

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 237

December 1992

Contents

THE STRONGHOLD

ANOTHER DAY

GROWING CHILDREN

THE STRONGHOLD

1 Chronicles 11: 1-9, 15-18, 12: 16-18; Acts 4: 23-31

N.J.H. I wondered if it might be for profit to look at the strongholds of David. Chronicles does not touch on his strongholds during Saul's reign. What the stronghold of David speaks of is something we might need to be strengthened about in the day we are in. With Timothy it is not in the first epistle that the apostle spoke of "a spirit of cowardice" but in the second: "For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice", 2 Tim 1: 7. It may be that at times we get a little enfeebled and feel the need of strengthening. I think the stronghold of David will help us. I used to think that the stronghold was somewhat a military thought, but more and more I see it is much wider than that because it is the place where David expresses his feelings and where there is the expression of loyalty to him. Amasai expresses his feelings, his loyalty to David. I think we will be encouraged if we look into it with the help of the Spirit.

A.McK. What you call attention to is very interesting and I am sure it will be helpful, because it is in the second epistle to Timothy that there is a reference to Timothy's tears (see chap 1: 4).

N.J.H. That helps. You can see how the apostle would draw that young man into the experience of the stronghold. The enemy's constant attack is to weaken the testimony. I think your reference to Timothy's tears shows that the apostle took full regard for the feelings that he had for it.

A.McK. It would not express weakness so much as feelings. Paul was marked by feelings too. He refers to his many tears in the second epistle to the Corinthians (see chap 2: 4). I think what you are saying is helpful, that feelings may be developed amongst us that in some way represent Christ.

N.J.H. Yes. Timothy looked at things differently; it was not because he was not getting his own way that he wept, but he had "genuine feeling". The inwards are searched in the presence of God and the apostle could discern that these feelings were genuine.

J.A.G. Would Damascus be like a stronghold of David? "Enter into the city, and it shall be told thee... Saul, brother", Acts 9: 6,17. What feelings!

N.J.H. Saul of Tarsus had success in his previous campaigns and he thought Damascus was within his reach, but he did not know that there was a stronghold there. The Lord had to do with him in the way.

J.A.G. He met David.

N.J.H. That is right; he met the true David.

J.G. You refer to the scripture in Timothy as to not having "a spirit of cowardice, but of power, and of love, and of wise discretion": are these inward features which mark the stronghold? I wondered if these three features would be seen in David when Saul was king: "thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel", 2 Sam 5: 2.

The inward characteristics of what you are suggesting in the stronghold were there in David even although outwardly Saul was the king.

N.J.H. In the chapters of Samuel where David is just by himself the stronghold is not referred to. It comes in in chapter 22 when persons gathered to him. I think that bears out what you are saying, that these features of the stronghold were personally seen in David; He gives character to the stronghold.

R.S.R. It says, "But David took the stronghold of Zion, which is the city of David": would that be a base for operations?

N.J.H. You can understand that, after his installation over all Israel, he had to work from the centre, Jerusalem really, the city of David. That is where things would commence.

R.S.R. It is essential that there be a base for operations - the "stronghold"; it is a strengthened position.

N.J.H. Yes, it is not from weakness, and neither has this dispensation commenced with weakness; it is in power, and that power is unabated now.

M.G.W. The fact that David was there made it a stronghold, whether it was a cave which was Adullam or in a city like Jerusalem. Things are all right as long as Christ is there and He is gathered to as the point of attraction.

N.J.H. They had to go to David, had they not? You get the impression that David remained in the stronghold.

M.G.W. It is lovely; they gathered "to David to Hebron" to himself. "We are thy bone and thy flesh"; it is not skin, the external. This is substantial. Is this morally what underlies the idea of a stronghold among the saints, in correspondence with Christ?

N.J.H. Yes, there would have to be some moral work in the soul to be drawn here. It is not exactly as with Solomon. With Solomon there is magnificence that will come out in the millennium to which persons will be drawn, but it will not necessitate, as I understand, the work of God that is required here. I think morally there has to be a work of God in a person to be drawn to David, in rejection, earlier, and now as he is coming into his place as the king.

J.N.M. Would the stronghold in our day be in persons? I was thinking about the buffaloes in South Africa. When they are attacked they form a defensive circle with their heads outside where their horns are, with the weak and the young within, and they are impregnable. It is in persons, is it not?

N.J.H. The young need to be protected, and the Lord realised that in setting up the principle of the stronghold.

A.McK. Zion relates to God's rights in mercy, does it not? A sense of mercy is the first thing that we would be built up in, and then the sense of grace. That would bring us into the stronghold, would it not?

N.J.H. Yes, it would. Things will expand from there. In a moral sense God needs Zion to begin things. A spreading throughout the world to come will take place as a result of Zion being there, as I understand it. That is how the millennium will actually work.

J.A.G. If the Lord's mind is known, even if adjustment has to come in, it is very blessed and readily accepted: "I have heard from many concerning this man how much evil he has done", Acts 9: 13. He has that place. Communion is known in it.

N.J.H. Ananias's relations with the Lord were very good. We are apt to view it as adjustment. The Lord knew Ananias's feelings as to how Saul was going about and ravaging the assembly. He knew that Ananias had right feelings, and He knew when He spoke to him how he would express them, but it was not adjustment, was it?

J.A.G. He spoke to his friend.

N.J.H. That is fine.

R.S.R. This seems to be a co-ordinated movement: "And all Israel assembled themselves to David". Then they have a judgment of Saul's system, and too, not only David's ability to lead out but to bring in, which would be the more difficult part.

