all the patriarchs who lived before him. Thus Noah may have had opportunity to learn about creation and the subsequent events at best firsthand from Adam or at least from Seth, Methuselah and the other patriarchs. Thus for Noah the account of creation and knowledge of the purpose of God was still very fresh. He demonstrated his remarkable faith by building the Ark, whilst the bulk of mankind despite this direct knowledge turned aside and corrupted the earth.

Following the flood Noah lived for approximately 350 years. Thus not only Shem, but also several generations who followed, for example Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor and Terah, the father of Abraham, had opportunity to know Noah. Noah died somewhere around the time of the birth of Abraham. Thus the life of Noah had spanned between the time of Enos and the time of Abraham.

Next we can consider Shem who was the patriarchal father of the Semitic races. Some commentators suggest he may have been Melchizedek identified as the Priest of the Most High God (Gen 14:18) Shem was contemporary with Methuselah for about 97 years, was 100 years old when Arphaxad was born and lived a further 500 years after the birth of Arphaxad. Thus Abraham would have had opportunity to talk with him, as would Isaac for about 52 years.

So just think how few generations span from Adam to Abraham. Abraham would remember Shem, who would remember Methuselah, who would remember Adam. Just a mere three people in the line from the creation of Adam! Alternatively a closer family line of Abraham would give direct knowledge from his father Terah, who could have talked to Noah, who knew Methuselah, who knew Adam. Which ever way we look, only a few people span from Abraham, down to the time of Adam, The knowledge passed from one generation to the other would have been so wonderfully full of detail and experience.

So much had passed over the intervening centuries; the flood had swept away the bulk of mankind, who despite this close proximity to Adam had corrupted the earth and forsaken their Creator. Adam had lived to see an earth populated by his descendants and long enough to know the outworking of human nature. We can only imagine his feelings seeing the earth go from an Edenic state, to one full of corruption. Certainly we do know how the heart of Yahweh was grieved as He saw the violence that filled the earth.

Abraham would know this firsthand from the eyewitness account of Shem. Shem in turn would have seen the earth go from the few who came out of the ark, to a world that once again was becoming corrupt. Yet Shem may have taken heart from seeing the faith of Abraham and knowing the outworking of Yahweh's purpose in faithful Abraham.

But what of us? How far back do our memories go? Maybe to grandparents or maybe even great grandparents, but how limited the time span. At best for the older ones amongst us we may have known those who could tell us about Bro John Thomas or Bro Robert Roberts. But if like me you were a teenager when your great grandparents died, maybe little thought was given to asking about their memories.

Just consider those generations of the patriarchs of old. Can you imagine how you would react if you spoke to somebody today who was able to relate to you an eyewitness account about the events surrounding Jesus, just as Methuselah could tell Shem about Adam? How remarkable that would seem!

Well here we are about two thousand years or so from the Lord Jesus Christ. Not that much longer than the time span from Adam to Abraham, but how many generations have come and gone. A sad tide of humanity crumbled back to the dust. Generations of lost lives, loves, dreams, fears, wars and cruelty. All for nothing, what a sad waste. Now here we stand at the end of time, all things coming full circle and the world back to the evil days of Noah.

Time is short; the time of the end is upon us, yet like Noah we really are not so far removed from eyewitness accounts of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each time we open the scriptures and read from the gospel records the detail is there. Then as we read our imaginations can allow us to walk with the Disciples, with Paul and the many other faithful of old. We have no excuse for following the world along that self destructive path to oblivion. Though few in number in these last dark days, we walk in good company and can follow the examples recorded about the lives of the few who were faithful in patriarchal times.

Their hope, is our hope, their faith is our faith. Their joy when they are raised can be our joy, if we also remain faithful.

Just consider that one day, in the mercy of God, you may hear for yourself an eyewitness account of how His purpose worked out in their lives, spoken from their own lips. Just imagine talking to Methuselah, Noah or Abraham!

*Andy Peel*

## **Kent Prophecy Day 2010, God Willing**

**Theme “ye do well to take heed...”**

**Venue:** East Malling Village Hall, East Malling, Kent

**Date:** 20 March 2010

**Start:** 3.00pm with interval for tea at 5.00pm

**1<sup>st</sup> Address:-**

The King of the North and His Allies

Bro Simon Collard (Cambridge)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Address:-**

Israel and Her Allies

Bro Andrew White (Rugby)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Address**

The Papacy and Her Daughters

Bro John Evans (Swansea)

Brethren and Sisters are reminded to bring their own food. Hot and cold drinks will be provided.

For further information contact, Brother Peter Moore, Tel: 01474 703037 or email: [petermoore123@talktalk.net](mailto:petermoore123@talktalk.net)

## **Be Teachable**

It is one of the marks of the truth of the Bible narrative that it never seeks to gloss over the weaknesses of men. The fact that it reveals the depths of depravity to which human nature can sink has been one of its characteristics on which the agnostic and the atheist have seized in order to bolster up their unbelief. Yet, in fact, those who look at the record without prejudice, and against the background of their own experience of what human nature is capable of, must see in its plain, unvarnished account an evidence of its veracity. Even the weaknesses of men and women who might have been expected to be different are plainly revealed. They are pointed out, they are corrected, they are reviewed, but they are never exaggerated, they are never dwelt upon. Never is the impression given that because of weakness alone, even repeated weakness, has God cast them off as unsuitable vessels for the working out of His mercy.

Again and again this comes out in the gospel records. Jesus called twelve men to be his especial companions in the hard road which he had to tread, and yet how weak they were, how lacking in understanding; how often they were more concerned with their own position, their own desires and their own needs, rather than with the welfare of their Master. Especially they were prone to quarrel amongst themselves as to who should be the greatest. They were very much inclined to allow petty jealousy and rivalry to destroy that harmony which should have prevailed amongst them. It was understandable; it was inevitable.

Here were twelve men in close daily contact, living a hard, unnatural life, all anxiously seeking to please their Master, all seeking for his approval. They had, as Peter said, forsaken all to follow him and unless their service to him proved to be acceptable they were lost indeed. Naturally they were anxious, and inevitably, under such circumstances stresses and strains developed amongst them as they do in the body of believers today. Several times those tensions were revealed in a quarrelling amongst themselves as to who should be the greatest. On each occasion Christ rebuked them and showed them very clearly the principles of submission and mutual service which should govern the relations between his followers in contrast to the pride, the ambition and the self-seeking which characterise worldly communities.

### ***PRACTICALITIES***

He also taught them by more practical means, and it is upon this that we wish to reflect by way of exhortation. So shall we look first at that chapter from the gospel record according to Matthew which we read together yesterday, and the first verse:

"At the same time the disciples came unto Jesus saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'" Matt.18.1

Now the circumstances in which these words were spoken are brought out more clearly and in more detail in the other gospel records. Jesus and his disciples had just arrived at Capernaum from Galilee, and on the road the disciples had been

disputing amongst themselves as to who should be the greatest. Jesus had discerned their thoughts and when they sat down in the house in Capernaum he asked them: "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" Mark tells us, "But they held their peace; for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest."

