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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1993

DEITY BEFORE MANIFESTATION IN FLESH

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Study #3

He Maketh His Angels Spirits, His Ministers Flames of Fire

Reading: Psalm 89:1-18

Bro. Chairman and our dear brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the conclusion of our considerations yesterday, we were looking at the altogether lovely work of the El Shaddai, who indeed were in the charge and superintendence of the production of the first born nation of Yahweh. And in confirmation of the things that we saw from those references in the book of Genesis, as Abram was given that title, and as he in faith passed it on to his son, who likewise passed it on to Jacob, and Jacob on to Joseph; we begin to imagine, brethren and sisters, that in the face of a hostile and a severe environment it would have been of immeasurable comfort to know they had with them, some people like El Shaddai.

And brethren and sisters that same power is available for us today. And if we would like to take our Bibles and turn to 2 Corinthians, chapter 6, we have a very strong confirmation of the conclusions that we were able to make from the title in the Book of Genesis in particular.

In the 2nd Corinthians, chapter 6, the apostle is addressing us about being unequally yoked together with unbelievers. And then coming through to verse 16, he asks a continual series of questions, concluding them by saying, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith [El Shaddai]."

There just can't be any question about what those words of the 'LORD Almighty', in verse 18, really means. Because the whole context of the latter end of that chapter is the Fatherhood of the Deity manifested through those spirit powers that He has placed over the charge of His sons and daughters as they are drawn out of the nations as a separate people unto His Name.

And the touchstone of our calling, brethren and sisters, is that we might come out from among them and be separate, and to touch not the unclean and the uncleanness that is in this world, and we will receive and we will be hovered over by El Shaddai.

El Shaddai is that continuing series and that continuing rank of angels, brethren and sisters, that definitely hovers over us, that is a very great nourisher for us in daily deliverance from evil and also is a very powerful protection if we place our faith and our trust in them, that they might continue to place the enemy at bay.

And therefore, brethren and sisters, we can say with very great confidence, that this would have cheered Abraham and his subsequent progeny enormously, as they in faith clung tenaciously to those several visions that they had of El Shaddai. Having in their minds those few words given to them, from time to time, in the promises of that seed, and eventually of the nation to spring forth from their bowels.

And this morning, brethren and sisters, we are going to attempt to cover two or three of the other titles of the Deity as they come to us through the pages of the Scriptures: We'd like to look at the Elohim; we'd like to look at Yahweh Sabaoth; and, we'd like to look at Yahweh Sitkanu, i.e., Yahweh our Righteousness.

And so therefore, we begin by quoting the words of Bro. Thomas in Elpis Israel, on page 47, where he says, 'That the Elohim are a society, rejoicing in the love and attachment of one another.'

And we are now, brethren and sisters, going to be led through some of the psalms which talk about them, to try to get a vision of what is going on in the most sacred precincts of the universe. We are going to have a look at the very throne of the Deity. We are going to peer at Him, through the eye of faith, that:

- we might see into His very Holy Temple where He resides, - and in which place He sits upon a throne, - surrounded by the Elohim, as they, - as emissaries of His Word and His commandments, - go forth on various errands throughout the universe.

And perhaps there is no better definition of the angels than our Bro. Robert Roberts gave us in our Christadelphian Instructor. And for:

#24 - The answer is that the angels are glorious beings sent by God on various errands throughout the universe;

#25 - They are spiritual bodies and they are like men in their form and aspect; and,

#29 - The angels come on God's business and work by His power and are of His nature.

His Name is in them. And that is perhaps, brethren and sisters, the most simple definition that we could give to the nature of the angels and of the works they have been

commanded to perform.

We would like now to turn to the 104th Psalm. And in the first few verses there, we see a description of the angels. Psalm 104 and beginning at verse 1, "Bless [Yahweh], O my soul. O [Yahweh] my [Elohim], thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:".