N.J.H. Yes, a judgment of Saul would be required of course. You could not bring through anything of that into the stronghold. That would be an evidence of weakness and could not be permitted. Did you say it was harder to bring them in?

R.S.R. Yes, leading them out is one thing, but bringing them in after the conflict is another, is it not?

N.J.H. It seemed to be lacking in Saul's reign. You could hardly say he was a leader. There was little evidence of any ability to bring the people in. They were left exposed.

R.S.R. David never lost a battle.

N.J.H. No, he was a mighty warrior.

J.S. Would all Israel assembling themselves to David bear on the moral side of the work in persons to which you were referring? They had come to appreciate what David was in his moral characteristics. They "assembled themselves"; there was the capability to do that in relation to him.

N.J.H. Yes. I do not think it was coincidence; there was moral teaching in Hebron first and then Jerusalem, do you think?

J.S. Yes. I think these persons had come morally along with David so that they would appreciate him and could go further.

N.J.H. It certainly is to be reflected in all our histories. Our appreciation grows as we go through things morally with the Lord. It is a very poor impression of Christ if there is no moral pathway in keeping with it.

K.D. So does the feature of a prince become very attractive to us? I was thinking of the moral attractiveness of a "prince over my people".

N.J.H. Are you suggesting dignity in the prince?

K.D. Yes, and the feature of leadership which would influence the people. They say, "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh", to link on with that character of glory which would shine in a prince.

N.J.H. That is good. It shows also the way that David arrived at the throne. There was a pathway, a proved pathway of David. He went through testings. His pathway involved testings, and no doubt the prince and eventually the king came out in it. It is well to remember that any progress in divine things involves soul history. We used to hear a lot about soul history; it is essential.

E.D.S. I wondered if soul history entered into what it says here: "Thou shalt feed my people Israel". He had spent a great deal of time feeding and shepherding sheep. Would shepherding and feeding be the protective side of the stronghold morally?

N.J.H. Yes, the characteristics were there.

E.D.S. In Acts 20, where Paul reminded the elders of his tears, the injunction was to "shepherd the assembly of God, which he has purchased with the blood of his own" (v 28). It is a protective stronghold idea, is it not?

N.J.H. David was taken from the sheepfolds. God took account of his life, exactly. There was not only what the people did, but God

knew intimately every circumstance that David went through which equipped him for the position that he is taking up.

J.A.G. Does that mean then that the spirit of Christ is in evidence in the stronghold and grace is reigning?

N.J.H. That is right. That is how things are maintained; the local assembly will die out if that is not so.

J.A.G. Is it not the ultimate in chapter 5 of Romans that "grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life" (v 21)? - that is a stronghold corresponding to David's.

N.J.H. You will not get eternal life conditions in a locality without that being pursued. David sets things out in his reign. You might say finality is not reached in David but it is so essential at the present time to know something of the measure of the reign of David.

J.A.G. Very essential because Christ is "the root and offspring of David", Rev 22: 16.

N.J.H. Yes, and, for instance, the tabernacle of David which is fallen will be rebuilt (see Acts 15: 16). Why is it David's tabernacle and not Solomon's? Is it the moral side that is so essential in this dispensation that lays a certain basis for the world to come?

J.A.G. Yes; I think the moral side is the reign of grace, not the reign of Saul.

R.S.R. Jerusalem seems to be the objective. That is the height and is really Ephesians. There is a reference to Hebron - "And all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron" - which would link with Colossians, but it says in verse 4, "And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem".

N.J.H. Yes, Jerusalem was in the mind of God. The Benjaminites had not dispossessed the Jebusites, so the city was really in the hand of usurpers or foreign people and awaited the time when eventually David expanded the kingdom. It was only in David's reign that the whole inheritance was taken up: it shows how essential David is in the divine plan.

A.D. In Paul's epistle to the Philippians there is the reference to "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ", chap 1: 19. Then the moral side comes in in chapter 2: "having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing" (v 2), and then "each esteeming the other as more excellent than themselves". Would that come into the stronghold?

N.J.H. That helps. You can see how settled things are. There is nothing to disturb the feelings of this position.

M.G.W. It appears that Benjamin had not really shone. In fact there was a time in his history, at the end of Judges, when the tribe was lacking in Israel. But here David is the kind of man who can gather them. In the next scripture it is the children of Benjamin and Judah who came to the stronghold. Some beloved brethren have gone on well and others not quite so well, but we are all there under David.

N.J.H. Yes, that is right. Was Saul not a Benjaminite? It shows that they did overcome, as you say, in the next chapter. There is always room for overcoming characteristics which may have marked us.

We have given in to what speaks of Saul's reign, Saul's line of things. You can overcome and set that aside, and pursue the line of David which is the line God is on.

J.N.M. They overcame natural loyalties. Our bonds in Christ are in resurrection. Natural loyalties, hung on to, cause distress, do they not?

N.J.H. Yes, and disturb the atmosphere. We little understand or realise how little can disturb the atmosphere, and it is from without. It is brought in from what Saul's reign represents.

D.A.S. Is the stronghold position similar to Galilee? It says in Mark, as to the women who went to the tomb, that they were told to go to Galilee, "There shall ye see him" (chap 16: 7) - in resurrection.

There would be nothing pretentious about that stronghold. Do you think that reproach, and the Person who was there in resurrection, would be the stronghold?

N.J.H. Galilee was far enough away from Jerusalem not to be affected by what was going on against Christ in that city. If you do

not have separation from the principles of the world, the principles of the stronghold will not be there. You cannot have it. It is an unworldly Christ that fills the stronghold, that characterises it.

