

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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CHRIST BUILDING THE HOUSE

Bruce Ikin

Hebrews 3: 1-6; Ruth 1: 3-6, 15-21; 1 Samuel 1: 4-11; Malachi 3: 8-10, 16, 17

Our attention has been drawn to the greatness of Christ, who He is, and I desire to interest you a little in what He is doing now, what He is doing in building the house. In Matthew's gospel we see that He is building on the appreciation of Himself. We see in chapter 16 how He draws out Peter after asking questions of His disciples. Peter speaks spontaneously of his own impression of the glory of Christ, he says, "*Thou* art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v 16). That was delightful to the Lord Jesus and He used that to speak of building His assembly. He is building – this passage speaks of what He has built. Peter speaks in His epistle in the gain and the good of what the Lord Jesus had revealed to Him and what He saw on the mount in the presence of the Lord Jesus, as adjusted by the voice out of heaven. You see how Peter speaks in His epistle of what Christ is doing, He is building a house. It is to those who come to Him. The greatness of His Person comes out in this passage and we are to consider who He is. Note that in relation to the house it is written to "holy brethren". What is suitable to the presence of God would search us as to the answer to that question. This is written to "holy brethren"; that is arrived at through exercise; it is arrived at through discipline and through God working with us individually, and through overcoming. We are to consider the One who is building, we are to consider who He is in the greatness of His Person, He is the "Apostle and High Priest of our confession". In the Old Testament you had two, the apostle and the high priest; you had one to fulfil what was needed in the authority, that was needed to produce what was suitable to God's presence; and you needed the priest in order to be able to approach God in His holiness. But there is One who is suited to fulfil both, that is the Lord Jesus. He is the One whom we are given to consider, He is the One who is the object

of our consideration. There could only be One who could qualify in this way and that is the Lord Jesus.

But, not only that we see that He is Son over God's house. We have been hearing about the One who was engaged in His Father's business. We see One who wrought a work in the intimacy of His love for His Father and in the consciousness of His love for Himself. We see how the Father loves the Son, and has "given him all things into his hands", John 13: 3. How capable His hands are; do we put our trust and confidence in Him that He is going to see what is due to God right through to the very end? He is the One who is constituted to do it. How wonderfully He is qualified to do that in the glory and greatness of His own Person. He is magnified here in our affections, the Lord Jesus in the greatness of His Person as Son over His house.

What I wanted to draw attention to is our responsibility. There is a little touch here which struck me very much recently as contemplating this verse, "whose house are we". Does it stop there? If it stopped there we may say we can claim this and claim that, but following that is the "if", the "if" of consequence – "if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end". That does not exclude persons but what the Lord Jesus is looking for is material that is marked by these qualities, boldness and boast of hope, firm to the end. I was struck with that, "to the end", and God through Christ is working to an end, and He is using material to His own ends and He wants to use you and me. You may say, I can understand the assembly. You might think it is something right out there somewhere, or you might think abstractly about the house, but the scripture says, "whose house are we". That means that God is desirous that you and I should be included in the "we" and that you and I should be qualified as material of this quality, quality so valuable to God. We have been reminded as to the need for humility: God uses humble persons, God uses persons who have finished with themselves and are engaged with the greatness of God, the greatness of Christ, and who resort to the Holy Spirit.

I read in the Old Testament of persons who God loved, who God used in His own ways to an end. I read of Naomi and Ruth – Naomi was a person who was returning and she was returning in very sincere humility. She was not afraid to acknowledge that she had gone out but that Jehovah had brought her home empty. Are we free to acknowledge that we have failed God in the greatness of what He has called us into, “partakers of the heavenly calling”.

Naomi comes to it that what she went in for, what she pinned her hopes on had failed her, it had died out, her hopes had died out naturally. She still had ears, she still knew what was going on. It says, “she had heard in the fields of Moab how that Jehovah had visited his people to give them bread”. Have you ears to hear what the Spirit is saying? He has in mind that you and I, if we are away like Naomi, should be revived in our affections, revived to what is living, revived to what the Lord Jesus is doing in His greatness, because He is going to see things through. But will you and I be part of it vitally? Naomi returns and Ruth is seen here in committal. It was not easy for her. Naomi did not make it easy for her, in fact you might say Naomi said things which seemed to be quite negative as if she were testing her. The Lord Jesus loves to test His work. You may say, I am very tested in my locality, by my local brethren, but what is the result of the test? The Lord Jesus would test you that it should bring out the best in you; Naomi tested Ruth and it brought out the best that was in Ruth’s heart. Think of how the Lord Jesus when there were those thinking of going away, He says, “Will ye also go away?” (John 6: 67) and what is Peter’s answer? In the ardency of Peter’s affection he says, “Lord to whom shall we go?” Would that be your answer? Ruth says, “Do not intreat me to leave thee” – as if there is a certain extremity in the way that she is expressing herself – “to return from following after thee”. Her attraction here is to Naomi. She seemed to find solace and resource in the man of great wealth. Here she sees that there is something loveable about Naomi, about one who is returning, someone who is returning to what God is doing, what the Lord Jesus is doing. She says, “for where thou goest I will go”. What a thing it is to find others who are

looking to what the Lord is doing and set their hopes there. You may say, everything else has failed. Naomi could not offer anything of natural excitement to Ruth. She could not give her a promise that she would have this and that, but the wonderful fact that really what excluded all that was natural there was what God was doing, and that attracted Ruth. She says, “where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried”. God loved that, God used it.