Jesus left them in no doubt as to his mind on this subject. "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." However, it would seem that throughout the subsequent conversation the question about which the disciples had been arguing was still very much in their talk and they asked Jesus, therefore, for an authoritative answer. "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus answered the question by emphasising the principles which he had already express by an illustration, a practical object-lesson, so we read in verse 2 of the 18th chapter of Matthew:

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not into the kingdom of heaven."

Now Luke in his record says that Jesus put the child by his side, thus giving the child in the midst of the disciples a position of honour by his side, emphasising the principle which he was trying to convey to them. Before we examine just what Jesus meant by these words, with a view to applying them to ourselves, let us look at a very similar incident recorded in Matthew 19, verse 13:

"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on the in, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said; suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence".

Why the disciples wished to turn them away we are not told. It is generally supposed that it was in order to spare Jesus. Yet their action caused Jesus considerable displeasure. Matthew and Luke record only a comparatively mild rebuke, but Mark says that "when Jesus saw it, he was much displeas." The Revised Version reads "when Jesus saw it, he was moved much indignation."

What it was in the disciples attitude which gave rise to such indignation on the part of their Master we do not know; a viciousness perhaps, a certain pride of position – they were the disciples, the followers of Jesus, who were these to push their children forward? A despising, perhaps, of those who in their simplicity desired their young children to see and feel the touch of Jesus. We do not know what was in their minds. Certainly they showed by their action how far they still were from an appreciation of the mind and the feelings of their Master.

Bro Roberts in his own inimitable way comments on this incident in Nazareth Revisited:

"There is reason he wrote to be glad of the record of this incident. It helps to check the tendency to sternness which some aspects of the truth, by themselves, would generate. It helps to preserve the spirit of loving sympathy which is at the root of the gospel; it makes a place for the young and the helpless in the hearts of all who take after Jesus."

Whatever the particular thought of the Disciples was at this time Jesus took the opportunity to emphasise that lesson which he had taught them before.

Now if we turn over for a moment to the gospel record of Mark we shall find how beautifully he records the whole incident. Mark 10 verse 13:

"And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them, But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands, upon them, and blessed them."

#### *AS A LITTLE CHILD*

At once we notice how emphatic the words of Jesus were. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." "...Shall in no wise enter therein" recorded Luke. Equally emphatic were those words of Jesus which we read earlier: "except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

How important it is, therefore, that we understand just what Jesus meant by this teaching, and having understood, that we apply this principle in our own lives. It is not a question of being as little children if we can and if we are naturally so disposed; it is a question of being as little children otherwise we shall not enter the kingdom of God.

What then did Jesus mean, "become as little children"? First, it is clear that it is not a quality which is natural to us. We need to be converted, Jesus said, be turned, be changed if we are to become as little, children. Now the average man would consider it an insult to be told that he was of a childlike disposition. Yet that is the disposition which God desires to see in us, which He must find in us if we are to be worthy of entering the Kingdom of God. It is essential for us to be converted, to change our minds and become as little children. It will surely be helpful then if for a few minutes we reflect upon just what it means to become as little children, for of such, said Jesus, "is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Jesus defined more clearly what he meant when he said; "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Humility is not a quality which we normally associate with a child.

Certainly a child does not consciously show humility in the way in which an adult might, and yet there is humility in a child, an involuntary one, a natural humility, from which we, as adults, can learn. What do we understand by humility in a child? How is it manifested? What makes him humble?

Well, a child is surely humble because he is helpless, dependent and ignorant. He needs to be protected, supported, taught and guided, and generally the young child will recognise this and is pleased to accept support and protection, willing to be taught and guided. Of course, he will rebel from time to time, but with wise, firm handling, the child is not slow to recognise his weak and dependent state, to accept the love, the care, the guidance of his parents, and to find the contentment which such subjection to them must bring, and he is pleased to grow in knowledge and understanding.

But as the young child passes from childhood to adolescence, so he seeks to assert his independence. He begins to resent being taught; he would like to think that he needed no guidance. Then he has to learn what true humility means, and as he moves into adulthood he has to re-learn some of those childlike qualities which he once thought were so unbecoming. Spiritually, the majority of men and women never progress beyond adolescence. They remain proud, rebellious, willfully resentful of being taught. They are too big and self important for religion and God. Jesus says, in effect, 'what you must do is to retrace your steps, turn and become as little children, recognise your helplessness, your dependence, your ignorance, not now in natural things, perhaps, but certainly in spiritual things.'

### *CHILD-LIKE QUALITIES*

A child has very little sense of his own value or importance or dignity. He is just what he is, accepted for what he is. He needs love, affection and encouragement. But he has no false pride, no proud seeking after position. And so Jesus said it should be with his followers. Greatness amongst his followers depends not on self-assertiveness, but upon humility. Not on lordship, but upon service. Not on teaching, but upon learning. An outstanding characteristic of a child is his willingness to learn and the ease with which he learns. A young child, having no pre-formed ideas, no false pride in his own knowledge, is ever ready to accept new thoughts, new ideas, to learn new words and develop new actions. His mind receives impressions very readily and he is continuing developing and changing according to those impressions. It is part of the natural humbleness of a child that he should be always learning and developing. No false pride, we say, prevents the entrance of knowledge and growth and understanding. A child's mind takes on the impress of his surroundings and closest associates. This of course could be dangerous in the wrong environment and with the wrong associates, a point not without its bearing upon, our position as children in our spiritual life. But the wise parent will ensure that as far as possible the child is only in contact with people and things that will cause him to develop in the right direction.

The application of these childlike qualities in our spiritual life is at once obvious. Man in spiritual things is like the child in natural things helpless, dependent and ignorant. The majority will not recognise this and so they remain in that condition. Only a few, recognising their true situation, become as little children before God. Now our presence to remember Christ this morning is an evidence that at one time at least we had this childlike disposition. Appreciating our weakness and our need, we were prepared to be taught of God, to learn from the Word of God and to submit to God's commandments. But now the question must arise at this time, have we preserved this same attitude towards God and His Word? Like the child, we should be continually learning, ever developing, forsaking old ways, learning new and better ways, learning to walk in ways more and more acceptable to our God, no matter how old we might be in years, or how young.

### *PRIDE AND HARDNESS OF HEART*

There are two insurmountable barriers to such development, pride and hardness of heart. But if we are truly children in the way in which Christ exhorts us to be, neither of these unfruitful characteristics will be found in us. If we are meekly responsive, truly pliable, never too proud or too set in our ways, then we shall develop and change our ways of life and character to whatever extent the Word of God requires of us. There is tremendous emphasis in the Scriptures, on the need to in this manner respond to divine teaching and guidance. The true children of God are those who are willing to respond to the instruction of their Father.