A.McK. I was wondering if the counterpart to that would be the upper room. There is the Galilee position, but then the other side is in Luke whose order is healing, feeding and teaching, which would bring us into the upper room.

N.J.H. Well, that is something to consider. There is no question that God's power was known there. The house was filled, was it not? That was the power of God.

J.S. It says of David that he took the stronghold and then, after the Jebusites are displaced, he dwelt in it, and then he built. His taking the stronghold would be how he gets possession; then, if there are to be settled conditions, the Jebusites have to be displaced; and then the building can proceed. It seems to be all in line with what you are saying as to the moral working out of the truth.

N.J.H. Yes. "All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth" (Matt 28: 18) and then there is the making of disciples. There is a certain process to be gone through. David takes possession of it and then the power of that is going to affect and change persons. That is what Christianity did at the beginning and it is still doing it. If persons are coming into anything they are coming in and being changed.

K.D. In Matthew, after reproaching the cities, Jesus says, "Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened", chap 11: 28. Would that link with what is in your mind?

N.J.H. Yes, you get rest there. "Take my yoke": it is yoked persons who are taught there.

K.D. He says, "for I am meek and lowly in heart". Does that kind of man become attractive to us?

N.J.H. Well, that is the Man who is reigning in the stronghold. He is not changed there. The same meek Person is there. It has been said that in the kingly gospel the only claim He makes is that He is

"meek and lowly in heart". It should attract us. The stronghold is worth going into. I would like to know more about it.

A.McK. You said in your opening remark that you used to think it was a military idea. Say how you came to it that it was not actually a military idea.

N.J.H. I meant it was more than that. I previously thought that the stronghold was only for military advantage, that you work from strength. It is a poor army general if he is working from weakness.

The king in Luke 14 is to sit down and take counsel whether he is able to meet the enemy's army. That is strategy, that is how military things operate, but I thought there was more than military advantage in the stronghold. I thought it was a place where feelings are expressed.

A.McK. That is helpful. Here it would appear that David becomes continually greater. Is that the whole point of getting into the stronghold, that Christ has a greater place in our affections?

N.J.H. That is fine; that is the desire of a true heart. What an effect it would have on a meeting if every heart sought for that earnestly; it is like being emptied of self and filled with Christ. It needs to be stimulated amongst us.

E.D.S. Even Joab here is influenced by the conditions you are speaking of. He was a great military man, a ruthless man at times, but here he seems to enter into a different spirit. It says, "And Joab renewed the rest of the city". David built and Joab renewed the rest of the city as though he was taking his guidance from what David was setting on.

N.J.H. That helps. I had not thought of that. You mean there is a subduing effect even on a Joab. At Antioch there were different persons there - the five mentioned are all different. Saul of Tarsus himself required subduing, did he not? It shows the effect on Joab: his damaging characteristics, you might say, were neutralised; he was subdued.

R.S.R. They were "ministering to the Lord and fasting" and that made way for the Spirit to speak: "Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them", Acts 13: 2.

N.J.H. Yes, there was a wonderful atmosphere there.

R.S.R. Do you not think environment and atmosphere have a lot to do with our occasions?

N.J.H. I think so. In the world to come the animal creation will not just be tamed, but their instincts will be changed, and if God can and will do that in the world to come, is He not intending to change certain characteristics now? I may be a bit awkward but that characteristic is to be changed. So there are spiritual conditions which you referred to where they fasted and prayed and so on.

M.G.W. Is that why the Spirit of God goes on to speak about the exploits of these persons? It seems to be under the banner of this classification that they were "the mighty men whom David had".

Having established that they are devoted to him they really come out like him. They are not rivals. They are carrying out these exploits in devotion to him. Is that the idea?

N.J.H. Yes, David made them mighty. When Saul saw a valiant man he chose him for his kingdom (see 1 Sam 14: 52). If he saw somebody who could add to his kingdom he would include him.

There must have been awful rivalry there. But it was those in distress and in debt and of embittered spirit who collected to David in the cave of Adullam in 1 Samuel 22. That was the type of person that gathered round David.

J.A.G. Do you think then that, as we practically learn to judge ourselves, we come on to assembly ground and touch union? Saul's brethren of Benjamin must have come to a judgment of their position, and they helped David. So we have God helping. They have come to help; that is all related to the helpmate. And then the "mighty men whom David had" must relate to union: they are drawn to him in spirit.

N.J.H. What were you thinking of the mighty men as linking with union?

J.A.G. Well, the mighty men whom he had; they are joined to him. He just needs to think something and they are off.

N.J.H. Just whisper something and it is done. Would it not be wonderful if that were so in a locality, that just a whisper, just some indication of the Lord's feelings, and persons are active?

J.A.G. Yes, 'Whose faintest whisper makes our souls rejoice!' (Hymn 213).

N.J.H. That hymn writer was a man who was close enough to the Lord to know His feelings.

M.G.W. Is the thought of the helpmate involved in "We are thy bone and thy flesh"?

N.J.H. I think so.

J.G. The city of David has this feature of sensitivity. It belongs to him, it takes his name, he is there in it and there is response to him. The stronghold became a city. You spoke earlier about how it takes so little to disturb the atmosphere; perhaps we need to consider that more.

N.J.H. Yes, it is sensitivity. Sensitivity marks the Spirit in the figure - "the sole of her foot", Gen 8: 9. There is sensitivity in the Spirit and we have to be careful in His presence. We have to beware.