And our minds, brethren and sisters, return to Genesis chapter 1 and verse 2, don't they? Where we saw that the spirit of Elohim moved upon the waters before the formation of the earth we now inhabit. The angels are indeed spirit bodies. And they are, as the psalmist testifies, they are ministers of Yahweh, who are like flaming fire.

And our minds return to Genesis chapter 3:24, where we remember that in the cherubic figures at the gate of the garden, from which Adam and Eve had been expelled because of sin, that there was the faces of the cherubim involved in a flaming sword that turned every way. They are, said the psalmist, 'the ministers of Yahweh', but we will see in a few moments, that they are not only the ministers of Yahweh but they are the ministers of those who are the heirs of salvation.

And in the end of Psalm 103 beginning at verse 19 we read that, "[Yahweh] hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless [ye Yahweh], ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye [Yahweh], all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure."

This is not so much saying, brethren and sisters, that they are ministers attended upon Yahweh, but they are Yahweh's ministers attending upon the heirs of salvation.

The meaning of that word 'ministers' is 'to attend as a worshipper or as a menial". And that puts the heirs of salvation in a very great position in the sight of the Deity, who sits midst a glorious covering of light on His throne in the heavens, wherever that might be. Because if He had prepared to prepare the angels as ministers and as a flaming fire, that they may attend upon the heirs of salvation, How are we, brethren and sisters, expected to reciprocate?

It's a very easy thing to be found in frustration at the purposes of those beings. And we in our own way, brethren and sisters, through the power God has given to us in His Word, have got to learn to cooperate with them. They have gone with us the second mile, they have probably gone the third, and fourth and fifth mile! And they are in the business attempting to get us to be fellow workers with them and with Deity Himself.

We are is it were to be, brethren and sisters, co-workers with the Deity. And it is those angels who have been put over our care that they might manipulate the events of our life so that we will be benefitted thereby. And we therefore, are to see the very

everyday circumstances of life as being manipulated by these menials; spirit beings, glorious beings, that are sent by the El on various errands throughout the universe. And we come into the reading done for us this morning in Psalm 89 and we are able to peer right into the very temple of the Deity. We're able to stand in the very presence of His glorious throne. And we are able to see these beings, standing around there, in that secret enclave, reflecting that glorious light that emanates from the Deity, in all its effulgence. And we are able to see, brethren and sisters, reflected through their presence in our life, the grace and the mercy and the love of the Father, who we really don't understand, but whom we are trying to come to know through the pages of His Word, which is His mind given unto His people.

And so the Psalmist says, in verse 1 of Psalm 89, "I will sing of the mercies of [Yahweh] for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations."

And here is the psalmist reminiscing upon the covenant that Yahweh has made with David about his seed that is going to sit upon his throne forever. And in response to a consideration of the promises, the psalmist says, "And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O [Yahweh]: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heaven can be compared unto [Yahweh]? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto [Yahweh]?"

And so far, brethren and sisters, in verse 5 we have looked at a system of worship among mortals. And then the windows open a little further, and it says in verse 7, "[E] is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."

We are looking right, brethren and sisters, at the very centre of Yahweh's Holy Temple. We are faced with a vision of Him sitting upon His all glorious throne and we are looking at the ranks and the orders of the angelic host as they stand as ministers in His presence.

He is to be had in reverence of all those who are about Him, and as Psalm 97 and at verse 7 says, which is taken up by Paul in Hebrews chapter 1. And in Psalm 97 and at verse 7 the psalmist expresses the view, perhaps we should start at verse 6, "The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols:"

And the grandest comparison that the psalmist can make with the foolishness and emptiness of bowing down to idols of graven wood and stone, is that he might invite the angels in heaven themselves to worship Yahweh. And the end of verse 7, "worship Yahweh, all ye angels." And Paul tells us the understanding of that verse in Hebrews chapter 1. And the invitation of the psalmist passes from the folly of man bowing down to something that is made with his own hands, to the glorious comparison of the angels

bowing down to the Deity.