We have only to look over some of the Psalms to see that. David was an outstanding example of one who desired from, the bottom of his heart to receive and to respond to divine instruction, whether that instruction was given by Word or by the circumstance in which he was placed. Look first at Psalm 25 and

Verse 4:

“Shew me thy ways O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day”

Verse 6:

“Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He teach sinners in the way. The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.”

Verse 12:

“What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.”

Notice the emphasis: “him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.”

Then in Psalm 27:11:

“Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.”

Psalm 32:8:

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.”

And now the exhortation of the Psalmist:

“Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.”

Be not like them; be like the child and accept the teaching and the guidance. “Humble yourselves as little children” said Jesus, be willing to learn, be humble and learn.

Then in Psalm 34 verse 11 David, having himself learned the fear of God, seeks to instruct others saying:

“Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord, What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?”

Surely we all desire that. Well, this is the way we can for David says:

“Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”

Throughout the Psalms we find again and again the emphasis on the correct attitude of mind, and heart, which are summed up in the words of David:

“Teach me thy way, O Lord. I will walk in thy truth”

Whether we are taught by the Word directly, indirectly by the Word, ministered to us by faithful brethren, or whether we are taught by the circumstances of our lives, whether they be joyful or sad, it is for us to respond as little children.

Yet how often we behave otherwise, being unresponsive and even rebellious perhaps. How often we allow our own ideas and reasoning to influence us more than those of God through His Word. How often we refuse to put aside obvious weaknesses and wrong ways. The council of Jesus when he said: "Except ye be con-

verted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God” are serious words. Let us do our best to take them to heart.

We know how we feel as adults about a child - whether our own or another’s - who is wilful and rebellious. Such a child is a continual source of grief and anxiety. It is not a pleasant character. So let us then learn the lesson and apply it to ourselves.

We could pursue this idea of being childlike in other directions. For example, a child learns because he responds quickly to his environment. As we indicated earlier, put the child in the wrong environment and he will learn wrong ways even more quickly, than he will learn good ways in a good environment. This has an obvious application to our own spiritual life.

However, there is a sense in which we are not to be as children in spiritual things. The apostle Paul wrote:

“Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”

There is a sense in which, as Paul exhorted those of Ephesus, we should grow up, henceforth being no more children. But this is another subject and in no way goes against what has already been considered. However, in the sense and context that Paul writes:

We must develop in the Truth.  
We must grow in knowledge.  
We must grow in understanding.  
We must grow in wisdom and in strength.

In short we must grow ever nearer to the example set for us by the Lord Jesus Christ. But we shall only grow in a way acceptable to God if we preserve throughout our lives that childlike disposition which is willing and able to learn and develop in the right way.

We cannot resist quoting once again the words of Bro. Roberts. Of Christ's followers he writes:

Christ would, not have them abdicate their reason; on the contrary, he would have them 'wise as serpents'. He would not have them ignorant of truth and fact; on the contrary, he would have them 'filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.' At the same time, with this knowledge, he would have love to dwell.

With this discernment and skill he would have the simplicity and faith that can trust implicitly, and with the firmness and boldness of confident knowledge he would have them combine that humility of self-estimate which is according to self-powerlessness, that reverence for greatness and worth which is the noblest attitude of created beings, and that docility or faith and obedience which is, the

highest result of enlightened reason. There is no type of manhood so beautiful as that in which these qualities combine. A childlike, strong man is the ideal of humanity. Christ himself was the highest example of this, and he seeks to generate his own image in all who believe in him.

It was fitting, therefore, that Christ should seize the incident of children being brought for blessing to rebuke the harshness of the disciples, and to exhibit the children as the type of the men and women who will at last find acceptance with him.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me” said Jesus, “for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Here truly, in the one we remember this morning, was the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet he could, say, “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.”

Jesus learned and as it is written, “He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” He learned from his Father, from the Word of his Father. He learned by his experiences. His mind and his disposition were such as to respond to the training which he received. He learned God’s will by the study of His Word, and he learned to obey by the things he suffered. The apostle John wrote:

“He that saith he abideth in him, himself also ought to walk even as he walked.”

Paul wrote:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a slave, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

This was the result of Christ’s childlike submission to the will of his Father, the result, but not the end. As the apostle continues:

“Therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”

And so the promise to us is likewise:

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of God.”

May we each learn to be so humble, so contrite, so willing to tremble at God's Word, that we, like our Master, may be exalted in due time.

*(Bro E. J. Toms, 1965)*

## Correspondence

*Further to our Special Issue: “The Most Reliable English Translation”, Bro CC enquires:- What do you think of the New King James version? Bro Peter Moore replies as follows:-*

“Dear Brother CC.

Please accept my apology for being so long in replying to your question; What is your opinion of the “ New King James version “?

The NKJV is probably the only version, other than the King James Version, that would be almost universally accepted by our community.

The NKJV appeared in 1982. If the King James Version was no longer available then, in my opinion, for Christadelphians who have no knowledge of Hebrew or Greek languages, the NKJV would be the next best available version.

The Preface to the KJV-NKJV Parallel Reference Bible sets out the goals and the guidelines followed by the translators to achieve these goals.

The “Statement of Purpose” of the NKJV translators was:

1. To preserve the original intended purity of the KJV in its communication of God’s Word to men;
2. To clarify the KJV by use of current words, grammar, and sentence structure so that the NKJ would speak to the individual reader in the twentieth century in a clear, simple and accurate manner as the original translators of the KJV in 1611 endeavoured to speak to their readers;
3. To neither add to, take away from, nor alter the communication that was the intent of the KJ translators but to transfer the Elizabethan word forms into twentieth-century English.

The KJV-NKJV parallel reference Bible has a common centre of each page reference column. This is only possible because the corresponding words or phrases have been used.

However, the sources consulted by the NKJV translators include some used by the New International Version translators. They include: the Septuagint and 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament and the 3rd edition of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament. these sources are used to render a word or phrase, the text is annotated to indicate the source. Therefore, when reading, we should note the textual footnotes that identify sources.

For example: “Seed” has been replaced with “descendants”, see Genesis 12:7; Genesis 13:15-16 but not consistently, see, Genesis 3:15; Genesis 4:25;

This can be useful when the NKJV distinguishes between singular and plural uses of the word “seed” found in the KJV. This means that we must of course be vigilant in Bible study.

It does seek to preserve complete equivalence to preserve all of the information in the text

Usefully it uses block capital letters in the New Testament for quotes the translators have identified. (e.g. see, Galatians chapter 3)

Overall the NKJV is a useful version, to use for study and preaching.

For further reading on this subject see, *Which Translation?* published by The Testimony Committee.