J.G. The city is where Christ's administration is seen. It is where His sway is known. So often we tend to bring in what we think, but we have to make way for what He thinks.

N.J.H. Yes, He is meant to give character to the city and that is what we know at the moment. In the millennium it will spread out from there to every corner of the earth, but in the meantime what we can do is hold to the idea of the city and David's stronghold. His influence is restricted. It is not exercised yet. He has received the kingdom but he has not exercised it yet. When He does It will

spread to every corner of the earth, but at the moment the idea of influence in the city is what we should be after.

K.D. So is it that our appreciation and knowledge of Christ would be increasing? After the Philistine was slain they compared David with Saul, but here there is no comparison.

N.J.H. Yes. What Saul represents is out of the picture and the quicker the better.

K.D. Is that not something we have to come to?

N.J.H. Well, if we do not come to it we will be brought to it. The Father has His own way and no doubt discipline and other things can come in, but it is His intention that the true David should shine.

J.N.M. Is this seen in the anonymity of the three? From verses 10 to 14 they are all named, and the great deeds they did, but when you come to verse 15 and onwards there are no names mentioned. They have hidden themselves, do you think?

N.J.H. I think that helps because these three people worked together.

J.S. That is encouraging for us. David says, "Oh that one would give me to drink", and three rise up to do it and do it together.

N.J.H. Very good. It is like the "two or three" of Matthew, is it not?

J.S. I think so: "where two or three are gathered together unto my name", chap 18: 20. We need to cherish that thought, what it means to be unto His name. It is interesting that this is a prime thing that comes out in the stronghold.

N.J.H. Yes, because immediately it is quite evident that the forces of opposition are very great. We cannot underestimate what stands athwart the testimony. We need not carelessly go down the street and imagine that nothing is against the testimony of the Christ. There is a whole system that hates Him. The gates of Hades refer to a whole administration that is set against Him and here it is the Philistines.

J.S. This is the cave of Adullam where the stronghold was. It is really Christ in rejection. It is not a popular Christ; it is a rejected Christ. It is a great privilege to be able to afford Him some refreshment in His rejection.

R.S.R. Affection for Christ would know no obstacle. The well was in the gate. That would be the most heavily defended part, but their one desire was to gratify the heart of David.

N.J.H. Yes, that was unselfish. You have to be unselfish to do that. It is going to cost you something.

A.McK. These would represent persons in communion; they would know the beatings of the heart of Christ, would they not?

N.J.H. Yes. I appreciate what was said about headship. They are not just working under command. Saul of Tarsus said "What shall I do, Lord" (Acts 22: 10) which involves obedience to the command of the Lord, but here it is just like a touch of headship, just a longing expressed. What do you think?

A.McK. Yes. You see that in the Philippian jailor; there is no command and yet he instinctively knows what to do.

N.J.H. That is another example. We are surrounded by "a cloud of witnesses", Heb 12: 1. The "cloud" involves persons who are setting out features that we should take account of.

A.McK. A question was once asked in this place as to how we would get through the garrison of the Philistines. The answer given was, It is very easy: keep out of sight.

N.J.H. That helps. At one point Jonathan went on his hands and knees; he kept low.

R.S.R. The product was just a drink of water, and yet see the assessment David had of it, how he valued these men who went at the risk of their lives.

A.McK. It became a drink-offering.

N.J.H. It shows how the service of God is strengthened.

J.A.G. We touch the key of David, the holy and the true and the open door, in this section.

N.J.H. I think that is so: "he who opens and no one shall shut", Rev 3: 7. He opens and, if an open door is set before us, it is the Philadelphian overcomer who takes it up.

J.A.G. They obtained the water and nobody interfered with them.

N.J.H. And they returned. They must have broken through going and coming back.

K.D. In the Acts it says, "Saul, who also is Paul", chap 13: 9. It has been said that he was a very small target for the enemy.

N.J.H. The smaller we are the safer we are. It says of king Saul that he was from his shoulders and upwards above the people (see 1 Sam 10: 23). He was imposing. It is safer when we keep a low profile, but strong.

R.S.R. Why did David not drink this? It says, "Therefore he would not drink it". They did it for David and yet he did not participate.

N.J.H. Well, you tell us.

R.S.R. The drink-offering was for God.

N.J.H. Yes, he poured it out to Jehovah. I think it shows how the service of God is strengthened and set forward.

J.A.G. Is that the point of "the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God... which comes down out of heaven, from my God", Rev 3: 12? It is all in his heart and mind.

N.J.H. The overcomer in Philadelphia would appreciate all that, would he not? He would respect it; and when that is offered to him, what a reward to his heart!

J.A.G. That is what these men are.

N.J.H. They would not complain that it had been poured out, that David had not drunk it.

J.N.M. This offering would refresh God's heart, would it not? The usual drink-offering is wine which is to bring joy, but that is not what

this is. It is a unique drink-offering, for refreshment. It is God who would be refreshed.

N.J.H. He must be refreshed when these conditions are extant amongst His people, when they are all under the true David and ready to respond to Him. They are at His behest and available to Him.

D.A.S. The real lover of the Lord Jesus would seek to break through any Philistine element that there might be in our hearts so as to answer to His desires. There are many lovers of the Lord Jesus who do not remember Him in the breaking of bread. Here it is a desire to "drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem", which would involve a tremendous sacrifice, a breakthrough. We used to speak in earlier days of our having to break through something in ourselves in order to remember Him and answer to His desires: "This do in remembrance of me". It is a similar request, is it not?

N.J.H. I think what you say is right because we do not want just to visualise that what is Philistine is outside of ourselves; there is that which has to be judged within. There is what exists in the heart of persons which would hinder them expressing themselves, and that has to be overcome.