And therefore, brethren and sisters, though we can see the grandeur and the greatness and the glory of this rank and this society of beings who are the ministers of the heirs of salvation, their grandeur is eclipsed by the fact that they worship the One around whose throne they are gathered, waiting for their commandments that they may harken to His Word and do His will and His commandments upon the face of the earth, and to manipulate our daily round of monotonous affairs, brethren and sisters, so that we might learn that we have a Father in heaven who pitieth His children.

These indeed are a rank, as bro. Thomas tells us, a rank of holy sentinels; and, we first meet them as it were on our behalf in Genesis 3:24. We are not going to turn to it now, brethren and sisters, because we don't have time, but we can see throughout the Scriptural record, that just as there are different qualities and different capacities given to the sons of God in the days of their mortality today, so there are among the angels of His presence.

"And the [Yahweh Elohim] said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the [Yahweh Elohim] sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

There's order, there's degrees of power, there's degrees of wisdom, there are degrees of authority among them.

And it is perhaps no more clearly seen than in a little incident that occurred in Exodus chapter 12. We have the record of the Passover festival, that festival that signaled the release of Israel from the oppression of Pharaoh king of Egypt. In verse 23 it says, "... [Yahweh] will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, [Yahweh] will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you."

Brethren and sisters, it is fairly obvious that there is an angel called The Destroyer. If we keep our fingers in Exodus chapter 12 and turn to 1 Corinthians 10; and, we know what 1st of Corinthians chapter 10 is all about, it is all about the apostle Paul making examples for us about the experiences of Israel in the wilderness. And in the midst of that exhortation, he says to us in verse 10, "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer."

He has almost certainly taken that from Exodus 12:23; and, we can see a being, a glorious spirit being, sent by God on an errand, to be a destroyer of the first born of the Egyptians. That angel, says Paul, also had the power to destroy murmuring Israelites. But turn back to Exodus 12 and look at the record a little more closely. And we can see a very strange and yet a very wonderful thing occurring in that verse, because it is

told to us that Yahweh will pass through to smite the Egyptians.

So we are seeing that the everlasting self-existent El, or Deity, has got control over all these events. But then we notice that it is Yahweh that passes over the door, and that the same Yahweh, that is an angel of Yahweh's presence, manifesting His power because His Name is in that angel. That angel called Yahweh is going to prevent the Destroyer from going into the houses of the Israelites.

And we have as it were, a meeting of two angels, and the one has a higher mission to perform. He's been charged with the salvation of Israel who are faithful, in spreading the blood upon the lintels and door posts. And it almost seems, brethren and sisters, that without that angel there, the destroying angel would not have known which houses he was allowed to go to destroy the first born. There is at it were, an exchange at the door of the house and the angel with the greater authority would have been able to persuade very easily The Destroyer, that this house is a house in which Yahweh has passed over; and, he moved on to the next.

It is a very lovely little window, brethren and sisters, into the fact that there we have a situation where immortality and infallibility reign, but the power and the wisdom are restricted in the one. That's all together right, isn't it? Some in the future will have charge over 10 cities, some in the future will have charge over 5.

There was an angel in the days of Daniel, who didn't know the King of Persia. And he called upon someone with greater wisdom, infallible wisdom, just like the lower one; but there was a job to do which he couldn't manage and he was unashamed to call upon some higher authority, a higher form of wisdom, that he might bring to bear the manipulation that was necessary so that the King of Persia would do the Deity's will.

And we see that, brethren and sisters, in ecclesial life today. It's sometimes a very sad thing that we don't take much notice of it, but it's in life today. It's no shame to the one, no glory to the other. We need to understand, brethren and sisters, that God is a very wonderful God, and He is making a body and the parts of that body have to fit together just like very obviously His angelic ministers do; and they work together for the good of the whole of the community, whether it's in heaven or whether it's on earth.

And we therefore, brethren and sisters, are very wise in accepting the hand, accepting the manipulation of those angels in our lives. We will never know in advance, we can only ever know when we look back; and, it might never be found out in our lives, when the hand of the angel manipulated some circumstance to cause us to go in another way. It may be so inscrutable as to be indeterminable by us, but accepted is the only wise course.