What is the end of it? We see those who hold boldness and are firm to the end. We see what the end is. You see it in the last chapter, a worshipper is coming to light: there is what is for the house, and not only that, but God built upon what was seen in Ruth in that what comes to light is Obed and David. Think of it that God’s king began with this return and with this committal of Ruth to what the Lord Jesus, in type, was doing!

I then read from Hannah because she was also one who was tested, tested by what was opposed to her – you may say unnecessarily so. Hannah felt what was impoverished among the people of God. Mr. Lyon used to remind us of broken hearted churchmen. Hannah a woman here, but she was broken hearted as to what was happening amongst the people of God and she sought an answer to it that there should be something for God. She had to suffer for it, she was prepared to be misunderstood, but Hannah spoke in her heart and God looks upon the heart. Hannah had the secret in her heart that it was not through pride that God would look upon her, it was in humility. You see that in her song in chapter 2, in the outpouring of heart. It says, “she continued praying before Jehovah” (v 12): it was not a ‘one-off’ matter. Our brother has been referring to what continues right through to the end and here Hannah was continuing praying until the desire of her heart was met. Eli marked her mouth – only her lips moved, he thought she was drunken. Eli was not right, Eli was taking his ease, there was what was decadent, there was what was decayed, there was what was corrupt. There was a seat outside the temple, it should not have been there; there were beds there. What was corrupt was going on,

but Hannah desired that there should be an answer for the heart of God. It was the result of her desiring that man child and giving him to Jehovah, on a basis of sacrifice, of committal, of her being bold, not in the boldness of the flesh, but the boldness of committal, her eye upon the hope. Thus God used that. How do you use it? In chapter 2 he says, "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed continually" (v 35). That is what God had in mind; He had that in mind before there was anything expressed by Hannah, but He used the feelings and the committal of Hannah to His own ends. He was building upon it, right through. How God, through Christ, is building upon desire and experience expressed in humility in the day in which we are, soon to be completed, the Holy Spirit's work in relation to the assembly completed, the preciousness of what it will be for the heart of Christ, the preciousness of what is going to be expressed for God, God's dwelling place.

I read in Malachi because there we see again what was impoverished amongst the people of God. There was a carelessness, people were saying, "Behold, what a weariness!" (1: 13). You may say, it is weary to go to the meeting, it is weary to be engaged with these things; people were saying that. God in His message, in His word through the prophet, was saying, "Ye are cursed with a curse, and ye rob, even this whole nation". But what is the answer? "Bring the whole tithe into the treasure-house", God's house, bring it in – it is full committal, being engaged with the greatness of Christ and being dedicated to it. I am searched as I speak about it, but what God is saying here was, "Bring the whole tithe in to the treasure-house, that there may be food in my house".

What is He doing from His own side? What is His resource? What is His resource in Christ? It is that He is going to open the heavens and there is going to be, as the note makes clear, 'superabundance'. As you make way for what God is going to do, you see that it eclipses all that might satisfy, but really cannot satisfy me naturally, what engaged me in my energies, in my affections. You see what

God can do far exceeds that in superabundance. That is His resource, but He is waiting for a response. Was there a response to His plea? Was there a response to His word "rebuke"? Yes there was. What was it? "Then they that feared Jehovah spoke often one to another; and Jehovah observed it, and heard". What a thing it is to hear young brethren speaking about Christ and their experiences. God would look upon that and use and build upon it, build upon your desires, build upon what is attractive to you in Christ as you speak to one another, as you speak to older brethren, as the older brethren speak to one another, as we speak about these wonderful things in our gatherings in sincerity and reality, God looks upon that. God looks upon reality and He writes it down. It says, "a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name". What was due to God? It says, "they shall be unto me a peculiar treasure, saith Jehovah of hosts, in the day that I prepare". What was the end of this period? It was, as you read in Luke 2, the same quality of persons, seen in Simeon and Anna. It was "divinely communicated to him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he should see the Lord's Christ" (v 26). That is what he was waiting for, that is what mattered to him. All that mattered to him was that he should see, "the Lord's Christ" and what spontaneous uplift of heart goes up to God as a result of him having that wonderful fresh view of Christ. It says he, "blessed God" (v 28).

It says of Anna, "who did not depart from the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers; and she coming up the same hour gave praise to the Lord, and spoke of him to all those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem", she gave praise to the Lord. Think of what went up in God's house, what was here left as a result of the exercises of Malachi, the word that came through Malachi, the probing of God in His voice of admonition and the answer to it in persons who spoke to one another in relation to the greatness of Christ. What it is to find one another to appreciate one another to find those who have the same purpose of heart, waiting for the same Saviour, waiting for the same Lord, looking for His

coming. Do you relish and love their company and find joy in their company? Anna was like that. Simeon and Anna had no account in this world's estimation, they had no place in the court, they had no place in the assemblings of the Pharisees and the scribes who were so full of their self-importance. These persons, Simeon and Anna were not full of self-importance, they were full of Christ waiting for Him. May we be more exercised, dear young brethren, older brethren, that we may increase and grow in our appreciation of Christ and be formed after Him until He comes.

For His Name's sake.