A.D. Onesiphorus refreshed Paul when he was in prison in Rome. He searched him out and refreshed him (see 2 Tim 1: 16,17).

N.J.H. That is fine. That is it working out.

M.G.W. Could you help us on the difference between this and what we get in chapter 12 where it is a different kind of challenge. Have they come peaceably? Have they come to help? It is not just a one-off experience of getting some refreshment but something constant and characteristic.

N.J.H. Ministry should always have a moral edge; it should have a challenging effect. I think the word of God has that character; it does not matter how spiritual a person may be, the word of God carries its own characteristics. It is "sharper than any twoedged sword" and so on (Heb 4: 12): that is, irrespective of what state a person might be

in. If the ministry has that effect with them, not necessarily to expose but a searching quality, that is God's word. This is like the word of the Lord, and it raises certain matters. It is intended to bring out this exclamation: "Thine are we, David".

M.G.W. The question David raises is, "If ye come peaceably to me" - not to the stronghold but - "to me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you". It raises the question why we are where we are and whether it is in relation to the Lord with a heart that loves Him and owes everything to Him. We just want to be where He is. Is that the idea?

N.J.H. That is good. It is to the Person. You have to come to the Person. If you rely only on the company it may fail. Some failure will come in and spoil your view, but if you come to the Person, He is unfailing. He is the perfect rallying point for the true heart.

G.B. The Lord says to the blind man, "Thou, dost thou believe on the Son of God", John 9: 35. So that, believing, he is to be engaged with Christ, is he not?

N.J.H. I appreciate that reference. He is outside of religion at that point. He was put out where Christ was because Christ was not in the religious system; he is outside.

G.B. He hung on to the one thing that he knew which was what led him out to Christ.

N.J.H. Yes, that one thing was everything to that man. We sometimes call it the one thing as if it was small, but it was the greatest possession he could have. Relations with Christ are the greatest thing any believer can have, and the Lord in His grace will lead him on. If a person is receptive he will be led on to know something of the Son of God.

J.S. It says here, "And the Spirit came upon Amasai". Would the Spirit help us in this direction to recognise Christ and His claims? He says, "Thine are we, David"

N.J.H. Yes, it is important to recognise the service of the Spirit.

J.S. What we are naturally would not lead us this way, but if we allow the Spirit to have way with us He will lead us in this direction to recognise the claims of Christ and then to see how we can help Him, do you think?

N.J.H. Yes. When he says, "Thine are we", it shows that these claims were recognised and taken up. It was not just a loose expression as to the place that Christ has but that He has particular claims over the soul and you bow to them.

J.S. You used the word 'loyalty' at the beginning. It is a thing to come to that our prime loyalty is to Christ.

J.A.G. Does that then bear on our appreciation and recognition of the anointing because that is the big test with David?

N.J.H. Yes, you can understand that as the Spirit came upon Amasai there was an answer in him to the anointing in David, and there is an affinity in persons having the Spirit to the anointing in David. It must be so.

A.T. Is it encouraging that Amasai can speak for those who are with him? He has the confidence of those with him to associate them with himself in his links with David.

N.J.H. It must be the result of the Spirit's work that you can take that up. Peter says at the end of John 6, "we have believed and known". He is speaking on behalf of the rest.

A.T. I wondered if that tests us as to our links with our local brethren. Can we speak for them?

N.J.H. That is a good point to raise. Do we know them all enough spiritually to be able to speak for them?

R.S.R. Peter says, "to whom shall we go?", John 6: 68. It was the Person in his vision, was it not? - not where but "to whom".

N.J.H. Yes, it was the Person that was before him. There was no other claim in Amasai's life or in that of those with him, but David's. He says, "Thine are we". Everything they had was held for Christ in type.

J.A.G. So they overcame natural prejudice: "there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah".

A.McK. "The God of our fathers see it and rebuke it" is a searching word, is it not? So that as coming to David they were conscious that they were coming under scrutiny. It is something like the Supper: "But let a man prove himself", 1 Cor 11: 28.

N.J.H. Yes, that is a sobering thing because in 1 Corinthians 11 it says "For the eater and drinker eats and drinks judgment to himself, not distinguishing the body" (v 29). There is a certain scrutiny a person comes under as to whether they are doing it rightly.

A.McK. But then the triumph is that the Spirit came upon Amasai. He was a clear man, was he not? He could be searched.

N.J.H. That is the idea of proving; it is not to prove that there is wrong there, but to bring out what was of sterling quality, what was right. "And thus eat": it is not to refrain from eating but "thus eat". I think the side of scrutiny is important. As you say, "the God of our fathers see it and rebuke it".

D.A.S. Did the Spirit not come upon him before he made the statement? There is a very interesting note to "came". It means 'clothed'. Amasai came out into the open. Then the Spirit clothed him as he stood. He made his stand and associated himself with David. It is as if the Spirit identifies Himself with a person who makes a stand.

N.J.H. It is an interesting study to look through the Old Testament and see the persons that the Spirit came upon.

E.W.J. It says in the end of Luke: "remain in the city till ye be clothed with power from on high". I wondered if the sense of heaven 's favour on someone who is humble is given in view of their being strengthened.

N.J.H. Yes, the anointing normally gives expression to what is within, as I understand it. There is dignity in the anointing. There was something within Amasai that God took account of, and the

anointing was expressed in the dignity of his words. Was that what you were thinking?

E.W.J. I was thinking of correspondence with it inwardly and heaven being pleased, the Spirit clothing them with power from on high.