They are the eyes of Yahweh, that run to and fro throughout the whole earth, and they show themselves strong on the behalf of those whose heart is faithfully toward Him. They are the fingers, the Elohim, the work of whom is paraded before us day by day, brethren and sisters, that we might be reminded that we are called to a great and a high

and a heavenly calling; and, that through them we might be able to look [at] them right into the very presence of the Deity, whose presence is exhibited to us throughout the pages of Scripture. And together with them [we] might endure in this day of sorrow and sadness, drunkenness and fear as seeing Him who is invisible.

And so we would like to pass on to a consideration of the title, The Lord of Hosts. This particular title, brethren and sisters, occurs in the Scriptural record in 1 Samuel, chapter 1, to which we'll turn. We know that title means, Yahweh of Armies, Yahweh of Hosts. And although we find it for the first time in the 1st of Samuel, chapter 1 and at verse 3, it is perhaps not the first time that it does ever occur in our Scriptures. We've been looking at Exodus 12 and verse 41; the children of Israel as they went up out of Egypt by night - they are actually called the hosts of Yahweh. In other words, Yahweh was establishing, not just a nation, He was establishing an army. But that's the army that's on earth very obviously.

The first time in which this phrase occurs in that sense, is 1 Samuel 1:3. The record states that this man, Elkanah, went up out of his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to Yahweh of Armies in Shiloh. We are looking at the intervening period, brethren and sisters, between [a] the time when the judges were in command of Israel from time to time and [b] the establishment of the kingdom, first under Saul and then under David. And we are therefore, looking at a period of history in Israel's history, where there were significant changes beginning to be made. It is the first occasion when Yahweh of Armies appears in that direct form in our Scriptures.

Why does it suddenly come into the record here? Well, brethren and sisters, you come a little further to 1 Samuel, chapter 1, verse 11; now looking at the prayer of Hannah. And the prayer of Hannah begins in verse 11 and she vows a vow and she said, "... O [Yahweh of Armies], if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto [Yahweh] all the days of his life,"

Here's the vow of Hannah, brethren and sisters, what is she saying? She's making a connection. She's making a connection which is a very obvious connection with the period of Israel's history. They're under affliction, and who does she appeal to look on the affliction of the handmaid? She appeals to the Yahweh of Armies! Now, brethren and sisters, we always say, and we're right in saying, that this itself is a militant title. But a survey of the use of that term in the Old and New Testament Scriptures will help us to understand the way in which this title ought to be properly used by us.

It's very definitely an appeal to Yahweh of Armies on the background of affliction. And throughout the scriptures of truth: We find it 11 times in the books of Samuel, and twice in the record of the Kings; we find it three times in the books of Chronicles, only six times in the Psalms, 54 times in Isaiah, 65 in Jeremiah, once in Micah, twice in Nahum, once in Habbakkuk, twice in Zephaniah, 14 times in the two chapters of Haggai, 53 times in the 14 chapters of Zachariah, and 24 times in the four chapters of Malachi.

Do you see the weight where that title is used, brethren and sisters? Isaiah and Jeremiah, the very extremities of the kingdom, where the surrounding nations are really getting the upper hand of Israel and Judah going into captivity and when they are in captivity. The name in that title appears a multitude of times.

Its telling us something, brethren and sisters, and when we turn over to the first chapter of Isaiah we get a very clear indication as to the circumstances in which, and under which, Yahweh of Armies is operating and will operate. Isaiah chapter 1 and verse 5, and the prophet is asking some questions of the nation under the inspiration of the Deity, of course, "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard ..."

And what that means, brethren and sisters, is that every year when vintage time came around, the owner of the vineyard built up a very flimsy booth in the midst of his vineyard to which the reapers might repair to get some refreshment from the heat and the blazing sun as they reaped those grapes. And it's a very flimsy affair because it is only meant to last for a season, as respite from the heat.