Sunbury

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THE SEED

Andrew Martin

Isaiah 53: 10; Psalm 22: 30, 31; 69: 35, 36; 102: 23-28

It will be seen that what is in mind is the thought of the seed. We have in the first two scriptures read the thought of the seed as relating to the Lord Jesus, that is to say, His seed. The thought of a seed is the continuance of what was originally there. We get it early in Genesis in relation to the vegetable creation, the seed, “after their kind”, Gen. 1: 12. There is to be a continuance of what was seen once, that is the thought of the seed. It is affecting that, as applied to man, the first time the thought of the seed comes into the scriptures refers to the Lord Jesus Himself. At that time, the terrible moment in the history of mankind, when God came down and before Him were three wretched creatures, man, the woman and the serpent. You might say that all God’s thoughts had been put in jeopardy because the serpent had acted in opposition to God and the woman had been deceived by his craft and man had sinned. God says of the woman herself, the one who had listened to the serpent – “her seed”. He says, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed”, Gen 3: 15. He then says, “he shall crush thy head”, showing that God already had Christ before Him. The answer to man’s fall was Christ, the answer was in Christ to the one who rose up against God, “he shall crush thy head”. Think of what God had, His wonderful resources in Christ, but think of the greatness of the One who could do that, who from divine counsel was marked out as the One who would crush the head of the serpent. He was content to come into this scene as the seed of the woman. What grace! What lowliness we see in Jesus. He is referred to in many ways, “seed of Abraham”, “seed of David”, John 7: 42. Think of the grace of the One by whose very word everything came into existence, who came in and was content to take His place amongst the seed and be referred to in that way as the seed of the woman. It had to be so if He was to take up His glory as the Son of Man, it had to be seen that He must come that way, that He must come in,

“come of woman, come under law, that he might redeem those under law”, Gal. 4: 4,5.

He came in in such humility and lowliness. What humility marked the Lord Jesus. We see Him in His humility here in Isaiah 53. If ever a chapter brought before us the lowliness and the humility of Jesus it must be this one. You see what men saw of Him, but first you see how God saw Him. He is presented in this chapter as God’s servant, that is the place He took. It is one of these chapters where He is referred to without a name. It says, “he shall grow up before him ... he hath no form nor lordliness” (v 2), it is ‘he’ all the way. The antecedent at the end of the previous chapter is “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently” (52: 13). He is presented here as God’s servant, that is the theme of Isaiah in the latter chapters, He is God’s servant. Israel should have been God’s servant, Israel was taken up to be God’s servant, but it is fulfilled in Jesus. The servant is the one who fulfils the will of another. Who could carry out the will of God? The One who came in as His servant, He came in as His servant. Think of the greatness of that amazing stoop as Jesus came into manhood, and He came in in order to be the servant, to carry out the will of God.

I looked up the word before coming and according to the original the word ‘servant’ and the word ‘bondman’ are the same word, but the translator, according to the wisdom he was given has used the words in different contexts, and God reserves to Jesus as “my servant”. Jesus takes that place, the bondman has no will of His own at all, he relinquishes every right he has. Such is the grace of Jesus that He was prepared to come in as a bondman. Think of all that marked Him, see the spirit of the bondman. We read about it in Philippians 2, the character, spirit and mind of the bondman, the lowliness that marked the Lord Jesus, that as man, though as to His Person He is God, yet as Man He emptied Himself and then humbled Himself. Think of the spirit that was seen in the One who took the place of a bondman. If we see the spirit of the bondman in Philippians 2, we see the heart of the bondman in Exodus 21 where he says, “I will not go free” (v 5). Bondmanship according to man is

inevitably against man's will, but with Jesus it was not ever against His will, He says, "I will not go free". What a bondman he was! God calls attention to Him, earlier in Isaiah. He says, "Behold, my servant", just look at Him, is there anybody like Him. God says, He is unique, "Behold my servant whom I uphold ... in whom my soul delighteth" (42.1). There is no one like Him and there never has been.

We have Him here in this beautiful chapter growing up here before God as a tender sapling drawing nothing from His surroundings. Men saw Him in a different way, God saw Him as the tender sapling, saw Him there as the One who was the plant of God's right hand:

As a tender sucker rising,
From the dry and stony land,
Object of man's proud despising,
Grows the Plant of God's right hand.

The One there who was come to do God's will, growing up before Him as a tender sapling, but when men looked upon Him they said, "he hath no form nor lordliness, and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (v 2). Have we all seen the beauty in Jesus. Is there anyone here who has not seen the beauty in Jesus? Is there anybody here who in the last two days has heard the Lord Jesus spoken about, heard about His humiliation, heard about the way He has gone, and not been stirred in your heart? Is there anyone here who has not felt a movement in your heart as you have heard about the lowliness of Jesus, the things we were speaking about yesterday? I would urge you, if you did not feel a stirring, get to Him, do not leave it, you have not a moment to lose, make sure you develop a link with that blessed One, a living link with the Lord Jesus. Where we have read it speaks of, "his soul an offering for sin". Dear young brother or sister, if you have never come to it that you need One to take up the question of your sins, make sure you settle that tonight because the One who came in to take up everything for God was necessarily made an offering for sin. Think of Him there, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for

sin". He had to take up the whole question of sin in order that God should be glorified and that man should be secured. That includes you and me. Make sure that you have got to God as to sin because if you have not you are in grave danger, it is not a thing that can be put off. You cannot guarantee how long you can put that off, you cannot put it off for a moment. The One whom we are speaking about was made an offering for sin. Think of the great work which He undertook upon the cross, the One who took up everything for God's glory to accomplish His will, He was made an offering for sin.