Your brother in the Hope of Israel,

Peter Moore”

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*Dear Brother Christopher*

*Thank you very much for your exhorts etc we enjoy them very, very much, and look forward to them each week.*

*I have a question I would like to ask please – I heard a Brother say that the Brethren who are baptized will not have to appear before the Judgment Seat on Judgment Day – his reasoning being - we are told we have forgiveness every day, we start with a clean slate every day, God no longer remembers our sins if we ask for His forgiveness.*

*Can you help me please, I cannot find anything that is close to that suggestion - we must all appear before the Lord to give an account of ourselves I have always believed.*

*Your Sister in Christ, With Love in Our Lord*

J N-G

**Reply:-**

The Scriptures are explicit and clear on this point. As you allude to, the inspired Apostle Paul states: “... we shall all ***stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*** For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and ***every tongue shall confess to God.*** So then every one of us ***shall give account of himself to God***” (Rom. 14:10-11). Bro Ron Abel in his book “*Wrested Scriptures*” deals very succinctly with this issue on pages 137-139. Forgive this short reply: If the Lord Permit, we will include an article on this subject dealing with the points you raise more fully in a future issue.

CAM

## The Psalms Diversified

*We are thankful to Bro. GR for submitting the following extract from the pen of our Bro. Robert Roberts, which we reproduce for the benefit of our readers:*

The Psalms form a large and prominent part of the Scriptures. They are not attractive to the popular mind, religious or profane. There is a clear reason for this. The Psalms turn on the existence and activity of the personal God of the Bible; to whom the natural man has a philosophical aversion where it is scholastically trained, and an instinctive aversion where it has not risen above native animalism. As for the religious mind, the Psalms are too vigorous, personal, material, sublunary and spiritual for the taste that has been developed by immortal-soulism, blown or spun into all sorts of artificial attenuations and rarefactions by the soothing essayists and elegant speculators or exiting declaimers of a false theological age. They are not twaddling enough or human-sentimental enough for the sickly modern school of "piety".

Are the Psalms useless then? Far from it. They are delightful nutriment to the new man that has been truly begotten by the word of truth. There is no part of Scripture to which a spiritually-formed taste can more ardently apply the Scripture encomium: "I esteemed the words of thy mouth to be more than my necessary food: more to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold: they are to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."

The Psalms are a school in which truly divine thoughts and expressions are to be learnt. We need to keep at this school to keep in the right style. Another school is around us on every hand, from which we much more easily learn aversion to the thoughts and ways of the Spirit, especially in a day like ours, when the educational tendency is more and more to banish God from heart and lip. Scriptural speech is obsolete with those who have a weak or a dead faith in the age to come, and the age that has gone. It will return in full vigour with the Kingdom of God, which will establish a pure language in all the earth. An obedient believer of the Gospel belongs to that age, though living in this. That which makes him belong to it is the reception in advance of its spirit. This spirit finds expression in its language, and its language is nowhere more wealthily displayed than in the book of Psalms, in which the Spirit by David has formulated the thoughts that are acceptable in man towards God in all relations. We may be guilty of "cant" in the estimation of merely secular thinkers, in conforming to the divine standard in the matter; but a wise man will keep his eye on the fact that the secular thinkers are on the road to oblivion with the age that has given them birth, and that the divine standard alone will govern the evolution of futurity. The future belongs alone to Christ: and his spirit is in all of the Psalms, to which we do well to conform as entirely as we can.

We have thought it would not be amiss to have an occasional ramble in this picturesque country of Scripture delights: that is, to make selections—somewhat indiscriminately, perhaps—and serve them up from time to time with a little of

the variation and diversification that sometimes in the musical sphere, turns a homely air into a pleasing fantasia. Success in such an experiment must always be doubtful. On the other hand, failure cannot be disastrous, and the attempt may be interesting, and even productive of some degree of advantage. It is the beauty of Scriptural things that, provided you stick close to them and do not get into the merely natural groove, you are bound to get benefit from them, whatever form you work them up into. In the hope that we may not fail of this experience in this case, we indulge in a preliminary experiment.

### *THE FIRST PSALM*

Blessed every man desires to be;  
Yet to this state attaineth only he  
Who takes the way to reach it; but alas!  
Most men dislike along this way to pass.  
The reason is, the way is not quite sweet:  
Its roughness tires the limbs and hurts the feet.  
“Discard the counsel of ungodly men.”  
“Walk not in ways of sinners, where nor when.”  
This motto is not pleasant to observe  
The sons of sin are often sweet to serve.  
“Stand not within their way,” God loud commands  
Although that way convenient often stands.  
Sin’s way is prosperous in an age of sin;  
And who loves not to prosper with his kin?  
In ways of honour stand the ungodly now;  
And who loves not to share the lordly bow?  
In ways of ease, and wealth, the world thrive;  
And who would choose with poverty to strive?  
Yet pleasure is the fruitful source of scorn.  
Proud speakers are of rank and luxury born.  
“Sit not in scorner’s seat,” God calls again  
Where mirthful flouts and quips roll round amain.  
Pleasant, infectious, universal all,  
“Yet stay,” cries wisdom, “death is in its thrall.”  
“In what must I delight?” the meek man cries.  
“Delight in God and his law truly wise.  
Wise you will find it, if you study well;  
For wise are all God’s works, as all things tell.  
Meditate on it, Yes both day and night.  
‘Twill yield you better joy than things of sight;  
Not like the zest of intellect or taste,  
Which briefly pleasing, runs the mind to waste.  
‘Tis more like breathing air, partaking food,  
A matter needful, an untiring good;  
A thing our nature calls for, daily use,  
A satisfaction pure, without abuse.  
And now consider what will come of it

When God's forth-bringsings show his workings fit;  
Like thriving tree all planted by a river  
The godly man will flourish fair for ever;  
No withered leaf on his strong branch appears  
He grows and prospers for a thousand years  
Ripe fruit and healing in his season yields  
Dispensing blessing o'er a thousand fields.  
In honour firm established, and in wealth  
He wears the noblest crown, immortal health.  
But not so are the ungodly—where are they?  
Gone: like the worthless stubble—blown away.  
The ways of righteous men to God are known,  
The way of sinners will be overthrown.

*Robert Roberts*

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## **Make the Tree Good, and his Fruit Good**

### **Reading: Matthew 12**

Once more brethren and sisters, we are confronted by the emblems before us upon the table. We are brought face to face with the love and the grace of our Heavenly Father, vouchsafe for us within the example of our beloved Master in the bread and the wine.

Yet at the same time we are brought into the stark reality of our own individual and our collective ecclesial failings. This example of our Lord that we have each come to remember, in obedience to the commandment, for our own eternal good, brings brilliantly into focus all our impurities and weakness.

Thus we are each doubly humbled by our own need and by the gracious provision of our Heavenly Father for us in Christ.