And now we are coming to see that the daughter of Zion is left just like a flimsy structure in a vineyard. It's like a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, it's the besieged city, and what does the next verse say? Except the Yahweh of Armies was hovering over a very small remnant, we would have been like Sodom, and we would have been like Gomorrah. "Except the [Yahweh of Armies] had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah."

And again, brethren and sisters, in this title of the Deity, though we rightly say that it is a militant title, we can see what the aims are. It's really like the Shaddai, and although it presents a militant face to the enemy, it really is a nourisher and a protector of the very small remnant.

And we're like that today, brethren and sisters, a small remnant. We need the protection of Yahweh, we need to appeal to Yahweh of Armies, so we might not become like Sodom and Gomorrah; that in these last and perilous days of the Gentiles in which we live, we might be able to delineate between the way Yahweh wants us to walk in and the way in which He detests; that we might separate in our minds and be found to be in cooperation with Yahweh of Armies; that He might preserve Himself a very small remnant in the earth.

And that title, brethren and sisters, is used consistently like that throughout the Scriptures. And James 5 endorses that very, very firmly; because James says that there were certain people in the ecclesia who were under vigorous oppression, nay robbery

from rich men. And he warned the rich men and he said, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth."; i.e., You need to be careful rich men that the cries of these people, who need the wages day by day for their very existence. You need to be very careful because their cries are going to enter into the ears of Yahweh Sabaoth.

And Yahweh Sabaoth has it in His power to take vengeance, and to reap vengeance, against the oppressors of that very small remnant; who are doing their utmost to be in conformity and to work together with the angels of His presence, those eyes of Yahweh and those fingers of His, that harken unto the voice of His Word; and are indeed His messengers attending upon us, brethren and sisters, that we might gain eternal life in the kingdom of God to the glory of The Name of our Father in Heaven.

We'd like to spend the rest of the time this morning in talking about something that we read in our readings just a couple of days ago. We will turn to Isaiah 23.

There are quite a few occasions in the Scriptures, where there is another word that is joined together with the Name of Deity. And here is such an occasion in Jeremiah chapter 23 and verse 5 where it says, "Behold, the days come, saith [Yahweh], that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, [YAHWEH] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

It's a righteous branch says verse 5; and, the name by which this one, who is going to reign and prosper, who is going to have a name pronounced upon him, is going to be Yahweh Our Righteousness. Now ever since the days that Adam and Eve sinned, brethren and sisters, this has been a very real problem. Hasn't been a problem for the Deity, but it's been a very real problem for us, because when we come to analyze what Yahweh desired right from the very beginning, is that He really did desire the lives of men and women to be totally given to Him. And one sin was one too many.

One sin was one too many! That is, brethren and sisters, why the Deity is concealed from our view. It is necessarily so. He is of too pure of eyes than to behold iniquity and He cannot look upon sin. Therefore, reciprocal vision is entirely out of the question. Apart from the fact that we would be destroyed if we saw Him, He can't look at us because one sin is one too many.

And here now is promised in verse 6, somebody who is going to be a king, who shall reign and prosper. He's going to be a righteous Branch out of David, and He's going to be called YAHWEH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Now, brethren and sisters, Yahweh's terms (so that we may be able to be in fellowship with Him), his terms have never changed because of sin. His terms have never altered. The only basis upon which He will ever let man approach Him, is on the basis of total sinlessness in the negative sense, and total righteousness in the positive sense. There's no other basis upon which God will be approached by man, by anybody.

So how is it going to be effectively dealt with, when sin comes into the world? Well, there's got to be a representative of our race who is able to be made unto us, wisdom, because we have none of our own; and righteousness, because we have none of our own; and sanctification, because we have none of our own; and redemption, because it is unattainable by us.

That's what Paul says in the 1 Corinthians, chapter 1. He says that Jesus unto us Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption, none of which are attainable by us, because he is talking about them in the sense of their perfection. So here's an individual who is called, YAHWEH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, and we'd like to dwell a few moments, brethren and sisters, on this whole subject because it is one which very easily escapes our mind.