God made Him an offering for sin according to this; elsewhere He offered Himself, but here God made Him an offering for sin, God looked upon Him and there was no one else that would do, He made Him an offering for sin. How He stands out in all His distinctiveness and uniqueness and glory. But, as having accomplished that great work, that work of redemption, He sees that there is something else that comes into view. The perfection of the Lord Jesus is so great and God's heart is so full of Jesus, so full of His Son and the glories which belong to Him that He would not have Him alone. He would have the features of that blessed One reproduced in many. "When thou shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see a seed". In other words there is going to be a continuation of that line, there are going to be others brought in to continue what was set on and seen in Jesus so perfectly that, "he shall see a seed". Have you seen the seed? The Lord Jesus has seen it, He sees it in all its perfection, He sees the perfection of His own work. He sees it universally. I suppose for many of us here it has been a long time since we have seen so many beloved brethren together in one place and it does your heart good to see them, but what a tiny fraction of the seed which He has seen. John saw great numbers in the Revelation: at one point he saw a great company that no man could number, he saw the seed; it is what has come out of the death of Christ, the work having been done. "He shall" see a seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand". What more capable hands could the pleasure of Jehovah be in? How could He find His pleasure in any other

hands? Any other hands would be unable to provide the pleasure of Jehovah, but, "the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand". "He shall prolong his days". The days of Jesus were cut short upon the earth, they are continued now in heaven, that life continues there before God in all its perfection and beauty and vitality. That life continues as the object of God's heart, but here upon the earth there is a seed, "he shall see a seed", and it is Himself all over again. That is the work of God in His people, that is what He sees, that is what He takes account of. How often we take account of anything other than the work of God in one another and in ourselves, but what He sees is perfect because it is Himself again, it is the seed. It is the seed of God's servant, that One, that character of Person, that character of Man who came here to undertake the will of God; it is formed in divine workmanship in the hearts of His own. How is it formed? Who can tell? How did it grow? Who can tell? Some of us were speaking earlier of the other figure of the seed, of the man who cast the seed upon the ground, and He says it grows, he know not how. It is the sovereign divine work of the Holy Spirit of God that causes that seed to grow, but it grows and it develops and it expresses the feature of the blessed One of whom we read in Isaiah 53.

In Psalm 22 we read of Him again, again a setting of His sufferings. Psalm 22 stands out distinctively amongst the Psalms, the setting being the sufferings of Jesus. It opens with words wrung from the heart of David. I have often wondered, but we do not know, what experience David went through to give utterance to those words, "why hast thou forsaken me?" (v 1), but what we do know was that the Holy Spirit gave him to record those words; and when the Lord Jesus was upon the cross there were no better words that could be used to give utterance to His feelings as to the forsaking of God, that He should be forsaken of God. He could use no better words than the words that David utters at the beginning of this Psalm. This is a Psalm in which His sufferings are distinctly brought out, there are sufferings brought out in this Psalm which no other could enter into. There are sufferings which others can enter into

and feel, and they come into the Psalm too, but there are sufferings brought out which none other could ever enter into as He Himself was forsaken of God. When He was made an offering for sin, He was forsaken of God. Think of all the sufferings of the Holy One who there took our place upon the cross. Think of what He endured, the suffering was that He was forsaken of God. There was that from men which comes in as well, and there was that which offended Him, His sensibilities. The sensitive perfection in the Manhood of Jesus felt these things, felt the crudeness and the callousness of man, felt them deeply in His spirit. What a perfect One He is! But at the end he says, "A seed shall serve him".

We have to be careful with the scriptures – we are applying them; literally they refer to Israel here and the Psalms tend to relate to Israel particularly in a day to come. We know that Israel had rejected the Lord Jesus, they had cast Him out and they would not have Him, and they have been scattered and the worst troubles are yet to come. The day of Jacob's trouble is yet to be seen upon the earth; that day will come and there will be no suffering like it; Israel will go through suffering they have never endured before. You might wonder at that knowing what that nation has already gone through, but they will go through suffering that has never been seen before.

Yet at the end of that there will be a few who will be looking for the One whom they first rejected, their hearts will turn to the Lord. We speak of those as the remnant, the few that there will be. Their hearts will turn to the Lord and they will be looking for Him, for the time of their redemption. This Psalm speaks about it too, "the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and revere him, all ye the seed of Israel", the speaker looks on to the time and it says here, "A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation". What a generation that will be when He comes to take up His rights among His earthly people. Does He have to wait for a seed that will serve Him? Does He not have something today, those who are secured, the result of His own work, the result of His death, those whom He saw, the seed that He saw as having been made an offering? He has it today. This Psalm speaks about His feelings as He comes out

of death. As soon as He comes out of death He says, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee” (v 22). That is taken up in the assembly, the seed that serve Him, they shall be accounted to Him for a generation. Today that seed is to be found in the assembly and it is a seed that serves. You see the character of the One whose seed it is, they are serving Him in response to His God and Father, “in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises”. Think of the Lord Jesus having secured His own, having a vessel for Himself in which He can secure the Father’s praise and those who are the same character of Himself, “his seed”, secure the praise in the assembly.

In the other Psalms I think we get the thought more of continuance, because we have the “the seed of his servants”. Psalm 69 speaks of His sufferings from the hands of man, speaking of all that man did, and we can see the spirit that marked the Lord Jesus, “They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty” (v 4). What opposition was against Him and then He adds, “then I restored that which I took not away” – what a spirit was seen in Jesus:

Midst man’s unfathomed ill (Hymn 190)

Who could plumb the depths of man’s wickedness? And yet He says, “then I restored that which I took not away”. How great was that restoration, restoring that which He took not away. I think for the fulness of it we look to Revelation 21 and 22. You see there all that God had lost from the fall of man all restored in Jesus, the paradise of God fully restored. You see it all restored by that blessed One who came as God’s servant to take up His rights and to fulfil His will, “then I restored that which I took not away”. Beloved, how much is that spirit marking me? We might sometimes feel that it is sufficient not to answer back, but the Lord goes further; think of Him in the garden when one smote the bondman of the high priest, not only did He stop it but He brought in healing. What grace we see in Jesus, what perfection of manhood. Then we have “the seed of his servants”, we have His thoughts in relation to His people, “God will

save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah; and they shall dwell there, and possess it". Think of God coming in in that way, saving Zion, building the cities of Judah, all that God had in His sovereign purpose, all that He had in His heart where He was going to dwell.