N.J.H. God is very careful as to whom He anoints, and you could not think of the Holy Spirit coming upon a person where the flesh is not judged. I am speaking of what is normal. The flesh and everything must be set aside so that the dignity of what the anointing involves is expressed. Saul's anointing was for his position to be king and was not related to his state.

K.D. What would you say about being a helper? It seems a very interesting thing: "And peace be to thy helpers! For thy God helps thee". It is as if there are persons who can link on with what God is doing.

N.J.H. Yes. There was an administration working under this person, not only David standing out in his beauty and perfection and dignity, but an administration, and there must be helpers in it. It would be fine to be a helper. "Helps" is one of the gifts (see 1 Cor 12: 28).

R.S.R. Then we have a reference to Phoebe: "that ye may assist her in whatever matter she has need of you; for she also has been a helper of many, and of myself", Rom 16: 2. Someone asked Mr Raven if he could define his gift and he said, 'help'.

N.J.H. It shows that any of His own can come into it. We can be helps locally so that Christ's place is reserved and protected and given to Him.

K.D. David says, "seeing there is no wrong in my hands". Can we be searched to be able to join in such an administration which Christ is leading?

N.J.H. That is a challenge.

J.G. A helper is one who sets a thing toward positively, in contrast, for example, to the Philistines who were a hindrance to David and to others as well. We would be tested whether we can set the thing forward. It is interesting that in this short piece of poetry - five lines -

he manages to have eight references to David: "David" and "thine" and "thee" and so on. So he is really full of Christ in setting the thing forward.

N.J.H. That is very good, and if what is said is full of Christ, that is bound to be a help. Amasai was a helper here himself. If we bring Christ into a meeting we are helping it on. We have maybe covered it already but I wanted to bring in in some way the power of the stronghold in Acts 4: "the place in which they were assembled shook". That involved power, did it not?

A.McK. Yes, it would involve power, but I think it would also imply confirmation.

N.J.H. It has been referred to as a friendly shake. They were not apologetic. The whole thing was clear in their mind: "The kings of the earth were there, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. For in truth against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou hadst anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the nations, and peoples of Israel, have been gathered together in this city to do whatever thy hand and thy counsel had determined before should come to pass". The whole thing was set in their mind. There was nothing to disturb these persons.

R.S.R. The section begins, "And having been let go, they came to their own". We can view each other as "our own", can we not?

N.J.H. It is in a certain sense like coming into the stronghold. They went out in the spirit of it, and when they came back they found the resource in the company. Is not the 'Despot' referred to here? It shows how these persons stood in relation to God: "and said, Lord, thou art the God".

A.McK. There are unique references here to the Lord as "thy holy servant Jesus". It is twice mentioned in this section and it is the only place in which it is mentioned. It is as if there is a pattern Man being called attention to.

J.N.M. Does that correspond in any way with what is said so often in the books of Moses: "without blemish"? In the note to Exodus 12: 5

Mr Darby has the word 'perfect'. It comes in again and again. It begins with the passover lamb. The offerings in Genesis are not said to be perfect, but where the blood is brought in the offering was perfect.

N.J.H. That is very suggestive. You can see how the whole theme stood in relation to God and that these persons were settled as to it.

They did not even ask for the weakening of what was against them or a change. They just say, "look upon their threatenings, and give to thy bondmen". They are coming out in the character of Christ. He is the great Servant; God's holy Servant has set the whole thing on.

J.S. This reference to "thy holy servant Jesus" would show how thoroughly He was apart from everything here, how He was available for God's service. It says in one of the gospels: "Behold my servant", Matt 12: 18. He just would not fit into the world's system at all. He was completely apart from it and available for God's service.

N.J.H. The filling out of God's will required that He be apart from the world. It was in the world that He completed the work that was given to Him, but it was not as part of it; He was morally "thy holy servant". You hesitate to say too much about it but it was God's will, the Despot that was being magnified. Is that right?

J.S. Quite so. Do you think the way the Holy Spirit is spoken of characteristically as the Holy Spirit is to produce something in ourselves that is in correspondence with the Man who has afforded God so much pleasure?

N.J.H. That helps.

A.McK. In connection with the reference to what is set out in the offerings, Mr Raven speaks about the fat as being the motives and the unleavened bread as being the walk; so they are to be seen here.

N.J.H. In the offerings everything was for the eye of God. You can understand how it started with the burnt-offering. It was wholly for God.

J.N.M. As to being "filled with the Holy Spirit" there are, I think, thirteen references to being filled with the Holy Spirit and one of them is Paul's; the other twelve are all Luke's. Luke presents the Man, and I wondered if "filled with the Holy Spirit" is the only state in the believer that is commensurate with that Man.

N.J.H. That is worth noting.

J.N.M. But is that not striking? The only reference Paul makes is rather, I may almost say, an incidental one: "And be not drunk with wine... but be filled with the Spirit", Eph. 5: 18. The other twelve are Luke's.

N.J.H. Being filled with the Spirit is something to consider and be desired.