### **1st Corinthians Chapter 1 and verses 9-8 & Philippians 1 and verse 6**

“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ? That he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”.

What have you done, what have I done to co-operate in this great work of transformation over this past week? Indeed we could ask what are you and I planning to do, to co-operate in this miraculous work in the coming week if our Heavenly Father is willing?

After all this great work of transformation is no small thing brethren and sisters? Each of us knows only too well, just how much change is required in this work of conforming us individually to the one we have come to remember?

Indeed since we are supposed to be labourers together with God, we ought not to leave such things to blind chance. At this point we might ask the question, well what exactly can we do as individuals to aid our Heavenly Father and facilitate this tremendous change into our lives?

The answer must be, much indeed can be done, although we accept that this is a work of the Father through his beloved Son.

### **Proverbs Chapter 3 and verses 5 – 7**

“Trust in Yahweh with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear Yahweh, and depart from evil”.

Two key things spring to my mind from this passage in the proverbs. Firstly to stop resisting our Heavenly Father as He providentially attempts to work in our lives. We do this in so many ways, but primarily by being so totally and constantly focused and obsessed with our own needs and wants in the here and now.

We have great difficulty in rising above the incessant calls of the present. Indeed the temporal, everything we see around us and experience after all seems so concrete to us. Yet we all know and intellectually accept that these things are only temporal, they are not the eternal realities of life. As Corinthians records “we look not at the things, which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which, are seen are temporal; but the things, which are not seen are eternal”.

How then are we to overcome this problem? Well, the scripture records that we are to set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians chapter three where that quote comes from instructs us brethren and sisters to busy our selves in certain activities. The activities of putting away the old fleshly man, by putting on the new man in Christ Jesus. It’s speaking about the deliberate and practical application of the truth on a daily basis.

More than this, the passage encourages each one of us to have a vertical focus to our lives. By spending more time in meditation upon the word of life, by spending more time in fellowship and by focusing more upon the things of the kingdom age. Here is an exercise for you over the next week to try. Take one of the kingdom passages from the word and do the following things with it:

Spend ten minutes a day personally thinking about that passage and the vivid picture it presents of the age to come in total contrast to the present.

Take a verse or two and try and memorize them over the week, just as you used

to do for Sunday school proofs.

Use the passage concerned to focus one of your daily prayers throughout the week.

Coming back to the second key thing, which comes out of that earlier proverb's reference:

We need to learn to acknowledge our Heavenly Father in everything that we do. This is much easier said than done, as I am sure you are aware brethren and sisters. Now if your anything like me then your big problem is with consistency in this regard. We often forget to include God. We make decisions about life in the moment and then pray about it afterwards, seeking the blessing of the Almighty. Therefore doing things the wrong way round, I must admit to being very prone to this error.

The real issue is not so much with consistency, but rather with priority. Just who do you really give priority in your life and in my life? Is it to I or is it our Heavenly Father?

After all we all acknowledge our Heavenly Father in our lives, we all recognise intellectually that He has sovereignty in our lives. But it is not the case of our God having just a little sovereignty in our lives, but of total sovereignty.

Just think about how our God has juxtaposed his will into our lives in this past week over such a simple thing as the weather. Our Heavenly Father is reminding each one of us in these circumstances that it is He that is in real control over our lives.

### **Matthew Chapter 12 and verse 33**

“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit”.

So brethren and sisters what sort of fruit have you produced this past week?

Well if you are anything like me, then you would have to admit both good and bad fruit have been produced. Which reminds us of some words in James concerning the tongue. “Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be”.

My brethren, these things ought not so to be the Apostle declares. Indeed from the Master's statement in Matthew it appears we have a choice to determine which type of fruit comes forth. We do have a choice that is why we must endeavour to set our affection on things above.

Rest assured brethren and sisters fruit will come forth, there is no neutral position. Either we actively make good our priority or evil fruit will be the result in our lives, whether we want it or not. Indeed in both cases in that verse from Matthew twelve the word “make” is the same word in the same form in the Greek. And it is an ongoing imperative command; in other words these things are to be a daily conscious choice on our behalf.

The use of the imperative here carries with it a sense of urgency, which ought to be seen in our lives, because we know that time is short and we must be redeemed it wisely.

You see then brethren and sisters if you don't actively choose to produce good fruit then you are by default choosing to produce corrupt or evil fruit. Yet we slip into that very thing almost daily on auto-pilot, because we let the temporal things of life cloud our vision of the eternal.

If we are to show ourselves fit for the Master's use in the kingdom of God, then we must make the conscious choice of developing good fruit in our daily lives. Not only in our own individual lives, but also in one another. As Hebrews records “let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works”.

The words of the Master here “either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt”. Remind us of a later exhortation given to the Laodiceans:

### **Revelation Chapter 3 and verses 15 & 16**

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth”.

Not one of us want to be declared lukewarm by our Lord, nor do we want to bring forth-corrupt fruit. Yet fruit development is the product of active and targeted cultivation, whether we are talking about in the natural or the spiritual realm. Here in Matthew chapter twelve the Master is focusing upon the thinking, the thoughts and the speech of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Elsewhere and earlier in the gospel, the Master uses the same phraseology to focus upon an individual's character.

Now character is the fullness of the fruit that our Heavenly Father desires and requires of those who will be constituted as Christ's brethren in that day. For we read in 1st Peter “let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price”.

Now although these words are spoken primarily to sisters and thereby exhorting all those that claim to be part of our Lord's bride. So just as a tree is known by its fruit, it is equal true of each one of us brethren and sisters. So how is your fruit production? Indeed how is mine developing?

### **James Chapter 5 and verse 7**

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain”.

To this we might add from 2nd Peter the following “account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation”. These two passages are comforting brethren and sisters in that this fruit is developed to our Heavenly Father's timetable not to ours. Because we seek to rush everything and cut corners and in doing so limit both the quantity and quality of the fruit produced. Our Heavenly Father understands the value of both patience and compound interest or reward.

We too need to learn this lesson that it is continual and consistent gradual progress day by day that this fruit is developed and produced within us brethren and sisters. For our inward man the Eternal Spirit exhorts us, is renewed day by day. Just like compound interest, the growth begins slowly and is gradual and almost imperceptible, but eventually it escalates exponentially. This good fruit of the spirit is produced within us, with patience, just like a natural fruit crop.

Our Heavenly Father wants you and I to be as interested and enjoy the process of developing this fruit as in the final product brought forth to his glory. For it is in the pursuing of the development of this fruit in all of its various facets that the real victory is achieved. For the victory of our Heavenly Father through the Lord Jesus Christ in each one of us will be in the person we each become through the process. Finally conformed to the image of the son we will shortly remember and fit for the Master's use in the age to come.

### **James Chapter 1 and verses 2 – 4**

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing”.