He says, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it", Ps. 132: 14. That is Zion, God's sovereign thoughts in relation to His dwelling and entered into by sovereign mercy, God will come in in that way and will build the cities of Judah, "and they shall dwell there, and possess it: and the seed of His servants shall inherit it, and they that love his name shall dwell therein". It is available for them to come in to, available for us to come in to. I suppose we can take that ground, the seed of his servants. What have we received? What have we inherited? What inheritance have we? Our inheritance is part with Christ in the assembly, is that not glorious? A wonderful blessed inheritance and you might say there can be nothing greater than that. But what have you in the way of understanding of it? What do you know as to that inheritance? How much have you entered into it? How much could you say about it from having had some impression gained in the presence of the Lord, gained there upon your knees as in communion with Him as to the greatness of that inheritance? There is much that we have inherited in the way of the unfolding of the truth and we cherish it; the fact that we are justified by faith, that is an inheritance that we have received and we value it. The fact that there is a Man in heaven and He has a body on earth, that is an inheritance that we value too.

You can go on and on, the fact that we have sonship, light as to the Holy Spirit, light as to the assembly, these are all part of the inheritance that we can cherish. But the real appreciation of it is by experience and it says, "the seed of his servants shall inherit it". The challenge I would find in that is what is my legacy? What am I leaving to others? What will others receive? Supposing the present period were to remain a little longer and I should be gone, what will I have left to others, what will they say? Will they have received something, will they have received an example of one who was here formed according to the seed of the great servant of God, the One who did not do His own will but came to fulfil the will of another, who

lived in the realm of His inheritance? Will they see something like that, or will it be simply what we are naturally, the things that we love to remember about one another? Will it be that that is left behind, or will it be an impression of Christ? It has to be an impression of Christ if the Lord's testimony is to continue. What goes on is the work of God and the expression of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself that is what has to go on.

In Psalm 102 we have the children of His servants again and here they abide. What a thing that is! The setting of this Psalm is the Lord Jesus in weakness, not here suffering from the hand of God, or exactly in the same way as in Psalm 69, but it is in a scene of weakness. God made Him weak, it says, "He weakened my strength in the way, he shortened my days". The Lord Jesus had to be weakened by God. Weakness is a thing that generally we do not understand unless we have experienced it. We may see it, and we may get some apprehension, but it is a thing that we do not understand unless we have experienced it. Generally it is brought about by deterioration through illness or neglect, weakness comes in. You can see that it could never apply to Jesus, God had to weaken Him. He was perfect in His humanity, He had to be weakened by God in order that He should go through that experience along with suffering humanity, "He weakened my strength in the way, he shortened my days. I said, My God, take me not away in the midst of my days!". Think of that cry in Gethsemane, "if it be possible let this cup pass from me" Matt. 26: 39. Then the word comes in as to the greatness of that One who said, think of the Lord Jesus there in weakness, He had fallen upon His face to the earth, He is the One of whom it could be said, "Thy years are from generation to generation". It speaks of the heaven and the earth, "*They* shall perish, but *thou* continuest; and all of them shall grow old as a garment: as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the Same, and thy years shall have no end". Think of the greatness of that blessed One. Feed your souls upon the greatness of Jesus though found in weakness and lowliness here upon the earth, think of Him falling upon His face to

the earth. I remember a brother speaking affectingly of the Lord Jesus falling upon the earth that He had created, He fell upon His face to the earth, there is weakness, the One whose years have no end. Here we have "The children of thy servants shall abide", none shall pluck them out of His hand, none can pluck out of the hand of His Father, they shall abide. What a comfort that is, what an encouragement that there is divine protection to see us through whatever the trials may be. Grace is available, power in the Holy Spirit is available, divine protection is available, no shortage of these things, but all from God, they are there to be drawn on in view of the testimony of our Lord continuing.

That was my simple thought here we have that blessed One our Lord Jesus Himself. We have the perfection of manhood seen in Him but He shall see a seed. That kind of man is to be continued until He comes and then it will be continued in God's presence eternally.

May the Lord bless the word.

Sunbury

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PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

David Beveridge

Hebrews 4: 12, 13; 1 Timothy 2: 1-7; Revelation 21: 1-8

There are just three references in these scriptures read that I would like to call to our attention. In the first in Hebrews it speaks of the things that are laid bare to his eyes, “with whom we have to do”. I would like everyone here to know now, if you did not before, that you will have to do with God. The second scripture tells us something about that God: He is described as “our Saviour God”, and it tells us what His desire is. He “desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth”, and in the final scripture there is reference to the same God, the veil of time drawn aside and showing the eternal scene: it says, “God himself shall be with them, their God”. I think that is most attractive. But I would like everyone here to know that you will have to do with God. I suppose the greater part of this company is made up of persons who already have a link with the blessed God. How wonderful and great that is. We can look through scripture – if we look at Adam we find that the blessed God, after Adam had eaten of the fruit which he had been forbidden, God came down and Adam hid himself. God says, “Where art thou?” (Gen. 3: 10). God would say that to you my friend, if you are without Christ tonight. He would say, Where are you? In the glad tidings He is dealing with the vital matters that relate to Christianity and to the sinner.