BRECHIN

23 May 1992

Key to initials

G.Bailey, Edinburgh; K.Deck, Motueka; A.Duthie, Aberdeen; J.A.Gardiner, Aberdeen; J.Gray,Dundee; N.J.Henry, Glasgow; E.W.Johnston, Edinburgh; A.McKay, Brechin; J.N.Mather,Dundee; RS.Renton, Edinburgh; D.A.Steven, Glasgow; E.D.Steedman, Grangemouth; J.Strachan, Dundee; A.Taylor, Glasgow; M.G.Wood, Dundee

ANOTHER DAY

Norman Henry

Exodus 31: 1-5; 35: 30; 1: 15-21; 2 Samuel 17: 15-19; 2 Timothy 1: 3-5

I wish to speak about 'another day' and how persons prepare for it. I hope every person here is looking for another day. It has been said that Jacob was a man who could await his day. Esau was a man of the field - hunting. He looked for immediate results but Jacob could wait for them. Therefore, Jacob wanted the birthright and he obtained it. Why did Esau despise it? He said "of what use can the birthright be to me?", Gen 25: 32. His day was now and it was going, disappearing, but Jacob could wait. God had great things in mind for Jacob. What a tortuous journey he took to reach it, but nevertheless God had great things in mind for him. His day would come, and he is prepared to wait for it. I wonder if we are. I wonder if you and I are persons who can genuinely wait for another day. It will change your life if it has not already done so; you will wait for another day. Is that not wonderful?

I started in Exodus because I thought something must come out in God Himself that, we might say, opens our eyes as to how He prepares for another day. In Ezekiel the magnificent outline of the house and the temple are given but these are not given in the recovery books. Why was it given to Ezekiel while they were still there in captivity? I think God always sets a thing out before us and I need to take a step. That is a principle with God, that He will set a thing out before He requires man to take one step in the right direction. Is that not wonderful? God prepares for a coming day.

Ah! Think of even Jesus having gone to prepare us a place! That is for a coming day. You are not there yet. You are not in the Father's house yet: that is an eternal thought. We can touch it by the Spirit, but really it is an eternal thought. And He has gone there to prepare a place for you. That shows that divine Persons prepare for a coming day. It makes you think, because man's life is taken up,

characteristically, with the present. That is all he knows. He cannot see beyond. Only faith takes us beyond. Faith as given to the believer can take us beyond. Instead of seeing the wilderness, faith sees God; natural man sees the wilderness. But the more the coming day comes into my soul, the more it will change my present steps. Of that I can be assured. So Ezekiel goes over all the steps going into the house, the seven steps and the eight steps. What is set out in Ezekiel, chapter after chapter of immense detail, is interesting, but it still awaits the actual fulfilment of that prophecy.

In Exodus I read of Bezaleel. I presume his grandfather was the one who appears in Exodus 17 in the conflict with Amalek. In Exodus 24 Moses said as he was going up the mountain that, if there was any matter which required guidance, "Aaron and Hur are with you". That is the last reference you get to Hur - whose name means purity. Certain things are never replaced. What Hur represents as far as Israel went was lost. They opened up a door for idolatry. In Bezaleel, I think, God gives a hint of how He would achieve things. Once the church became earthly it remained that way publicly. It has become joined to the world. In no time at all the thought of the water aspect of the death of Christ was given up.

There was no demand on purity or cleansing in view of having to do with the things of God. Publicly that remains. God nevertheless shows that in His ways there would be inward revival, and that has happened. Through divine grace we find our part in it. It is a wonderful favour for you and me to find our part in the time that we call the recovery to the truth. I wonder if we appreciate it enough, to be able to handle divine things in an atmosphere where there is respect and godliness.

So, as I say, Bezaleel comes up. God already had gone over the whole thing in Exodus 26 to 30 before He introduces Bezaleel.

He speaks about the ark; He speaks about different objects that were going to fill His tabernacle. Movement was in His mind because the staves were going to be there. Are God's thoughts going to be lost? No! Bezaleel is taken upon the principle of sovereignty. It is in the beginning of 2 Timothy that it says "who has

saved us, and has called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time, but has been made manifest now by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ", 2 Tim 1: 9,10. God casts Himself back, we might say, on the principle of sovereignty; so He takes up Bezaleel. Now Bezaleel was a valuable man, a needed man, because not only was he gifted and skilled, but he was going to teach others to be so (see chap 35: 34). That is what Bezaleel was going to do. He was going to bring in teaching.

What a valuable asset in the setting up of the tabernacle was a man who not only had the skill himself but was going to infuse, was going to teach persons what was necessary for this work. One thing about Bezaleel is that he made the ark; that was unshared. You see how God prepares for, you might say, a coming day. Was this whole matter going to fail, having taken the people out of Egypt, having brought them into the wilderness and having given some insight of His thoughts to Moses having shown him the pattern in the mount?

Was the thing going to founder? No. You might say on the eve of breakdown God threw Himself back on the principle of sovereignty.

He had one man who could take the matter up for Himself and for Moses, and that was Bezaleel, a man who was skilled and able to do the job. I love to think of that, a man available who was going to bring into actuality what was made known to Moses on the mount before the failure came in. Is that not wonderful, that persons, even when breakdown has come in, hold to the original? If we are committed to anything it is to the original. We know there has been breakdown, but we must hold to first principles. That is how things are established. In the assembly things are established. We speak about walking in the light of the assembly. Where do you see the assembly? Do you see it in the public position? No! You do not see it there, but many of the personnel of the assembly are scattered there. Every true heart will be taken out of it. They will be raptured.

Thank God for that! But in the meantime to know how to walk you have to go back to what you might say are first principles, and they are set out, thanks be to God, in His word. So Bezaleel could put

into practice what had been spoken by God before breakdown. I love to think of that. God is not thwarted by breakdown.