The Eternal Spirit through the Apostle Paul gave us a list of a single fruit - love, made up of eight constituent parts in Galatians; while repeating one in Ephesians and adding a further two:

Joy  
Peace  
Longsuffering  
Gentleness  
Goodness

Meekness  
Temperance  
Righteousness  
Truth  
Faith

## **Galatians Chapter 5 and verses 22 – 25 & Ephesians Chapter 5 verse 10**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord”.

The fruit of the spirit primarily represent internal qualities and attitudes, which renew our minds as our Heavenly Father desires. So that all our attitudes to life are corrected through his word and orientated towards the production of godly good works, to his glory. Thus each facet of the fruit represents an aspect of our thinking and attitudes, which need renewing from those naturally occurring in us due to the mind of the flesh.

None of these facets come naturally to us and so they must be cultivated in our lives, which takes great faith, effort, focus, determination, patient endurance and time. For since we are talking about fruit brethren and sisters we must note that these qualities are not surface behavioural changes, but deep-rooted character transformation and the beatitudes of the new creation in Christ.

Each of the facets of this fruit when developed will aid us in the crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts. Thankfully each of these facets of the fruit of the spirit, strips away our preoccupation with self in one form or another. So the cultivation of the fruit then, takes away little by little our perennial problem of focusing only upon the temporal here and now. Which we discovered earlier is one of our most pressing issues to overcome.

Indeed positively each of these facets will likewise further enable us to not only walk together. But to also live more like our Master abundantly in godliness now, as our Heavenly Father intended.

## **John Chapter 15 and verse 5**

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing”.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the living embodiment of the fruit of the spirit. He provides the model from which you and I must learn how to co-operate with our Heavenly Father in our spiritual growth. This brings to mind an exhortation from Philippians “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you”.

Like a young child we are to be avid observers of the Master and the other faithful examples contained within scripture. Observation is how children learn, so we need to become like little children. Therefore we must learn to read the gospels in particular with a focus upon what we can observe in terms of the Masters actions and behaviour.

Far too often we miss this important aspect of understanding our Lord's life. Because we are so focused upon what is the passage about, its context, historical setting and meaning. We unfortunately are conditioned to learn using the Greek model of education. Which is for the pupil to learn to know what the teacher knows, where the focus is upon knowledge.

Brethren and sisters, we need to renew our minds and come to understand the way the Master taught using the Hebrew model of education. Which was through a mentoring process. Which is a relational experience where someone empowers another by sharing God given resources with the goal to spiritual reproduction or duplication.

The Hebrew model of education is concerned not with content, but with context in other word's life application. The focus is not upon learning all the knowledge of the teacher, but rather upon the pupil becoming what his teacher is.

The idea then is that of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ being poured into us. Through the word of life, through our interaction one with another and through the providential circumstances of life. Our Heavenly Father through the Lord Jesus Christ is investing into each of our lives, just as naturally as a parent does with their child.

Speaking of the priesthood of the one we have come to remember Hebrews declares:

### **Hebrews Chapter 7 and verse 25**

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”.

To this we can add these well-known words from Ephesians to complete this picture:

### **Ephesians Chapter 5 and verses 25 – 27**

“Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish”.

The Apostle Paul expressed the same sentiment to the Galatian brethren and sisters “my little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you”. This is the same attitude we ought to have one to another, a desire that each of us would come to imitate and resemble the Master in both character and action.

No wonder the Apostle elsewhere exhorts us brethren and sisters to “be ye followers (or imitators) of me, even as I also am of Christ”. Indeed to Timothy his

own protégé in the faith the Eternal Spirit through the Apostle wrote:

## **2nd Timothy Chapter 2 and verse 2**

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Like Timothy the word of life instructs us to likewise pour our lives into one another in a relational way. Not only in sharing and empowering each other through our knowledge and experience of the truth, but also importantly by imparting our own beings to one another through sacrificial love.

It is through this meaningful fellowship and intimate interaction that we will become imitating disciples and glorify our Heavenly Father by bearing much fruit. Let us recall brethren and sisters we have a daily choice to make our tree good and its fruit good.

As we come now to remember the Master once more in these emblems of bread and wine. Let us “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”.

For in the bread we clearly see the bread, which speaks here of the love of our Heavenly Father in Christ, expressed in his word. That word, which is able to transform and renew our minds and characters to be, like his.

Then with the wine it clearly speaks to us of the outworking of that word in a life poured out in service, invested into others. This is modelled for us in the Master’s sacrifice, which we remember now. And also in his ongoing High Priestly intercession on our behalf to our eternal wellbeing in the father’s mercy and ultimately to our Heavenly Father’s glory.

*Wayne Marshall*

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## **Judas the Betrayer**

One of the means by which Scripture teaches us, is through precept and example. So, within its pages, we have examples of faithful men of old – but also men of disobedience, who provide examples of unbelief (cp. Heb. 4:11). In our New Testament reading for the day (in Matthew chapter 26), we behold the pre-eminent example of disobedience, in the betrayal of Messiah by one who was in his closest circle of friends and disciples. Judas Iscariot, whilst being Christ’s “own familiar friend” (Psa. 41:9), became the great betrayer, representative of the sin-power that lifted up its heel against him. In considering his role, and the relationship of Judas with Christ, we can learn to heed his example, lest we fall after the same example of disobedience, and become, like he, a “son of perdition” (Jno. 17:12).

Our reading in Matthew 26 reveals Messiah's knowledge of not only his betrayal, but who it was who should betray him: "As they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me" (Mat. 26:21). Indeed, we read elsewhere that "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him" hence he had told his disciples: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (Jno. 6:64, 70). This is a most significant point to bear in mind: throughout the 3 ½ year ministry of Messiah, and the things experienced with his disciples, Jesus knew Judas would betray him. Though he, like the other 11 disciples, was given the Holy Spirit to heal men of their infirmities, though he, like them, heard the teachings of the Lord, Judas was predominantly a man of the flesh. His true character was revealed before his betrayal, in his response to the anointing of Christ by the unnamed woman of Matthew chapter 26. As she poured out her alabaster box of "very precious ointment", "when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, to what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor" (Mat. 26:8-9). Judas was leading this murmuring, for the record in John 12 cites him as saying: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor". His motives were not that the poor might benefit, for the record continues to say: "This he said, *not that he cared for the poor*; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein" (Jno. 12:6). In this event, Judas is revealed to be carnally minded, seeking his own advantage to the expense of others.

This aspect is also revealed in the prophetic Psalms which speak of him. Psalm 109, which is cited in the New Testament as being to do with Judas (see verse 8 compared with Acts 1:20), describes his relationship with Messiah, who had little of this world's goods: "... he remembered not to show mercy, *but persecuted the poor and needy man*, that he might even slay the broken in heart" (Psa. 109:16). Self interest is the predominant characteristic of Judas - a common failing amongst men, which we must learn to guard against.