If we looked at Moses, we would find that he had to do with God. He saw a bush burning and he wondered why it was not being consumed, and he went up to the bush and he got the word, “loose thy sandals from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exod 3: 5). God spoke to him there. Look at Noah, God spoke to Noah oracularly and warned him of what was coming upon this earth before the flood came. God spoke to him and God is speaking in the glad tidings tonight, as He alone can. He may use human vessels, but the voice is His: the glad tidings come from heaven and He is speaking now.

The scripture in Hebrews speaks about the “word of God”. The greatest speaking that there is in the world must be the word of God. You and I owe our very existence to God; the very breath that you are sitting breathing is given by the blessed God Himself. How good He is, He gives us breath to breathe. In the preaching by Paul in Athens Paul speaks about God and says “for in him we live and move and exist” (Acts 17: 28). We owe our very being to the blessed God and tonight His word would come to us; and it speaks as “living and operative, and sharper than any two-edged sword”. We have been reminded of the sharpness of God’s word. Think of the woman in John 4, the Lord Jesus there, the One who was the Word of God. “In the beginning was the Word” (John 1: 1). That would relate to the Person of the Lord Jesus, God Himself coming into human form. Oh the wonder of it! He moved out of these realms of glory that are beyond human thought and came into human form in the Person of the Lord Jesus, and there was the woman and the Lord Jesus sitting at the well speaking together. As He spoke to her the living word of God came into that woman, manifesting her history. Would you like God to know all about your past? I will tell you tonight, He knows about it, all of it, you can hide nothing from God. Have you ever tried to hide something from God or from your parents or family, your wife, your children? You might be able to do so, but you can hide nothing from God. It says, “there is not a creature unapparent before him”. It says that the hairs of our head are numbered (see Luke 12: 7), not a sparrow falls to the ground but He sees it. How great God is! Nothing transpires in this world but the blessed God takes account of it and sees it.

Therefore, in this first scripture I would like to leave that impression on my own heart and on yours that you have to do with God. Do not shy away from it, even unbelievers will have to do with God, but in the glad tidings, in God’s word, He desires that you should know His word penetrating your being. How great God is! He can speak so that you know that He is speaking to you. Remember the preacher Jonah? He wanted to get away from preaching the message God had given to him. He sought to get

away from God. Friend, you cannot get away from God. Do you realise that? God is saying to you tonight that you will have to do with Me and He wants to do with you in infinite grace. What a God He is! He loves His creature, He does not love the sin that is in you and me, the sinful nature or the sinful acts that we have all committed, but He loves the sinner. Friend, I want to leave that impression, that the need is to be aware of the fact that we have to do with God. The children would know what it is to have to do with one another and with their parents, and perhaps the brethren, but far greater than all these things is that you should have to do with the blessed God. Today in the glad tidings the word of God is coming and it is living. It is a remarkable thing, it is “living and operative, and sharper than any two-edged sword”; it can penetrate.

I can look into the faces of all here, but I cannot see what is in your heart, but the blessed God that I know knows exactly what is in your heart, He knows exactly the thoughts that are passing through your mind. What a God He is! He is the all-seeing God; it says, “The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, beholding the evil and the good”, Prov 15: 3. Nothing escapes His notice and tonight He wants everyone to be aware of that, that they are under divine scrutiny.

What a thing that God should look upon you and me just as we are! His word is “living and operative, sharper than any two-edged sword, and penetrating to the division of soul and spirit”. No medical doctor could speak to you about that, but the word of God can divide between the soul and spirit. Remember the man in Luke 12 (v 6): he wanted to expand his business and he speaks about his soul; he decided that he would pull down his barns and build greater ones so that he could make more money and get on better in this world (See Luke 12: 18). We have been reminded of these things as we have been together, materialism and affluence, how these things can come into our lives, how ambition can come in, all these things can come into the human heart to take it away from Christ. That man wanted to pull down his barns and build greater, and the word was, “Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee” (v 20). I suggest that he was thinking only of his soul, the feeling part of man. Man is

a tripartite being body, soul and spirit, and if you only think of your soul, you will perhaps finish up on a wrong path, but God has given man a spirit. It says, “Jehovah Elohim ... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and Man became a living soul” (Gen 2: 7). The spirit of a man is received from God Himself, that intelligent, vital link with the blessed God. Oh, my friend, may you be alerted to the fact that you in that sense have a link with the blessed God in your spirit. What a great matter that there is a division in a man between his soul and his spirit, and the word of God can separate these two matters. Then the scripture goes on to speak of the joints and marrow, the joints suggesting what is there to enable movement and the marrow being life. Then it goes on to say, “the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is not a creature unapparent before him; but all things” – nothing excluded – “are naked and laid bare”.

Have you ever thought about that? I speak to the young people; I remember what it was to be young, and the kind of things that I did and did not want my parents or anyone else to know about, hidden things: perhaps you know that. It says, “men have loved darkness rather than light; for their works were evil” (John 3: 19), so that in the darkness things can be hidden. God takes account of everything, your thoughts and intents, He knows them, He knows our motives.

The Psalmist speaks of that, ‘before they are on our tongue’, “*Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising*” (139: 2). How many times in a day do you sit down and get up, the blessed God takes account of that. What detail He takes account of in our lives.

Sometimes we think that things go unnoticed, but nothing is unobserved by the eye the blessed God. “Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways” (v 3), and then the Psalmist finishes up with, “Search me, O God and know my heart; prove me, and know my thought; And see if there be any grievous way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting” (vv 23,24).