Now, in the beginning of Exodus we get women preparing for another day. These midwives had regard for God and they feared Him. It says of them, "But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt had said to them, but saved the male children alive". The males were needed. The priesthood in Exodus required male children. Moses was required. Moses does not come in until the next chapter, but the principles of what these women stood for preserved Moses. In principle they prepared for another day when men would be required. The principle of manhood in the tabernacle system was essential for it to develop and the king of Egypt was after its destruction. That is what the world's system is after, to destroy what is functioning for God. You remember that in Titus it refers to the enemy as subverting "whole houses", chap 1: 11. That involves ruining the household. How successful that has been in the world itself! But he is after the moral breakup of the households of believers. The enemy is after the destruction of households here, but children are born. The midwives say, the Hebrew women are stronger. It says that God dealt well with them. God honoured persons who were preparing for a coming day. I love to think of it.

What lies ahead none of us knows, but we can trust in the One who does know. It is God who knows what lies ahead. We have to do our part.

Now in Samuel there is something going on in this house at Bahurim. Bahurim is an interesting locality. I do not know what encouragement they would get in the place, but there was a man there "who had a well in his court", and it says of the woman that she spread ground corn on it. I do not know if Shimei was their neighbour for he came from Bahurim, but they certainly would never have received sympathy from him. When it comes to what you do for Christ, you have to ignore those that are against Him. Although Shimei was characteristically against David, David did not pronounce judgment on him but Solomon did. This was the time of Absalom's persecution of David. This was very close, his own son, and it

appears as if he has the upper hand, and David is fleeing. Then Shimei railed at David and cast stones at him. Shimei says, in other words, you were not true under Saul and you are not true under Absalom either. He more or less put it that it is judgment on him for the way he had been. Abishai was going to cut off his head but David says "for Jehovah has bidden him", chap 16: 11. This is part of the sufferings of David and reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

So Shimei is from Bahurim and that type of spirit probably prevailed. He was that kind of man. It would have prevailed in the town. But there is one household which was true to Christ in principle and they had a well in their court and they had ground corn. I think they did not know when they were grinding the corn that they were preparing for another day. What they did was instrumental in diverting the enemy. That woman diverted the enemy and preserved the testimony. David got clear, and he was not overrun or overcome.

Wonderful! Be true to Christ in your household. You do not know the good you are doing or the moment when that will be required.

You are preparing for another day. When reading the Scriptures in the morning, sometimes you get something and at other times it seems a little difficult, but keep at it! It is the grinding of the corn.

Some day that is going to be required and God knows when that day will be. Your day will come. You are preparing for it. Think of our young children; they sit round the table and they listen to what is read. They listen to the prayer, the giving of thanks for the food.

They listen to everything and I am assured that more goes in than we realise with children. You are preparing persons in your household for another day. If the Lord does not come these young people will be required in the testimony and they will have to be strong in it.

Finally, in Timothy, Paul speaks about unfeigned faith. He says, "which dwelt first in thy grandmother". Timothy's mother was spoken of as a believing woman, but of the grandmother it says that faith dwelt first in her. She must have been characteristically a person of faith. I love to think of faith dwelling in a person.

Sometimes we judge faith by some act that somebody does and we

say, that was an act of faith. A person goes forward and relies on God and you say, that was an act of faith. But in this woman, this grandmother of Timothy's, it dwelt. That is a woman to listen to.

Would she have left her knees for Timothy? She would bring up her daughter Lois and then there would be the grandson, Timothy, and she would be well aware of his father being a Greek and of everything that stood against her grandson, but her faith was rock-solid. It dwelt in her, and she would have an insight by faith that lays hold of what is unseen. That is what faith does. She was preparing for another day. It is more assured than anything else in this world that that day will come. Timothy's day did come. Firstly what happened was the warm feeling that arose between Barnabas and Paul, previously so close together in service, and suddenly warm feeling comes in, and Barnabas eventually goes off - really to the natural. You say the testimony as well as Paul and his company are weakened in some way. But, no, this grandmother, this woman, had obviously considered that that day would come and of Timothy it says, "Him would Paul have go forth with him", Acts 16: 3.

There was a certain requirement that Timothy was drawn into the company. Dear brethren, it may not be obvious or immediately clear what things are, but go on with God and with what is normal and look to a coming day which in principle must be His day.

Scripture speaks about the day of Jesus Christ and about the day of God. God has these times in reserve, and He wants you and me not to act and live just in the present, although we thank God for what we do touch in the assembly. Even our weeks commence with announcing the death of the Lord, until he come (see 1 Cor 11: 26).

We make an announcement, awaiting the coming day, the coming of Christ into His rights. Why should Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and the other days not have the same character, that we are looking for that day? While we await the return of our Lord Jesus Christ go on with God, the grinding of the corn and the protection of young people required for the testimony. That is why we should prepare for a coming day.

That is all I have to say. I trust we will be encouraged and exercised by it. For His Name's sake.

BRECHIN

23 May 1992

GROWING CHILDREN

A moral lesson which can be learned from nature is that the Christian believer is like a tree sending its roots down into the rich earth and producing its fruits in due season. The lad, Samuel, is an example of this as he grew up in the knowledge of God. His mother would notice this growth every time she brought him a new garment. As this process continued, God was able to confide to him His mind as to one rooted and founded in Christ. Paul wrote about being rooted in love which is maintained by the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus and through the sunshine and air and rain of the Holy Spirit.

The gospel by Luke, who wrote most about the early life of Jesus, tells us that, as a child, He grew up and *became* strong in spirit, whereas John the baptist *was made* strong in spirit. In the latter case, no doubt that was for his special service of later on making for the Lord a prepared people. Heaven watches us grow, not only in our bodies, but in our spirits where we first had to do with Him.

Is anything hindering your growth?

J.C.Evershed