Immediately following the anointing of Jesus, as described above, we read further in Matthew 26:

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time, he sought opportunity to betray him" (Mat. 26:14-16).

"What will ye give me" is the constant demand of the flesh. What can we do for personal gain and reward – even at the expense of the "poor and needy man". Despising the honour showed to Messiah by the woman who anointed him ready for his burial, Judas was not satisfied with stealing from the collection bag for the poor. He saw greater opportunity in betraying his Master, and had no faith that he would rise from the grave to become the judge of the living and the dead. "What will ye give me": how often does this question arise in our minds, as we see opportunities for personal gain – even when it involves a departure from the Way ordained by Christ? We must seek to develop our faith, and discipline our

minds to overcome such thoughts. “What can we give?” is instead the constant question within minds of faith, even as it was in the mind of Messiah, who gave all that we might have life.

1 Timothy chapter 6 exhorts us to guard against the example of Judas:

“the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10).

This is the way of Balaam: the pursuit of this world’s temporal goods, to the expense of the eternal things related to the kingdom to come. Like Judas, we can so easily allow the cares of this life, and the love of mammon to obscure our view of the vision of Joy set before us. Let us beware, lest we meet his same end!

The actual sum covenanted to Judas was actually not a large amount of money at all. It was just 30 pieces of silver, the worth of a Hebrew slave:

“If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned” (Ex. 21:32).

Even so, the “bulls of Bashan” pushed against Jesus (Psa. 22:12) securing his death, and rewarding the betrayer with the price of a slave.

### ***IDENTIFYING THE BETRAYER***

Returning to Matthew 26, we read of how the Master identified the One who should rise against him:

“he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me ... then said Judas which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said” (Mat. 26:23-25).

Judas was not always in opposition to Christ. He was not always his enemy. So the spirit of Christ in the Psalms speaks:

“For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance” (Psa. 55:12-13).

And again:

“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my

bread, hath lifted up his heel against me” (Psa. 41:9). Despite knowing all that Judas was to do, Jesus continued to extend the tokens of friendship to him, even sharing a meal of fellowship together. Right until the point of his actual betrayal, Jesus treated him as a companion and friend, saying even at that point, “Friend, wherefore art thou come?” (Mat. 26:50). Judas the traitor, however, used the tokens of friendship deceitfully. As Jesus said to him: “Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” (Lu. 22:48). So, as it is written in the proverbs: “faithful are the wounds of a friend [i.e. Christ]; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful [i.e. Judas]” (Prov. 27:6).

It would appear that Judas did have a conscience, even though for a while it was numb to the things which he did. Matthew chapter 27 records his regret for what he had done in securing Messiah’s death:

“Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself” (Mat. 27:3-5).

There is a sin unto death, which shall not be forgiven. Christ himself spoke of what would happen to the betrayer:

“the Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born” (Mat. 26:24).

Psalms 109 also speaks of Judas’ demise:

“as he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels as water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually” (Psa. 109:17-19).

And so the record in Acts shows the fulfilment of these words:

“Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out” (Acts 1:18).

Putting these testimonies together, it would appear that Judas sought relief through suicide, hanging himself by his girdle. However, the girdle broke, and he fell headlong and his bowels gushed out. Some would see a contradiction between the record of Acts 1, and Matthew 27, but there is none. We already

saw that Judas stole from the collection bag for the poor: it would appear to be that he used this money to purchase the field (i.e. the reward of iniquity), where he fell and died. This is different to the money thrown back down at the feet of the Chief Priests and Elders, which they used to purchase the Potter's field.

So it is that when we come to consider the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see a contrast with the death of Judas. Jesus died to save men from their sins: Judas died as a consequence of sin. There is another ironic point to notice: "Judas" is the Greek form of "Judah", which is also abbreviated as "Jew". We read of a true "Jew" in Romans chapter 2:

"he is not a Jew which is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:28-29).

Judas, by name, was a "Jew". But though he had a name that lived, he was dead. Inwardly, he did not have the right spirit: he remained a man of the flesh. How ironic then, that his inward parts gushed out at his death, declaring his condemnation before all!

Returning to Matthew chapter 26, we saw how Messiah revealed to his disciples that one of them would betray him. Their response to this is most instructive:

"and they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" (Mat. 26:22).

The way of the carnal mind is to point the finger at others. "Is it him?" is the thinking of the flesh – those who follow the spirit however look inwardly first "Is it I?". The Apostle alludes to this in speaking of what we do together, when we come to partake of the memorial feast – like the disciples in the upper room:

"whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord [cp. Judas!]. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

When we come together to take the bread and the wine in memory of Messiah's sacrifice for our sins, let us consider ourselves, and our own conduct. Let us consider the treachery of Judas, as an example of unbelief and disobedience, lest we be beguiled by the way of the flesh to follow in his steps, and so reap the consequences of crucifying Messiah afresh.

*Christopher Maddocks*

## The Comforter

The inspired Wise Preacher speaks of the vanity of life without the Hope that Yahweh provides:

“So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but *they had no comforter*” (Eccl. 4:1)

Having no hope, there is no comfort to those who travail in iniquity. Describing Israel whose sins had separated between them and their God, we read: “she hath *none to comfort her,*” and again in the same chapter, “she hath no comforter” and yet again: “for these things I weep: mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, *because the comforter* that should relieve my soul *is far from me ...*” (Lam. 1:2, 9,16-17). Ultimately, Yahweh is the great comforter – and so alienation from Him is by definition, alienation from the source of comfort granted to those who trust in His promises.

The Prophet Isaiah describes those who are alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and therefore also from the Kingdom to Come:

“... the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. *There is no peace,* saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57:20-21).

What a desolate situation this is! No “peace”, no “comforter”, and “troubled” like the raging waves of the sea, casting up filthiness and defilement! But even in the most desperate of situations, there is hope for those who would turn to take hold of it. As the disciples of Christ experienced, Messiah is able to calm the troubled sea with but a word. In him, we have great comfort and hope, as we look to the times of the restitution of all things. Whatever might befall us on our journey, we have an exceedingly great weight of glory awaiting us: if we but hold fast to the things of the Spirit. Christ was thus a great comforter to his disciples in the days of his mortality, and prior to his departure he promised to send “another Comforter” in the form of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the faithful, a token of the reality of the Gospel message that they were preaching.

Ecclesiastes continues:

“Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit” (Eccl. 44)

In this context of men being jealous of another man’s works, we might think of Joseph and his brothers. Certain revelations were given to him, which he relayed to his family. They, however, refused to accept them, and three times in one

chapter we are told that they “hated” him (Gen. 37:4,5,8). Verse 11 states that his brethren “envied him” and it was out of their hatred and envy that they delivered him into the hand of the Midianites as a slave, who in turn sold him into Egypt, to Potiphar, who was an officer of Pharaoh’s and captain of the guard” (Gen. 37:36).