And we do that by turning first of all back to Genesis 15. In Genesis chapter 15 we have a record of an incident that is the equivalent of Abram's baptism - Paul tells us that in Romans chapter 4. And in this chapter, in verse 1, we read that, "after these things the word of [Yahweh] came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward'. It's the forerunner of the El Shaddai. It's the forerunner of Yahweh of Armies, because Yahweh here is both a shield, a protector from the enemy, and He is the reward in the future.

"And Abram said, Adonai Yahweh, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" How is your promise going to be effected to me, when you said that you would give me a seed? And Abram said, "Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir."

And the answer came and said, "This shall not be thine heir; but thine heir shall come forth out of thine own bowels." And the Deity, that is the angel, who was apparent to Abram, then brought him forth out of his tent and he said, "'Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them;' and he said unto him, 'So shall thy seed be'."

And now we are beginning to see, brethren and sisters, in the next verse, how God did not change His principles because of sin; but He made another formula, to which men and women of every intelligence, everywhere under the heavens above are able to attain unto. He changed the form through which His intentions are able to be accomplished. He didn't change His principles. Nothing changed as far as God was concerned when sin came into the world, except the method of approach by man to Him. And now that sinlessness, and therefore righteousness, is totally impossible in

man, mere man, God says - I'm going to make it possible upon the basis of another formula.

And here is a man, brethren and sisters, who is getting old. Here is a man who has a barren wife. We've looked at him yesterday in our studies of El Shaddai. We look at him now upon the basis of YAHWEH HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, because Yahweh was going to be his righteousness. And He was going to be his righteousness through the faith that man had in the promises that God could give.

Abram didn't just believe that one son was going to come out of his bowels; he believed that the moment the Deity promised it - that his seed would be as multitudinous as the stars of heaven. And he is getting old and his wife is barren. That's faith, brethren and sisters, that is real, biblical faith. It is not gullibility, it's FAITH.

And faith is that peculiar quality of the mind to which we are able to attain, which clothes words with reality. And Abram said, 'If you've promised that God, I believe it'. That was a very great graft on an old man to evoke that confession out of him. A very great graft. And verse 6 says, 'that he believed'. He doesn't say he believed Yahweh, it says, 'he believed IN Yahweh'. In other words, what Abram said back to Yahweh was this, 'I know that's a physical impossibility with me, I know it's a physical impossibility with my wife, but I also have the utmost confidence in thee O Yahweh, that whatever Thou hast said Thou art able also to perform.'

And so the record says, 'That Yahweh counted it to him for righteousness. He didn't say, 'I'll accept your faith as righteousness. He said here is something that Abram can attain unto, that I will accept provisionally in lieu of perfect righteousness. I know that this man cannot attain unto perfect righteousness, says God. He's already sinned and he stands in sin, but I'm prepared to accept him as a righteous man because he attributes to me what I have told him I can do. That's faith, brethren and sisters. And so it was accounted unto Him for righteousness.

Faith and righteousness aren't terms that can be just walked over. Faith is a peculiar quality, as we have said, that clothes words with reality. Righteousness is the performance of works that are asked by God to perfection. That's what righteousness is, brethren and sisters. And we have now been promised in Jeremiah chapter 23 somebody who will be YAHWEH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

And here is an imputation of righteousness unto Abram of which he was not deserving. But Yahweh said I will accept his faith as though it was righteousness. Now what's a man to do after that? Well, in James chapter 2, brethren and sisters, we are given the divine commentary by James, under the inspiration of God. We are given the divine commentary upon the incidents of Genesis chapter 15. In verse 20 of James chapter 2 we read that, "'wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith worked together as fellow family members',"

And that's what the idea of that word 'wrought with' is; it means that faith and works are fellow family members. They are children that spring from the same father - 'Seest thou how faith worked together with his works and by works was his faith made mature'.

So what happened, brethren and sisters, in that transaction? Well, verse 23 tells us what happened. It tells us that in the offering up of Isaac, scripture was fulfilled. And what is the scripture that was fulfilled? The scripture that was fulfilled was that Abram believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.