In Hebrews it goes on to say, “but all things are naked and laid bare to his eyes, with whom we have to do”. I want to leave that impression on the hearts of everyone here, including my own, that we have to do with the blessed God.

I come on to Timothy, our brother referred to this in his word about the Saviour God who desires that all men should be saved.

What a heart God has. We have been speaking about generations and if you think how many generations there have been since Christ was here, how many persons would have been born into this world.

I suppose at the present time there are about six thousand million persons in the world. God knows every one! How great He is! It says here of the blessed God, "the Saviour God". Is that not a lovely title? It says of the Lord Jesus, "thou shalt call his name Jesus for *he* shall save his people from their sins" (Matt 1: 21), but here it says, "before our Saviour God, who desires", this is God's desire. I suppose you and I know what human desires are. I spoke about ambition and I get concerned about ambition when I see it, ambition in this world, prospects and ambition. God may grant your ambition – I am speaking about life, I speak simply, those who are of a certain age, ambition is to get on in this world. Our brother spoke about a developed man; the world would seek to develop the abilities within believers. How solemn that is! Do you know what it does? One thing that I see that it does, when persons follow up ambition, is it absorbs their time. Time is one of the most valuable commodities available to a man. Some persons who are terminally ill are told that they have a certain length of time to live: time becomes very valuable then when they know that and they maybe change their thinking, but time is the most valuable commodity you have. We are now almost at the end of a dispensation, as we are so constantly reminded, and God would speak to us about ambition that we may not seek to go up in this world. The higher you go up in this world the nearer you get to the god and prince of it. God would speak directly to us about that. It may be that you have some aspirations or ambitions to proceed further; all it will do is take up your time and you will be absorbed in what is not of abiding value. It says in Corinthians, "the things that are seen are for a time, but those that are not seen eternal" (2 Cor. 4: 18). My friend, have to do with God about the unseen things and let not ambition in this world lay hold of you where all your time will be consumed: the god and prince of this world would do that in the present time so that your time might be

used up and you will not be able to have time for the Lord Jesus, for His interests, for His people or for the gatherings of His people.

This scripture speaks about the God who, “desires that all men should be saved” – if you are without Christ and you die, I have to tell you you will be lost. The scripture tells us, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3: 23), and if you die in your sins you will be raised in them. Oh the awfulness of that! But the God I am speaking about, the Saviour God, desires that all men should be saved and that includes you. What a God He is! He loves you whether you are a little boy or little girl, if you are a teenager or if you are older. He loves you and He is presenting Christ as a glorious Saviour. The apostle says in Romans, “For I am not ashamed of the glad tidings; for it is God’s power to salvation”, Rom 1: 16. He is presenting a way of escape. It says here, “who desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth”. You need to be saved and the only way is by coming under the shelter of the blood of the Lord Jesus. This scripture goes on to say, “and come to the knowledge of the truth. For God is one, and the mediator of God and men one” – a great matter. How thankful we are for the Mediator! Moses was there as a mediator, the people said, we cannot cope with the fire and so on and they asked Moses to speak to God on their behalf which he did. But when you come to the Mediator in this scripture, “the mediator of God and men”, what a matter that is! The Mediator, Christ, it says of Him, “the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus”. The gospel is about that Man, “the man Christ Jesus”. Those who love Him love to hear His Name spoken of:

How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear! (Hymn 54)

I think when you are a teenager and in your twenties and so on, life is busy and full, but I see in the beloved older brethren a simplicity and dependency and attractiveness as they rely on the Lord Jesus. It says, “the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus”, and then it tells us about Him. That is what the gospel is, it is about “the man Christ Jesus”, and the work that He has done, the

foundation that He has laid in divine righteousness for the blessing of men. That is another thing about the blessed God, He is not only a God of love, He is a righteous God. Are you not glad that things are on a righteous footing? How would you feel if things were on a shaky basis? The God that I know is a righteous and holy God and He is a God of love. What power is with the blessed God. Tonight let this word remain with you, He wants to have to do with *you*. It says of the Man Christ Jesus, “who gave himself a ransom for all”.

What love He had, what a Man He was. The woman in John 4 came to that. What a Man He is for the sinner, He “gave himself a ransom for all”.

Then we have got to come down to pertinent questions. The glad tidings can be preached, and they are wonderful and the word of God can be sounded out, and you can simply listen to it. As it is being spoken, you can hear it as an interesting, good, wonderful story, but if it does not penetrate and get within that being of yours through your conscience to reach your heart, it is not going to reach its end. God’s word has to come right to the inner most part of your being and He desires now, in the wonderful time in which we are living, the day of faith, that you may receive His word. The dispensation which is in faith is also marked by grace. It says of the One who came in, the Lord Jesus, that He was, “full of grace and truth” John 1: 14. What a Person the Lord Jesus was! It is speaking here of Him as a mediator. Remember Job, he would have liked someone who could deal with God and with himself. He wanted an umpire, someone that could go between. You might say, I am afraid of God – if you think of God in His greatness I suppose it does bring a certain fear into the heart of a man, woman or child, but then there is the Mediator, the one Man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all. What I wanted to stress in relation to that is, that because of the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus, I can tell you tonight, and any preacher can, that a basis has been laid in divine righteousness for the salvation of men so there is certainty in that.