We know the account well (if not, read Genesis 39), how through the collected force of various circumstances, Joseph ended up in the prison, for a crime that he did not commit. In Joseph, again we have a desolate experience relayed to us. Taken away from his family, sold as a slave, and then banished to the darkness of the Egyptian prison, his circumstances were dire. The Psalm comments on him:

“whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that his word came: the Word of Yahweh tried him” (Psa. 105:19)

The Word preached was the very cause for such a treatment of Joseph, but in addition, it “tried” him. In such a position as he, there was no human comforter. All that he had was the comfort of the Word – the revelations that were given to him: and that “tried” him, as his patience and trust in Yahweh were tested. If we ever think that we are spiritually alone, just think back to Joseph, down in the Egyptian dungeon. Yet in this terrible circumstance, the Scriptures say twice that “Yahweh was with Joseph” and not only was he saved from death in prison, his latter end was that he would be raised to an exalted position: second only to Pharaoh.

There are a number of passages which are particularly relevant here, firstly Ecclesiastes 4 (again):

“better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished. ***For out of prison he cometh to reign ...***” (Eccl. 4:13-14).

Joseph was a wise, yet poor child cast into the prison: but by the grace of Yahweh, he came out to reign over Egypt.

Again, Psalm 142:7 reads:

“bring my soul ***out of prison***, that I may praise thy name ...”

This latter reference is of particular interest in the context of Joseph, for the preceding verses describe how he was humanly alone, with no comforter:

“I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: no man cared for my soul” (Psa. 142:4).

Humanly alone, Joseph trusted that what Yahweh had promised he would perform, and it is in that Word alone that he had a source of comfort.

Another example that comes to mind is that of Cain and Abel. Abel brought an offering in harmony with the revealed necessity for sacrifice, whereas Cain sought to approach the Deity by a different means, the fruit of the ground. It would seem that Cain knew what was required of him, and brought something different, as it is written: “his own works were *evil*”. It wasn’t simply a misunderstanding which needed to be corrected: it was “evil” which implies an evil intent. The character of the man is further demonstrated in how that our of envy he slew his brother Abel. Abel’s name means “vanity” and such was his life in human terms. Yet according to Messiah, he was also a prophet (Luke 11:51), which implies there was a message which he was speaking. If this is so, this would provoke further animosity with his carnally minded brother. We do not know what his message was, but there has always been enmity between the carnally minded and the spiritually minded, and this could only further the tension between the two brothers.

### ***TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE***

Returning to Ecclesiastes chapter 4, (ironically in the light of the above),we read that:

“two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour” (Eccl. 4:9).

And again:

“if two lie together then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone?” (Eccl. 4:11).

This idea of two being better than one extends right back to Genesis, where we read of the words of Yahweh: “it is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him a help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). Accordingly, Eve was formed out of Adam’s side: a wife to complement her husband. We think of this in the context of comfort: a believing husband and wife are “heirs together of the Grace of Life” (1 Peter 3:7), and as such are in a position to comfort one another in the day of affliction (see Eccl. 4:10). In Scripture, the importance of families is paramount: it is directly through the propagation of the human race through families, in the union between man and his wife, that the purpose of God can be accomplished. The earth truly shall be filled with an innumerable multitude – but each individual member came from their mother’s womb in the first instance: the natural first and then the spiritual.

Our Master, Jesus the Christ sent his disciples in pairs of two:

“He called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits” (Mark 6:7).

This is a good model for us to follow: when going out preaching, if possible go in two’s – for both practical and spiritual reasons.

It is interesting to note how Ecclesiastes 4 is quoted by the Apostle in a similar context as this:

“Two are better than one; because they have a *good reward for their labour*” (Eccl. 4:9).

“now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his *own reward according to his own labour*” (1 Cor. 3:8).

Notice this: in both cases two are mentioned, and in both cases, a reward for labour is mentioned: we can see the parallelism quite plainly, which reinforces the point we are making.

### DAVID AND JONATHAN

The writer to the Hebrews give the instruction to: “exhort one another daily” (Heb. 3:13). Here, the Greek word rendered “exhort” is translated “comfort” 23 times in Scripture. This verse emphasises the importance of encouraging, and comforting each other as we endure the trials that come upon us daily. We have an example of this in David and Jonathan. Jonathan recognised that David, not he, would be king over Israel. In recognising and embracing the promises made, when David needed exhortation, the method by which Jonathan gave comfort was with reference to those things:

“Jonathan Saul’s son arose, and went to David in the wood, and *strengthened his hand in God*. And he said unto him: “Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and *thou shalt be king over Israel*, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth” (1 Sam. 23:16-17).

Although, as things worked out, Jonathan was not to reign with David, the point here is that Jonathan encouraged David with reference to the promise of coming glory – which David and Jonathan will experience when the ancient Davidic seat of power shall once more be established in the earth, and Messiah shall reign over all 12 tribes. The example of David and Jonathan appears to be alluded to in Romans 12:

“be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope ...” (Rom. 12:10-11)

Like David and Jonathan, we are to be kindly affectioned towards each other. Like Jonathan submitting himself to David, we must “in honour prefer” one another. Like both David and Jonathan, we must be “fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,” and like them, we must rejoice in the hope we share, which greatly surpasses any of the troubles that might come upon us.

## *THE LORD JESUS CHRIST*

We come now to consider the example of the Son of God himself. Just like Joseph of old, we are told that: "... the chief priests had delivered him *for envy*" (Mark. 15:10). Again, like Joseph, at the time of his greatest trial, he had no human comforter. So it is written in the Psalms:

"reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none" (Psa. 69:20).

The literal outworking of this is seen at Gethsemane. There, he asked his disciples:

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me" (Mat. 26:38).

However, rather than watching with the Master, they all fell asleep:

"he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Mat. 26:40).

This was the time of Messiah's greatest trial: his wrestle between the flesh and the spirit, yet not even his disciples could stay awake to be a comfort to him. Jesus knew that this would happen, for he had earlier said:

"Behold, the hour cometh yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, *and shall leave me alone*: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (Jno. 16:32).

Left alone, by men but not by his Father Who was with him until the last. Again, if we ever feel alone in our struggle against the flesh, let us consider Messiah, whose friends and disciples couldn't watch with him for one hour. His trust, like Joseph's was in the Eternal God, and the promises He made. Truly it was "for the joy that was set before him [that he] endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). And it is to that same vision of joy that we look, that we also may endure the trials of mortal weakness.

We have before us the faith and examples of many worthies of old. Each experienced both joy and travail in the course of their lives – under Divine regulation. A vision of joy is set before each one of us. We look towards the coming of Messiah to the earth once more, when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall be ever be with the Lord. *Wherefore comfort one another with these words*" (1 Thes. 4:16-18)

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