How was the offering of Isaac a fulfilment of that statement by God? Well, the way in which it was the fulfilment of that statement made by God was this - that God has imputed something unto Abram of which he really isn't worthy. He says you're a righteous man Abram, and Abram wasn't really a righteous man. And when God made that proclamation over Abram, 'he is a righteous man because he has believed me' or rather 'I have accepted him as a righteous man because he has believed me', Abram was expected to fulfil in his daily life [what God said over him]. And when we are baptized, brethren and sisters, and when we are baptized on the basis of real Bible faith believing what Abram believed and similar things, then God expects us to prove what He said over us.

And Abram proved what the Deity proclaimed over him in Genesis chapter 15, that there was faith there because of the works he did. And James goes on to say, verse 24, "ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." See what he's saying, brethren and sisters? He is really saying, verse 17, 'that if there's faith there is going to be works that prove the faith'. You can't have one without the other. If a man says he has got faith and there are no works that are honouring to his Father, who is YAHWEH IS RIGHTEOUSNESS, then there is no faith. It's just mere knowledge.

There's no such thing, brethren and sisters, as academic faith. There's academic knowledge, but faith is living and it's vibrant. It's fervent and it's active, that's what Bible faith is. And God says, 'when I see that in a person I'm prepared to allow my Son to stand in the breach, because He was righteous, He was perfectly righteous and therefore, that righteousness can be attributed unto us in faith'.

But that is only the start of the journey, brethren and sisters. We are expected to weave a garment of faith. Fine linen is the righteous acts of saints. And we're upon a journey ever since we were baptized. And the journey, brethren and sisters, is a quest for righteousness.

And the Lord Jesus Christ says that in Matthew chapter 5 where He says, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled". If we are hungry and thirsting after it, brethren and sisters, we cannot have it. It doesn't matter how many righteous works we do that are honouring to the Father, we still do not have righteousness. Righteousness is going to be a gift at the judgment seat. That's what Paul understood in the 2 of Timothy, chapter 4, where he said in verse 6, "For I am

now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

A crown OF righteousness, not a crown FOR righteousness. "A crown OF righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.", brethren and sisters, so says the psalmist. And what's this righteousness that we are going to be given on the basis of Paul's expectations? The righteousness that we are to be given, brethren and sisters, is the fullness of YAHWEH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS and we are then going to be given a mind to which righteousness is as natural as sin is to our present mind. That's YAHWEH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

And what's deficient in us, brethren and sisters, if we've got the right faith, will be made up to us at the appropriate time; because we've hungered and thirsted after it, because we follow after it, because we pursued after it tenaciously, vigorously, fervently. And if we have hungered and thirsted after it, we will be given it as says the Psalmist in Psalm 24.

In Psalm 24, verse 3, "Who shall ascend into the hill of [Yahweh]?, or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from [Yahweh], and righteousness from the [Elohim] of his salvation."

Yahweh is our righteousness, brethren and sisters. Yahweh is our righteousness through our Lord Jesus Christ today, because of faith; He is made unto us, WISDOM and RIGHTEOUSNESS and SANCTIFICATION and REDEMPTION. And, in the day to come, if we have hungered and thirsted after it, we shall be filled. We will be satiated because we have had an unquenchable thirst to be right, in a frame in which it is quite impossible. And yet we have got to have that faith, that quality of mind which clothes words with reality; that fulfilment, that desire, will be fulfilled by the gift of righteousness at the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren and sisters, these matters are under the hands of the angelic host. And as we peer into that throne, and as we see in that some secretly located spot in the heavens, the great El surrounded by His glorious enclave of spirit beings who are sent by Him on various errands, on menial tasks, on our behalf - Doesn't it inspire us, brethren and sisters, to become like Him? To be righteous, under the shadow of those Elohim, under the shadow of Yahweh Sabaoth, we can become parts of YAHWEH, Who is, indeed, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.