How much we need certainty. How many things in this life are uncertain. There is even uncertainty linked with human life itself, but

with the blessed God there is certainty. His word is like the nail fastened in a sure place (see Isa. 22: 23). I can tell you because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, because of His life, His death, His blood shedding, His burial and His rising again there are glad tidings which can be preached to all men. That is what this scripture is speaking about, "all men"; it is not signalling out Glaswegians or Scottish people, it is to "all men". What a God He is! His view is of the world and He desires that all should come to the knowledge of the truth. In the glad tidings we can speak of a righteous basis that has been laid by the blessed God in the work and Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It says, "that Christ died for our sins, according to the scripture; and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day, according to the scriptures" (1 Cor 15: 3,4), these are facts.

Men are always asking for facts; these are the facts of the gospel that the blessed Lord Jesus, Christ Jesus, came into the world to save sinners and by virtue of the work of His Person, the spotless Lamb of God, that is possible. If the sin and sins were to be dealt with righteously God needed a spotless victim. He had that in the Person of the Lord Jesus. It says of Him that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners", Heb 7: 26. What a wonderful Person the Lord Jesus is. Friend, is He your Saviour?

You need to have to do with Him tonight. Today He is speaking in tones of infinite grace.

I would like to speak to you about Satan, a remarkable being with remarkable power. I do not think normally we speak much about Satan but I think he is becoming increasingly active in the time in which we are living. The powers of darkness are increasing, and we need to be saved now. The Lord Jesus is the light of the world.

The flood waters in the world are rising, not literally, but they are rising again, the darkness can be felt (see Exod 10: 21); it is engulfing our fellow men, but in the midst of that the light of the gospel shines out. Friend, have you come to Christ? You need Him, you need to be saved. Put your trust in Him, come under the shelter of His precious blood. If you had been in the house in Exodus when the blood was put on the doorpost and the lintel, it did not matter

what you felt like as long as the blood was there you were safe, you were under the shelter of the blood. My friend, are you trusting in the blood of Jesus? If you are, I can tell you that on account of God's word you are safe. Oh the comfort of that, to know that you are saved.

So we come on to this scripture in Revelation. I think it is wonderful that in the scripture the veil of time is drawn aside and we are given a brief look into what is eternal. The blessed God that I know has given believers an insight beyond the realm of time. So many things are bounded by time, our very lives are bounded by time, but there is an eternal order of things. It speaks about the God who inhabits eternity. The psalmist says, "For a thousand years, in thy sight, are as yesterday when it is past", Ps. 90: 4. How great He is, the blessed God that you have to do with.

In this illustration He speaks about the, "tabernacle of God" – "I heard a loud voice out of the heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people". I thought it could just have said, and God shall be with them, but it says, "God *himself* shall be with them, their God". Is He your God? Remember too the words of the Lord Jesus, "my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God", John 20: 17. How wonderful the thoughts that the blessed God has for us. We can scarcely cope with them sometimes they flood into your heart, the greatness of the divine purpose for men to be at home in His presence. That will be eternally.

Then He goes on to speak of some of the things that we know something about, "he shall wipe away every tear", I suppose everyone in this room has, at some time, shed a tear. Even the young people have known what it is to shed a tear on account of something that has happened. "Death shall not exist any more" – is that not wonderful? The king of terrors, men fear death, the reality of death, life is real, but death is real. I remember the first time looked at someone who had died. Death is real. Someone that you had known and loved and been with, and then you look at them in death – how real death is. But then He says, "death shall not exist any

more” in the eternal order of things, “nor grief, nor cry, nor distress shall exist any more”. These things are presently known, I look at places like Iraq, Sudan, South America and other regions of the world. What distress, what cries, what awfulness, our blessed God taking account of that, but in the eternal order these things will no longer exist and there will be an eternity of joy for His people. Their God, He will be with them, and these things will have passed away and we will be with Him. How wonderful that is. That is before the heart of the believer.

How feebly I have spoken about Christ, He is the theme of the gospel, what a Person He is, the Lord Jesus. Do you know Him? Do you speak to Him? Do you speak to the Holy Spirit of God, another divine Person? The Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples, as He was going out of the world to His Father, of another Comforter that would come when He was gone (see John 14). How much comfort is needed presently and there is another Comforter here, the Holy Spirit of God. You can have Him. Think of that, God prepared to give His creature of His own Spirit to enable you to be here in some measure for His pleasure. What a gift is the gift of the Holy Spirit of God. Have you received Him? If you are not sure that you have the Holy Spirit, ask the blessed God and He will give it to you. How good He is! Another power and resource within you to be here for His pleasure.

I trust that all here will remember what I have said – you have to do with God. That is true, that is a divine certainty, you will have to do with God. Remember, He is a Saviour God and He can be yours by putting your faith and trust in Him. You do not need to make a show of it, but all you have to do is commit yourself to the blessed God, come by way of repentance and faith and trust. I like the word trust. I like to see a child with its parent walking along and putting its hand up into its parent’s hand trustingly. How attractive that is. You can do the same when you put your faith in Christ and you can be sure that there is certainty about it. One man asked, “what must I do that I may be saved? And they (Paul and Silas) said, Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou *shalt* be saved”, Acts 16:

31. The certainty of it. Friend are you saved? Have you had to do with God about your sins? There is a glorious Saviour Jesus who shed His blood, He suffered and died and lay in the grave and rose again that the matter of your sinful nature, and the sins that you have committed might be righteously met and forgiven. What a God He is! How good He is!

I would like to quote what someone said about Spurgeon when he got to the end of his preaching he said, 'you may be a bit uncertain or you may not be sure about what to do so come back next week and you can hear the preaching again'. A man went out from that preaching and was killed by a tram. Friend, "now is the well-accepted time; behold, now the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6: 2), we cannot give anymore time. Be sure that you have your faith and trust in Christ.

May it be so, for His Name's sake.

Glasgow